

Cairnlea Site Remediation – Frequently Asked Questions

December 2021

Cairnlea was home to the former Albion Explosives Factory operated by the Commonwealth Department of Defence. The factory produced a wide range of explosives and raw materials for ammunition from the early 1940s until the 1980s.

The Cairnlea Project site was previously remediated and certified for commercial use, and further remediation work will be required in early 2022 to prepare the site for residential and recreational uses. An Environmental Auditor accredited by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) will oversee the remediation of the area in accordance with strict regulations on environmental and health and safety requirements.

We have prepared FAQs to help answer common questions about remediation.

<p>Why is remediation required on this site?</p>	<p>The area was a former Department of Defence site and home to the former Commonwealth Albion Explosives Factory. The contaminants in the soil relate to the site’s history of explosives manufacturing and include metals, sulphate, nitrogen compounds and nitroaromatic compounds.</p> <p>At high concentrations, the contaminants can affect the growth of some plant species, soil organisms and have varied effects on people. Remediation ensures the site does not pose an unacceptable human health and environmental risk for the proposed land use.</p>
<p>Is the area safe?</p>	<p>Yes. As the suburb of Cairnlea has been progressively developed (from the late 1990s) all the areas where contaminated soil was present were safely remediated to a high standard for the proposed land use. This included previous remediation of this site in 2001 to enable commercial use.</p>
<p>If the site has been remediated before why is it being done again?</p>	<p>In the original Cairnlea Master Plan developed in the 1990s this final stage of development was originally planned to be a business precinct.</p> <p>The extent of remediation required changes depending on how the land is to be used. A higher standard of remediation (and lower levels of remaining contamination) is required for residential land uses versus commercial land uses.</p> <p>As we are now planning to develop the site for residential uses, further remediation is required to achieve the required EPA standards for residential land use.</p>

<p>What will remediation look like?</p>	<p>Site assessments have been undertaken to determine the extent of required remediation works, with these remediation works to be conducted in 2022. Remediation activities on site may include excavation of selected areas of soil and either removal of soil from site in covered trucks, or stockpiling of soil on site for treatment such as bioremediation of contamination. Planning controls will determine safe land uses for an area based on the remaining contamination levels in the soil.</p> <p>Prior to the remediation work commencing, full details of the remediation work to be undertaken, including any required asbestos removal and details of how it will be done safely will be provided to the community.</p> <p>Similar remediation processes of offsite disposal to landfill and bioremediation are used in Melbourne on a regular basis to remediate sites for a range of final uses.</p>
<p>How can I be sure the site assessments and remediation are done properly?</p>	<p>The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria is Victoria’s environmental regulator. They are responsible for ensuring contaminated soil remediation is undertaken in accordance with the strict regulations of the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i>.</p> <p>An important part of the EPA’s approach to managing contaminated land in Victoria is the appointment of Environmental Auditors to perform Environmental Audits. An environmental auditor must undertake an independent review of the condition of the site and form an opinion regarding its suitability for use</p> <p>The purpose of an environmental audit is to undertake a complete environmental assessment of the land to determine its suitability for sensitive uses, including residential, and determine any associated management measures required to ensure the site remains safe for those uses.</p> <p>An environmental auditor’s primary duty of care is to the people and environment within Victoria. An environmental auditor’s conduct is strictly regulated by the EPA, and the EPA may impose significant penalties and restrictions on an environmental auditor, including loss of accreditation, if an auditor commits a breach of EPA requirements.</p>

	A completed environmental audit will outline any construction and ongoing environmental management requirements for contamination (where required), so that any risks to human health and the environment during construction and in the future are appropriately managed.
What is the EPA's role in assessing the suitability of the site for residential use?	The site assessment for the proposed uses under Planning Scheme Amendment C222 is overseen and signed off by an accredited Environmental Auditor. The EPA's role is to assure the quality of the audit process which involves thorough checks of the auditor's abilities and qualifications as well as technical review of selected audit reports.
Will there be a requirement to undertake environmental management post remediation, e.g. monitoring of contaminants or barriers put in place where there is any residual contamination?	The Environmental Audit will set out the ongoing management conditions related to any residual contamination post-remediation and post-development. These requirements must be implemented as a condition of the statutory Environmental Audit for that area.
If I buy a house in this area can I grow vegetables and dig in my garden?	Yes, you can. The remediation plan is developed so residents can safely use the land for common activities like growing vegetables, digging a garden, or installing a pool.
I heard there was a former tailings pond on the eastern corner of Ballarat Road & Cairnlea Drive, is this true?	There was not a tailings pond on this site. There was a concrete lined settling pond associated with the former water treatment plant. This has been demolished, assessed, remediated and validated. The Environmental Audit (38251-33) was completed confirming the area is suitable for commercial and industrial use. The audit report shows details of how this area was remediated and where samples were collected and tested.
Can I read the Environmental Audit Reports produced for Cairnlea?	Yes. The EPA publishes Audit Reports on their website . If you are interested there is a significant amount of detail available within the existing Audit Reports and supporting documents outlining the current contamination status of the site prior to the further assessment,

