

While contamination is usually thought to be associated with heavy industry such as gasworks, fuel storage sites and landfills, the urban-sprawl, coupled with the pervasive nature of contaminants means contaminated land is being encountered with increasing frequency



**Contaminated
land and the
NSW planning
process**

**Easterly Point
Environmental**

Contaminated land specialists



Understanding the contaminated land process

Planners are often thrown into the world of contaminated land when they are working with a site that is known to be, or is potentially contaminated.

An environmental site assessment report is often required as part of the development application process and is used by council to determine if the site is suitable for the proposed land use, or if remediation is required.

The planning and development process aims to ensure that land is not used for an activity that is inappropriate because of the presence of contamination, and incorporates mechanisms to ensure that:

- planning authorities consider contamination issues when they are making rezoning and development decisions;
- local councils provide information about land contamination on planning certificates that they issue under section 10.7 of the EP&A Act; and
- land remediation is facilitated and controlled through SEPP 55.

During the development application process, the Conditions of Consent will often include requirements for a specific contaminated land assessment and/or site auditor. In NSW, the site assessment and site audit process includes the following:

1. The contaminated land consultant designs and implements the environmental site investigation; and
2. The site auditor independently reviews the works undertaken to ensure they comply with current regulations, standards and guidelines and the site has been appropriately assessed, remediated and validated to the proposed land use.



Easterly Point have recently helped progress a high-profile site through the local development process after elevated radiation was identified on a working construction site, for which our client had this to say:

"If every other consulting firm that I worked with had the same professional, prompt and logical outcome as Easterly Point, the construction industry would be a less stressful and more enjoyable place. Well done to you and your team".

The assessment and management of contaminated land

The assessment and management of contaminated land generally follows a step wise process of increasingly detailed investigations, remedial actions and subsequent validation, potentially including ongoing maintenance and monitoring.

Contaminated land consultants are generally engaged to assess land to determine the level of contamination, if any, and the associated works required to make the site suitable for the existing or proposed land use.

Just as individual specialists are engaged to prepare a stormwater plan, heritage impact statement or species impact statement, the same level of expertise is recommended when a contaminated land assessment is required.

If not appropriately characterised and managed, contaminated sites can result in large development delays and cost overruns. However, by choosing an experienced and appropriately qualified consultant, the process can be conducted alongside the development and completed smoothly and successfully.

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