Tarago rail yards lead contamination

Questions and answers from the livestream event held on Thursday 10 December 2020.

Question1: Regardless of the threshold, has there been any airborne lead detected?

Answer provided:

Yes lead has been detected, but that is not uncommon. Lead is an element that is found in the natural environment and low levels of lead can be expected. That is what has been observed.

Is there anything unusual or unexpected that's been found in the air quality monitoring?

No, nothing unexpected has been found. Our pre-remediation monitoring supports the conclusion that there is nothing out of the ordinary in terms of air quality since the monitoring began.

Air monitoring will continue in order to:

1. establish a data set that's representative of seasonal variability and
2. assess air quality across the pre-remediation, remediation and post-remediation periods.

Question 2. How was it determined that the source of the lead contamination was not from the rail corridor in those 4 properties. My understanding from speaking with people in the mining industry is that the source of the lead can be traced back to where it was mined from.

Answer provided:

Yes the source of lead can be determined and there are lines of evidence that can help to determine where the lead came from.

We have identified that there is lead contamination from the mine that exists within the rail corridor. There is also lead from the mine that did not make its way to the rail corridor, which appears to have been spilled during transport from the mine to the rail corridor. This tells us that there is contamination from the mine that is in or from the corridor and there is also contamination from the mine not from the rail corridor.

It is important to remember that lead is a very common contaminant within the built environment and there are many other sources where it can come from. Things like lead based paint or old plumbing fittings and roofing can all contribute lead contamination.

The techniques we have used have helped us to determine the difference between contamination that has come from ore concentrate and contamination that has come from other common sources.