
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SEMINAR & WORKSHOP

MANAGING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTAMINATED LAND: GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILS

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, MELBOURNE

INTRODUCTION SUMMARY

- Over the past few years, councils have carried out soil investigations of land they own (as part of due diligence, to ensure the land is safe for the occupants)
- In cases where sensitive use sites (such as kindergartens and child care centres or other sites where children may be exposed) are being tested for soil contaminants, particular attention must be made to effective planning and communication.
- This seminar/workshop is based on a guideline document which is now released, titled "*Managing Risks Associated with Land Contamination-Guidance for Councils*"
- It provides the tools to assist councils in managing risks associated with land contamination. For example, developing a policy and procedure for effectively managing contaminated sites, particularly so for sites that are owned by council, but the information is also useful for situations where council may be involved with contaminated land issues associated with privately owned land. Today, Focus will be made on effective planning and communication. The afternoon session will focus on risk communication and engaging the community, and we have the pleasure of having Captain Alvin Chun of the United States EPA, lead this session.

- South Australia (South Australian Centre for Public Health) runs a well regarded 3-day course titled "*Risk Communication in Practice – engaging the public*" (led by Alvin Chun). Councils that require further training on risk communication are encouraged to attend this course. More details regarding this course can be found at www.NSCEH.com
- Today will not go into great depth of the various legislation and requirements associated with land contamination issues; rather, an overview will be provided on: the regulatory framework and policies, the assessment process; and how potentially contaminated land fits into the planning system. An overview will also be provided on the soil assessment requirements for children's services (Office for Children), and a council case story will be presented by the City of Yarra.
- The Environmental Health Unit of the Department offers advice to councils on communicating public health risks (identified as a result of a consultant's site investigation) relating to site contamination. In relation to children's service sites, this advice is offered via the Department's Regional Childrens Service Advisor (Office for Children).