

Transport for NSW (**Transport**) has identified elevated levels of lead containing materials at the Tarago Former Station Master's Cottage and Woodlawn Siding (Rail Corridor).

We are committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of the community and our workers and will continue to work with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and other agencies to ensure any impacts on the community are addressed.

TARAGO FORMER STATION MASTER'S COTTAGE

Where is the Site located?

The Tarago Former Station Master's **Cottage (Site)** is located at 106 Goulburn Street, Tarago, NSW. The Site is on the Country Regional Network (**CRN**) and is adjacent to the operational Tarago Rail Corridor.

When was the contamination identified at the cottage and what is the contamination?

In February 2020, Transport identified elevated levels of lead in the soil and concentrations in dust samples inside the former Station Master's Cottage in Tarago, a privately owned residential property. The Transport Asset Holding Entity (**TAHE**) acquired the Site in April in 2021 and installed a fence to prevent access to the site.

What is the source of the contamination?

The lead in the rail corridor is related to a historical mining load-out facility that was used to load and unload lead ore concentrate from the Woodlawn Mine in Tarago.

The load-out facility operated from the mid- 1980s before being demolished between 1997 and 2005.

Is the Site declared by the EPA?

The Site was reported to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (**EPA**) in February 2022 and declared significantly contaminated under the *Contaminated Land Management Act 1997 (CLM Act)* in August 2022. Under the requirements of the Declaration, the Site is to be remediated to the National Environment Protection Measure (**NEPM**) Human Investigation Level (**HIL**) for low density residential land use (**HIL A**).

When did Transport last consult with the community in Tarago about the cottage?

Transport sought community feedback on potential uses of the former Station Master's Cottage in February 2023. This formed part of Transport's Future Land Use (**FLU**) Assessment to identify and evaluate potential land use options.

FUTURE LAND USE ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

Why did you do a Future Land Use Assessment for the cottage?

Due to the proximity to the operational rail corridor, the Site is not considered suitable for ongoing residential use. Transport conducted a future land use assessment to identify and assess potential uses for the Site and to determine the most suitable future use.

Why did Transport consult of potential future uses in February 2023?

The purpose of the consultation in February 2023 was to listen to the community and collect community ideas for potential futures use of the cottage.

What is a Remediation Options Assessment (ROA)?

An ROA is a process that takes place to identify suitable remediation strategies and will outline a preferred strategy for implementation.

Following the approval of the preferred strategy, a Remedial Action Plan (**RAP**) will be prepared which will provide a detailed plan to implement the preferred option.

What options have you considered for the cottage and which of the options are preferred by Transport?

The outcome of the assessment provided Transport with two potential options for the former Station Master's Cottage.

The assessment considered options in two categories:

1. Remediation Human Investigation Level (HIL) criteria.
2. Future use of the Site.

Options considered

1. Remediation criteria

Under the Declaration, Transport is required to remediate the Site to Human Investigation Level for low density residential use (**HIL A**), which is the most sensitive HIL criteria.

As the Site is not suitable for ongoing residential land use, Transport requested advice from the EPA on the possibility of reducing the remediation criteria. The EPA advised that as the land is zoned for residential use, a change in the zoning and permissible use would be required for the EPA to consider reducing the remediation criteria.

What options have you considered for the cottage and which of the options are preferred by Transport?

The remediation HIL criterion considered were:

- Remediate to Residential criteria.
- Remediate to Commercial/Industrial criteria.

Preferred HIL criteria option

Transport's preferred option for HIL criteria is to remediate to Residential criteria, which will also meet the expectations of the EPA. This option presents the least amount of risk and expense for meeting the remediation objectives.

Remediating to Commercial/Industrial will require a change of land use for the Site and will see additional fees and reports estimating \$130,000. It would also add around 18 months of approvals, before remediation could even commence.

Opting to change the land use of the Site to Commercial/Industrial also presents risks that Transport applications to change the land use zone will be rejected.

An application to change the land use zone may also come with special conditions that would affect how the Site could be used in the future. There is also a risk that the EPA may not reduce the remediation criteria after the land use zone change is approved.

2. Future land use

The assessment identified five potential land uses post remediation which were assessed against a weighted criterion. The options considered were:

- Divestment
- Community lease (e.g. Mens Shed; Community Garden)
- Commercial lease
- Recreational use, and
- Demolish the building assets and resume the land into the rail corridor.

Preferred land use option

To progress remediation of the Site as efficiently and cost effectively as possible, Transport's preferred option is to demolish the cottage and resume the land into the rail corridor. The remediation works will take around 18 months to complete.

This means that the Site can be remediated at the same time as Woodlawn Sidings (Rail Corridor). No changes to land use zoning would be needed to progress this option.

Why isn't changing the land use of the Site the preferred option?

Transport's priority is to remediate the Site as quickly and cost effectively as possible.

Changing the land use of the Site would see additional fees and reports estimating \$130,000. It will also add around 18 months of approvals, before remediation could commence.

Why isn't changing the land use of the Site the preferred option?

An application to change the land use zone may also come with special conditions that would affect how the Site could be used in the future.

This option also presents a risk of Transport's rezoning applications being rejected by Council and/or the Department of Planning and Environment.

