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SOIL CLEAN UP TECHNOLOGY BREAKS NEW GROUND

A contaminated site in the Melbourne suburb of Springvale has been successfully cleaned up using ground-breaking technology, potentially changing the way contaminated soil is treated in the future.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings said a process called ‘thermal desorption’ was used to treat the soil on the Springvale site providing a new option for landowners and avoiding sending contaminated soil to landfill.

“We are confident we now have a viable, safe and cost-effective method for treating polluted soil based on soil sample results provided to EPA Victoria,” Mr Jennings said.

“This is the first time the technology has been used in Australia to treat soil contaminated with PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls).

“Independent monitoring conducted throughout the three month operation and testing of on-site soil at the completion of the process showed the technology was effective in treating PCBs with no reports of any disruption to neighbours.”

The on-site treatment involves heating the contaminated soil in a two-step process until the contaminants are neutralised. The by-products are clean soil, carbon dioxide and water. The treated soil can then be safely reused as clean fill.

“The technology meets the stringent environmental and safety standards applied by EPA Victoria with oversight provided by an independent environmental auditor,” Mr Jennings said.

“It is great to see innovative and cost-effective solutions being delivered by Australian industry.

“Industry is making great progress in reducing waste by increasing recycling and reuse and ultimately putting less hazardous waste into landfills.”

The contaminated soil at the Springvale site was cleaned by Australian company Innova Soil Technology, using its Direct Heated, Fast Quenched, Thermal Desorption (DFTD) process.

Innova managing director Dr John Lucas said Innova has shown that the DFTD system is efficient and reliable in terms of performance, safety, emissions monitoring and control.

“The treated material has passed all tests and is suitable for beneficial re-use, and the only by-products are carbon dioxide and water,” Dr Lucas said.

“The technology opens up previously unusable land and provides a cost advantage to business by treating the contaminated soil at half the price of taking it to landfill,” he said.