

Community Information

CONTAMINATION OF LAND AND GROUNDWATER AT FORMER 7-ELEVEN SERVICE STATION, 476-482 NEPEAN HIGHWAY, CHELSEA

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BACKGROUND

In late 1999, it was discovered that petrol was leaking from underground storage tanks at the former 7-Eleven service station at 476-482 Nepean Highway, Chelsea and local groundwater had been contaminated

The contamination extended from the former 7-Eleven site towards Port Phillip Bay, along Wimborne Avenue. Groundwater under properties in Wimborne Avenue is contaminated.

A planning permit exists to develop the former 7-Eleven site for residential purposes. This permit, issued by the City of Kingston, contains a range of conditions including the need for an environmental audit to be undertaken prior to any development commencing.

As the owners of the site, 7-Eleven are responsible for the clean up of the site itself, and also the groundwater that is contaminated off-site.

WHO IS DOING WHAT?

An environmental auditor is an independent expert appointed under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and engaged by the site owner to determine the level of contamination of a site and its suitability for use.

An environmental audit is soon to be completed for the 7-Eleven site. In this the auditor will form an opinion as to whether the site is suitable for

residential development. The auditor has reviewed the clean up of any contaminated soil and/or groundwater and will ensure the site's suitability for approved land uses.

EPA Victoria will ensure that the environmental auditor and the site owner, 7-Eleven, meet their obligations. EPA will also approve the level of clean up of groundwater proposed.

During the past 5 years, groundwater clean up and monitoring work has been undertaken by OTEK. OTEK are environmental consultants engaged by 7-Eleven. OTEK have had substantial contact with residents in Wimborne Avenue on behalf of 7-Eleven.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Clean up of the site and local groundwater included:

- removal of the underground storage tanks and associated pipe work from the site (the source of the contamination);
- removal of contaminated soil from the site; and
- groundwater clean up using two different techniques. In both cases contaminated groundwater has been pumped out of the ground, and treated.

Other activities being undertaken include:

- groundwater monitoring to observe the movement and concentration of contamination

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- as it changes over time. The monitoring also seeks to identify whether the contamination is being broken down naturally by bacteria in the groundwater;
- carbon filters, are installed on privately owned groundwater bores impacted by the groundwater contamination. The carbon filters are designed to remove traces of petrol that may be present in water being used from these bores for garden watering, They are maintained and replaced by OTEK.

WHAT NEXT?

The independent environmental auditor has reviewed the work undertaken by 7-Eleven and assessed that the groundwater has been cleaned up sufficiently and no further remediation is required.

The auditor found the contamination in the groundwater no longer poses a risk to residents or to the environment, although groundwater in some areas still carries a petroleum odour. Any remaining groundwater contamination is expected to continue to decrease over time as bacteria in the groundwater break it down naturally. This may take many years.

EPA is currently considering the view from the auditor that groundwater has been cleaned-up sufficiently. Once EPA is satisfied in this respect, EPA will approve the completion of the environmental audit for the former 7-Eleven site.

This means that the site will be allowed to be redeveloped for residential purposes.

ONGOING MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE

7-Eleven has made the following commitments to the community and EPA. 7-Eleven will:

- monitor the groundwater for at least five years, both in private bores in Wimborne Avenue and in other bores in the local area;
- continue to replace carbon filters on private bores as required;
- report monitoring results twice yearly to those residents with private bores;
- report monitoring results and information about trends in the changes in the contamination, to EPA Victoria and the environmental auditor, yearly; and
- provide yearly updates to residents in Wimborne Avenue.

If it is agreed that the site has been cleaned sufficiently, EPA will require 7-Eleven and/or future owners of the former service station site to meet their obligations to the community and to the environment.

WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I NEED FURTHER INFORMATION?

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