

19. CONTAMINATED SITES

19.1 Explanation

“Contaminated Sites” refers to sites that are known to be or are suspected of being contaminated by hazardous substances. These include those sites which may contain unexploded ordnance.

19.2 Key Issues

The key issues dictating the planning strategy relating to sites which may be contaminated or which have been positively identified as contaminated include:

- the increasing concern in the community and within government regarding the public health risks associated with the redevelopment of land formerly used for military firing ranges, waste disposal and other industrial, commercial or agricultural purposes and for the detrimental effects of such contamination on the environment;
- the statutory provisions relating to sites which require reporting on the level and character of contamination by potentially hazardous chemicals and wastes prior to development activity;
- the procedures which have been developed for the identification of contaminants, the development of site management plans and remediation or other necessary actions;
- there is a potential for pyrite in soils (acid sulphate soils) in swampy areas to cause serious environmental problems if the saturated soils are excavated or drained because oxidation of the pyrite results in the formation of acidic leachate.

19.3 Contaminated Sites Strategy

The following elements outline the planning strategy to be employed in the intended development or rehabilitation of a contaminated site.

19.3.1 The Contaminated Sites Strategy involves the development and implementation of adequate procedures to identify as early as possible in the development assessment process, whether an application is over a potentially contaminated site. Once identified, there are Planning Scheme and legislated procedures for the assessment and resolution of the issue.

19.3.2 An area which has been identified as potentially affected by unexploded ordnance and which is subject to legislated procedures is shown on maps held by Council.

19.4 Objectives & Implementation Measures

19.4.1 To develop appropriate procedures for the early detection of possible contaminated sites.

Statutory provisions have been developed for the identification of contamination and the management and remediation of a site. Council can aid the development of potentially contaminated sites by applying procedures which secure early discovery of a contaminated site.

Implementation

1. The Environmental Protection Act specifies the relative provisions for potentially contaminated sites. In the event that contamination is determined or suspected the Director of the Chemical Hazards and Emergency Unit will be advised and the relevant legislative provisions will apply.
2. With respect to unexploded ordnance, areas suspected of being contaminated have been identified. These areas have been derived from information provided by the Australian Department of Defence. Land within this area is subject to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act.
3. Council has included provisions in the Planning Scheme to ensure sites with a high probability of being contaminated, or containing contaminated materials, will be assessed at a level which will allow for referral of applications to the relevant State Agency.
4. Council has included provisions in the Planning Scheme to require higher levels of assessment in areas which are likely to contain actual acid sulfate soils. Where such soils are found to exist, development applications will be required to be supported by an approved environmental management plan prepared by a suitably qualified person. Because of the potential for adverse ecological impacts from exposure of acid sulfate soils, Council will generally prefer they are not disturbed as part of development.