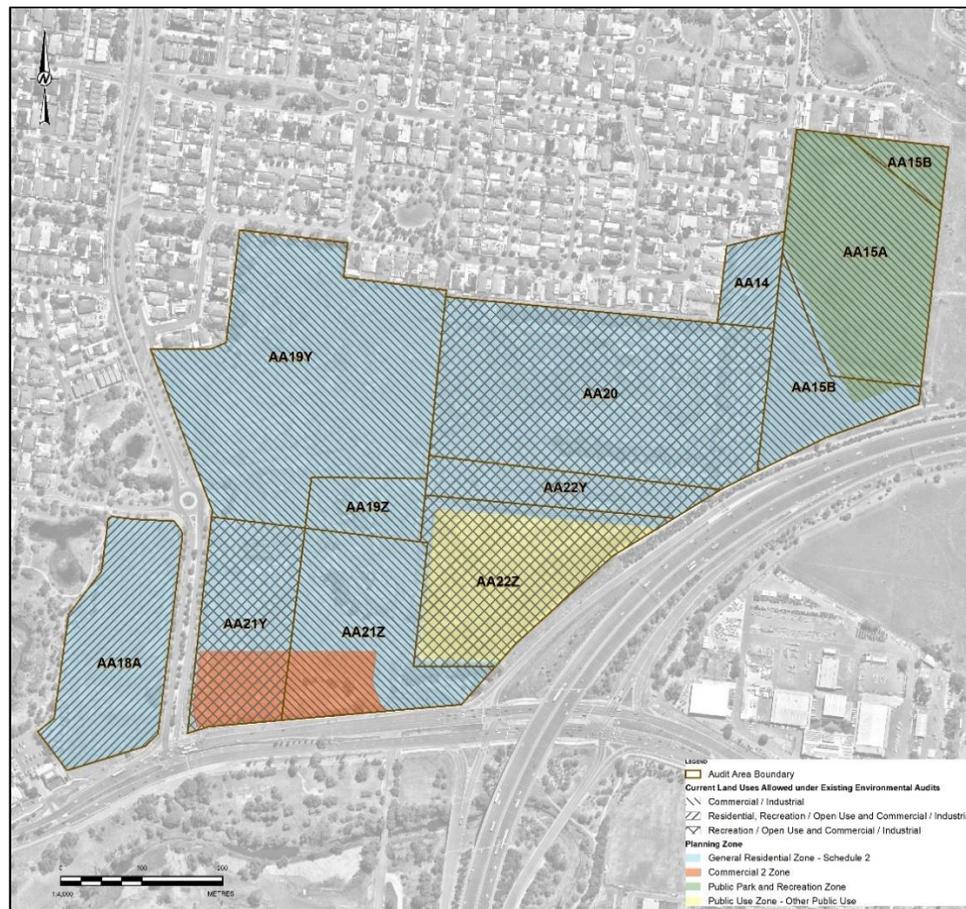
remediation and validation works planned for 2022 to support the future use. They include information on:

- Contaminant types.
- Areas and depths of contaminants.
- Post remediation sampling results.
- Ongoing monitoring and management requirements.

For the reports relevant to the final stage of Cairnlea, search under CARMS numbers:

- 38251-10 (Area 14)
- 38251-13 (Area 19Z)
- 38251-21 (Area 20)
- 38251-22 (Area 21Z)
- 38251-23 (Area 22Y and 22Z)
- 38251-32 (Area 19Y)
- 38251-33 (Area 21Y)
- 38251-37 (Area 18A)
- 38251-39 (Area Reid Street (Area 15A/B))

A plan of the relevant areas is provided below.



If you have further questions on the environmental audit process or the completed audits at the Cairnlea site, you contact the EPA on 1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC) or contact@epa.vic.gov.au.