

April 2021

Remediation of 7-11 Nelson Parade, Hunters Hill

This document answers frequently asked question regarding the remediation of legacy contamination at 7-11 Nelson Parade, Hunters Hill.

1. What is the extent of the contamination left by historic industrial operations on the site?

From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, a carbolic acid plant operated on land in Nelson Parade, Hunters Hill. As a result of this previous use, the soil along the foreshore of the site has elevated concentrations of coal tar waste material and heavy metals.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) has issued a Management Order for the remediation of soil in the foreshore area.

Site soils are also impacted by low concentrations of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM), a by-product of a radium processing facility that operated on site for a short period around 1911.

The NSW Government is delivering a safe and secure remediation solution for residents.

2. Where is the contamination?

The contamination is between the Nelson Parade roadway and the Harbour foreshore – primarily on the government-owned properties at numbers 7, 9 and 11 and the adjacent foreshore land.

3. What will the remediation work entail?

In 2020 the Government negotiated an agreement with US Ecology for the transport and disposal of the radioactive material from the site to a fully-permitted disposal facility in the US.

In April 2021, planning approval was granted to proceed with this remediation approach after the proposal received overwhelming support from the Hunters Hill Council and community.

This remediation solution will deliver the best outcomes for residents and taxpayers, putting to an end a century-old contamination issue.

The NSW Government will undertake a remediation process that is safe and meets all relevant regulations.

Remediation works will include

- **Step 1:** Site preparation works
- **Step 2:** Excavation and removal of impacted soil

Frequently asked questions

- **Step 3:** Contaminated soil will be sealed in Industrial Package-Type 1 (IP-1) bags then sealed in project-specific shipping containers for transport. The shipping containers will not be opened again until reaching the final destination in the USA
- **Step 4:** Contaminated soil will be safely transported from the site for shipping to the USA for disposal in a fully-permitted disposal facility.

4. When will remediation start?

Excavation work is expected to start on site by mid-2021. It is expected the remediation works will take about 18 months to complete.

5. How will the excavation works be safely managed?

The excavation method will minimise potential dust creation by using small excavators and loading excavated materials directly into Industrial Package - Type 1 packages. This will ensure a large volume of material is not stockpiled on site. Dust monitoring will be undertaken around the perimeter of the site. When site activities have the potential to create dust, methods will be employed such as wetting down material or the operation of perimeter sprinkler systems. An ANSTO representative will supervise excavations and a full-time work health and safety supervisor will be on site to monitor conditions.

6. How will the contaminated materials be transported and disposed of?

US Ecology and its logistics partner, ALARA Logistics, are taking all reasonable precautions to ensure their approach for the Nelson Parade site protects residents, the broader community, and the local environment.

Contaminated soil will be sealed in Industrial Package Type 1 packages. These will then be sealed in non-vented shipping containers for overseas movement. The shipping containers will remain sealed until arrival at the US Ecology facility in the USA.

The contaminated soil is classified as restricted solid waste within Australia. US Ecology and ALARA will meet all transport regulations pertaining to restricted solid waste, as well as any international requirements.

The USA facility, where the Nelson Parade material will be disposed, has been designed and engineered to the highest standards to prevent any leakage into the surrounding environment, notably:

- the facility meets all USA and international standards for safe waste treatment and disposal, and
- the facility is permitted to treat, store and dispose of hazardous and radioactive waste.

7. What experience does US Ecology have in remediating sites in Australia?

US Ecology has significant experience working with Australian energy and mining industries to safely transport and dispose of waste materials, including materials similar to what is found at the Nelson Parade site.

8. What is the transport route and port of departure for the waste?

The transport plan is to be finalised. The sealed containers will be shipped from Port Botany.

9. Where will the waste be stored until it can be shipped?

Due to the limited space on site for the remedial works, packed shipping containers will be temporarily stored at an appropriately-licensed facility at Matraville for a short period (two weeks) prior to shipping.

10. Why isn't the waste being disposed of in Australia?

Kemps Creek is currently the only facility in NSW licensed to take this type of waste. The Government has previously committed to not transferring the waste to Kemps Creek.

The NSW Government explored other disposal options in Australia, however there are numerous factors which limit the selection of a site for either interim storage or permanent disposal of the Nelson Parade waste.

Australia's National Radioactive Waste Management Facility has often been cited as a solution for disposal of the Nelson Parade waste. Government investigations have determined this site is approximately 10 years from being in a position to accept material from the site.

11. Will the remediation approach address all regulatory and government requirements?

This solution satisfies the NSW Environment Protection Authority's Management Order published in respect to the Nelson Parade site. It also provides a more immediate solution to disposal of material from the site than the National Repository and honours the Government's commitment not to send the waste to Kemps Creek.

12. Will the community continue to be informed of the remediation process?

The NSW Government and US Ecology are committed to ongoing consultation with the local community and stakeholders throughout the remediation process.

Frequently asked questions

All contractors recognise that safety and minimising disruption to the local community is of paramount importance during the remediation work.

Residents will be contacted and advised of next steps.

13. What health risk does the site's contamination pose?

Analysis of soil from the foreshore area of the Nelson Parade site has confirmed the soil to be impacted by coal tar at concentrations that exceed the NSW EPA-endorsed criteria for parks and open spaces (the approved use of this foreshore area).

These guidelines calculate a health risk based on ongoing access and exposure to the impacted area. This has historically been managed by fencing the area to prevent public access. It is important to note that the potential risk posed by the impacted materials to residents outside the fenced area has been analysed by an independent expert to be negligible.

Although the concentration of NORM on the site was analysed to be elevated above background levels, independent experts from ANSTO and the NSW EPA have determined that the concentration does not pose a risk to human health for the occupants of neighbouring properties. The NSW EPA Management Order does not include the NORM, however, the Government has committed to remediating the entire site.

14. What will happen to the Nelson Parade site once it is remediated?

Once fully remediated, the three, waterfront government-owned sites could be sold for residential use.