

# Summary document

## Potentially Contaminated Land Assessment report – Horsham South Structure Plan

### Overview and purpose of assessment:

Meinhardt Infrastructure and Environment were engaged by Mesh Planning to complete a Potentially Contaminated Land Assessment as part of the Horsham South Structure Plan (HSSP).

The overall objective of the assessment was to inform the preparation of the HSSP (and associated planning scheme amendment to implement the HSSP), including:

- Determining the historical uses of the land to establish their Potential for Contamination (PFC);
- Assess potential impacts on the future development of the potential change areas in relation to existing environmental conditions;
- Provide a wide range of technical information to inform and assist Mesh Planning and Council in the scoping and preparation of the HSSP; and
- Based on the desktop assessment and the potential for contamination, provide recommendations for further assessment, if required.

The key focus areas for this assessment within the HSSP are those associated with the Horsham Transfer Station and the Burnt Creek Estate; the area to be covered in this assessment is referred to as the 'assessment area'.

### Key findings and recommendations of the assessment:

Key findings	Key recommendations
<p>There are potential site-specific sources of contamination of moderate to high risk associated with current/historic agricultural uses.</p> <p>The Horsham Transfer Station, the GMMWater Sewage Treatment Plan and the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange have the potential to impact on the amenity of the Structure Plan area and will require separation distances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete a Preliminary Risk Screen Assessment (PRSA) for sensitive land uses in areas with a 'high' or 'medium' potential for contamination (PFC).</li><li>• Undertake a preliminary site investigation (PSI) for less sensitive land uses in areas with a 'high' PFC.</li><li>• Document the consideration of potential for contamination to impact any planning proposal for less sensitive land uses in areas with a 'medium' PFC.</li><li>• No further investigation required for 'low' PFC areas, unless sources of contamination are uncovered during works.</li><li>• Consult EPA Publication 1518 for recommended separation distances.</li></ul>

## **Methodology – desktop assessment:**

The assessment comprised a high-level desktop investigation of the available current and historical information relating to potential environmental contamination, hydrological and geological features. No site inspections, intrusive investigation or sampling of environmental media was undertaken as part of this assessment.

Specifically, the desktop assessment was completed primarily in the form of a desk based Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI), including:

- Review of available geological, hydrological and environmental information (i.e., geological maps, historical aerial photography, planning provisions, etc.);
- Review of regulatory and planning guidelines and applicable Australian Standards;
- Review of any previous or currently publicly available reports regarding contamination, adverse amenity uses or geological/ hydrological conditions in or within the vicinity of the Assessment Area;
- Review of Australian Heritage Database specifically for historic uses related to the potential for contamination; and
- Other information that may be deemed appropriate.

Meinhardt compiled the information obtained during the desk-based assessment into their report, to delineate which parts of the Assessment Area are considered suitable (or otherwise) for the proposed development and whether further environmental assessment may be required.

## **Pathway for assessing Potential for Contamination:**

Planning Practice Note 30 – Potentially Contaminated Land provides guidance on how to identify potentially contaminated land, the appropriate level of assessment, and appropriate provisions in planning scheme amendments, and conditions on planning permits.

The tables below set out the recommended approach to assessing potentially contaminated land.

'Assessment levels' (A, B, C, D) can be derived using the 'Potential for Contamination' rating and proposed land uses:

Proposed Land-Use	Potential for Contamination		
	High	Medium	
<b>Uses defined in Ministerial Direction No. 1, the EAO, and clause 13.94-1S</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive uses: Residential use, childcare centre, kindergarten, pre-school centre, primary school, even if ancillary to another use</li> <li>Children's playground</li> <li>Secondary school</li> </ul>	New use, or buildings and works associated with a new use	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
	Buildings and works associated with an existing use	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Other land use</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open space</li> <li>Agriculture</li> <li>Retail or office</li> <li>Industry or warehouse</li> </ul>	New use, or buildings and works associated with a new or existing use	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