There is also a risk that the EPA may not reduce the remediation criteria after the land use zone change is approved.

Can the cottage be kept even if can't be lived in and changing the land use isn't a feasible?

Transport is not able to sustain the ongoing maintenance costs of keeping the cottage as a vacant structure.

TARAGO WOODLAWN SIDING RAIL CORRIDOR AND STOCKPILE

What is happening with Veolia stockpile?

Transport has prepared a Remediation Action Plan (**RAP**) for the removal of the stockpile and are working through the approvals process to remove the stockpile. Transport will provide an update on the stockpile as the work progresses.

Will Transport continue with monitoring and inspections?

Transport will continue to commit to the Lead Management Plan and undertake monitoring and inspections. Monthly inspection reports are available on Transport's website. Air and surface water monitoring are continuing, and reports are available on the website.

Transport takes safety and risks seriously. The current monitoring results indicate that there is no risk of contamination migration from the sites to the community.

Which phase of the project is Transport working on currently working on?

The Remediation Options Assessment.

A Remediation Options Assessment (**ROA**) for both the former Station Master's Cottage (FSMC) and the Woodlawn Siding is in progress.

The objective of the ROA is to assess the appropriate and feasible options regarding the remediation strategy for both sites.

Has Transport prepared a Voluntary Management Proposal (VMP) for the Woodlawn Sidings Rail Corridor?

A Voluntary Management Proposal (VMP) was submitted to the EPA in May 2020. Transport sought an extension to stage four of the VMP due to delays in completing the preliminaries required to implement remediation, including planning permits and approvals, and procurement). This was due to delay in the procurement of a contractor to complete the required activities, and delays experienced by the appointed contractor in procuring technical specialists to assist with the completion of the activities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

How are you keeping the community safe?

The health and wellbeing of the community is our highest priority. We are working with the NSW EPA and our environmental consultants and will follow their advice on how best to manage the site. We have implemented a Lead Management Plan (LMP) to mitigate any potential risks to people and the environment including installing fencing and signage to restrict access to the Site. Routine inspections of the controls in the LMP are being conducted.

Can people safely live with lead?

Yes. There are practical ways to manage potential exposure to lead in and around the home, such as washing your hands regularly, using raised garden beds and covering exposed dirt with turf or mulch to prevent dust being carried by the wind. Below are some helpful resources:

- Information on living with lead is available at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/lead-exposure-children.aspx>
- For more information about managing lead in the environment, please see the EPA website: <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/household-building-and-renovation/lead-safety>

How likely is it that I or someone in my family have been exposed to lead? How can I be tested?

The likelihood that a person has been exposed is dependent on several factors including the level of lead in the immediate environment and activities that could increase exposure, the length of exposure, the person's age and general health. If you are concerned about possible exposure to lead, please see your local GP to request a blood test.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CONTAMINATION

Is it common to find contamination near railway lines?

It is not uncommon to find contamination in and around rail corridors. This is often because the railways are used to transport a large variety of industrial freight such as mined ores, minerals and other dangerous materials around NSW. Many rail lines across NSW have been in operation for more than 100 years. Over this time, spills, derailments and accidents have occurred throughout the network. Due to the industrial scale of the State rail transportation operations, it is common to find localised contamination where some areas have undergone limited remediation, but not to sufficient levels for today's standards. Historically, the health and safety standards for handling and transporting these materials were not as strict and regulated as they are today.

Is contamination an issue across all rail corridors and what is being done?

We have identified a number of sites across NSW requiring further investigation and are preparing a pro-active strategy to address this important issue in a methodical and prioritised manner. We are working with other key government agencies, including the EPA and NSW Health to address these issues.

What steps are involved in managing contaminated land?

The process of managing contaminated land varies from site to site but can be broadly divided into the following phases:

Phase 1 – Initial Assessment – **Completed**

Phase 2 – Risk Management – **Ongoing**

Phase 3 – Preliminary Site Investigation – **Completed**

Phase 4 – Detailed Site Investigation – **Completed for Siding (In progress for FSMC)**

Phase 5 – Remediation Planning – **In progress**

Phase 6 – Remediation & Validation, and

Phase 7 – Environmental Management Plan.

What is remediation?

Remediation is the management, containment, treatment or removal of contamination so that it no longer represents an actual or potential harm to human health or the environment. Remediation takes into account the current and intended future land use. The land use of the site is a key factor in determining the extent of remediation that is required. The land needs to be remediated to a level that will allow the land to be used for its intended purpose(s) and to manage risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

Who is responsible for the remediation process?

Transport will retain ultimate responsibility for implementing the Remediation Action Plan. We will engage specialist contractors to complete this work on our behalf.

What are the next steps for the project?

Transport will take the following steps to progress remediation:

- Complete the Remediation Options Assessment
- Community consultation on the Remediation Options Assessment
- Seek approval of preferred remediation strategy
- Develop the Remediation Action Plan (RAP) for the preferred strategy.
- Complete detailed design and engineering
- Obtain approvals required
- Remove the stockpile.

These works are expected to be completed by 30 June 2024.
Remediation works are planned to occur in 2024/25.