

19 November 2020

Information for residents – concerns about contamination at Stokes Point / Te Onewa Pa Reserve

Following on from my letter dated 2 October, I am writing to update you about concerns raised with Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) relating to soil contamination at Stokes Point / Te Onewa Pa Reserve. You are receiving this letter because you live in close proximity to the Reserve and may have an interest in this matter.

As mentioned in my previous correspondence, Waka Kotahi is continuing to work collaboratively with Auckland Council as the regulator, on matters related to soil contamination.

Bridge maintenance activities

Waka Kotahi most recently renewed our consents for bridge maintenance activities in 2015. As part of the conditions of the consents, maintenance works undertaken on the bridge are required to comply with an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) approved by Auckland Council.

Annual Reports are provided to Council, summarising monitoring data, and showing compliance with the discharge thresholds in the consent and mitigation. The annual reports for each year (2015 to 2019) show that all bridge maintenance works have been undertaken in compliance with the consent conditions and the requirements of the approved EMP.

The measured discharges of garnet particulates (used in sandblasting) and discharges of paint and zinc from paint removal and application have been consistently below the thresholds permitted. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the measures adopted by Waka Kotahi since 2011 to reduce the discharge of abrasive and paint particulates to the harbour and land during bridge maintenance activities. We have reduced our re-painting activities through a more focused risk-based approach, and containment where those activities occur over land (including Stokes Point).

Waka Kotahi's records show that lead-based paints were not used on exterior surfaces of the Auckland Harbour Bridge structure at Stokes Point, and as such it is unlikely that bridge maintenance activities are a meaningful source of lead contamination at the reserve.

Next steps

While we are confident that our current bridge maintenance activities are fully compliant with consent conditions and the approved EMP, we know there have been concerns raised relating to the potential contribution of historic bridge maintenance activities to soil contamination in the Stokes Point area.

Waka Kotahi is commissioning an external review to ensure that potential soil contamination from bridge maintenance activities has been properly assessed from a public health perspective in the Stokes Point Reserve. The first stage of the review will be completed, and the findings made available to Auckland Council as the public regulator of soil contamination in the region.

In the interest of transparency, we've enclosed a copy of the terms of reference of this review.

If you have queries about this letter, you can contact us at stokespoint@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

Steve Mutton

Director Regional Relationships
Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency

**Terms of Reference
External Review Panel
Soil Contamination Stokes Point
November 2020**

A. Review and assess existing information on soil contamination at Stokes Point, Auckland potentially arising from bridge maintenance activities. This shall include:

1. Reports summarising contaminated land investigations and health-risk assessments (soil contamination) at the southern (Erin's Point) and northern (Stokes Point) landings of the Auckland Harbour Bridge.
2. Conceptual model¹ for soil contamination arising from Auckland Harbour Bridge maintenance activities at Stokes Point.
3. Relevant Auckland Harbour Bridge maintenance records, and environmental reports.
4. Assessments and other relevant supporting information related to applications for statutory approvals for Auckland Harbour Bridge maintenance activities.
5. Records related to the use of paint/coating systems on the Auckland Harbour Bridge.
6. Interviews with key Auckland Harbour Bridge maintenance contractor personnel and Waka Kotahi staff, and walkover of public land, and land within the Auckland Harbour Bridge designation at Stokes Point.
7. Consideration of other relevant information held by Waka Kotahi or in the public domain.

B. Jointly report on the likelihood that any soil contamination at Stokes Point arising from bridge maintenance activities, may have caused unacceptable health risk at nearby residential properties. This report should specifically address the following:

1. The likely sources of individual soil contaminants at Stokes Point.
2. The conceptual model (contaminant sources, exposure pathways and receptors) for potential soil contamination at residential properties arising from Auckland Harbour Bridge maintenance activities.
3. Whether it is more likely than not that any soil contamination at Stokes Point, arising from bridge maintenance activities, has caused unacceptable health risk at nearby residential properties.
4. Whether a new health risk assessment or update to the existing health risk assessment should be undertaken based on existing data.

C. Recommend what further action, if any, should be undertaken by Waka Kotahi to confirm whether any contamination at Stokes Point arising from bridge maintenance activities, may cause unacceptable health risk at nearby residential properties.

¹ A system diagram identifying contaminant sources, routes of exposure (pathways), and what receptors are affected by contaminants moving along those pathways.

E. The panel shall undertake their duties in general accordance with the principles of Environment Court code of conduct for expert witnesses.

See - <http://www.justice.govt.nz/courts/environment-court/legislation-and-resources/practice-notes/expert-witness.html>

F. The panel will report its findings in Draft to Waka Kotahi, together with any questions or information requests, before finalising its report