Each assessment level is tied to a specific action required under a planning scheme amendment or planning permit application process:

	Planning Scheme Amendment	Planning Permit Application
<b>A</b>	PRSA (Preliminary Risk Screen Assessment) or Audit option applies. Proceeding directly to an audit is recommended.	PRSA or Audit Option applies. Proceeding directly to an audit is recommended.
<b>B</b>	PRSA or Audit Option applies. PRSA to determine need for Audit is recommended.	PRSA or Audit Option applies. PRSA to determine need for Audit is recommended.
<b>C</b>	PSI <sup>4</sup> to inform need for Audit is recommended.	PSI to inform need for Audit is recommended.
<b>D</b>	Planning authority to document consideration of potential for contamination to impact proposal.	Responsible authority to document consideration of potential for contamination to impact proposal.

## **Potential for contamination assessment**

### Findings: Sites with Potential For Contamination

A Potential for Contamination (PFC) assessment was undertaken for each property. Based on the desktop review, many of the properties were assessed to contain land uses or activities that have the potential to lead to contamination; these land uses and activities include:

- Earthworks / stockpiling / importation and use of possibly uncontrolled fill material;
- Use of land as a Transfer Station;
- Structures / buildings with unknown use;
- Storage and maintenance of heavy machinery associated with farming / agricultural practices;
- Use of agricultural sprays and irrigation of crops;
- Storage and use of chemicals / fuel / oil, chemical mixing (including fuel merchant, automotive repairs, freight transport depot);
- Potential asbestos containing materials (ACM) in structures or buildings, especially those constructed before 1980 when the domestic use of ACM was phased out. These structures/buildings may still be present at the property, or were demolished and/or removed;
- Livestock grazing – though stated in Section 4, non-intensive grazing or pasturing of noncarnivorous animals is not considered to contribute to significant potential for the presence of contamination;
- Former use of land as a sewerage treatment plant, with possible biosolids dispersal or treated wastewater application to land (as well as surrounding properties as adjacent contaminating activities are possible); and
- Former use of adjacent land as a landfill / disposal of waste material.

### Findings: Amenity impacts

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) provides recommended separation distances between industrial land uses that emit odour or dust, and sensitive land uses. This seeks to ensure that human health and amenity is protected, existing industry is protected from encroaching sensitive uses, and prevents land adjacent to industry from being underutilized.

The following facilities may impact on the amenity of the Assessment Area if the land use of these areas were to transition to sensitive use:

- The Horsham Transfer Station;
- The GWMWater sewage treatment plant; and
- The Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange.

The EPA recommends separation distances for these land uses (see table to the right).

Facility	Recommended Separation Distance (m)
Horsham Transfer Station	250
GWMWater sewage treatment plant	1,400*
Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange	500

# Updated EPA guidelines

Updated guidelines for separation distances and landfill buffers

October 2024

Since the preparation of the Potentially Contaminated Land Assessment report, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) completed a review of Victoria's separation distance guidelines to ensure that it reflected current practices, and [released the following guidelines in August 2024](#).

These guidelines help make planning decisions about land use around activities with potential offsite impacts, and they include updated recommended separation distances for some land uses.

- [Separation distance guidelines](#) (provides advice on recommended separation distances between industrial land uses that emit odour and/or dust, and sensitive land uses); and
- [Landfill buffer guidelines](#) (provides all relevant information about buffers for landfills).

Recommended separation distances and buffers depend on the characteristics of the particular land use and are often dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Ministerial Direction 19 ('Amendments that may result in impacts on the environment, amenity and human health') requires planning authorities to seek early advice from EPA when undertaking strategic planning processes and preparing planning scheme amendments that may significantly impact Victoria's environment, amenity or human health due to pollution and waste.

Council will continue to engage with the EPA and other parties as relevant to determine the required separation distances and buffers for specific land uses within the structure plan.