

Media Release



THE ANSWER TO MELBOURNE'S CONTAMINATED SITES?

The most technologically advanced soil decontamination project in Australia – and only the second clean up of its kind in the world has been successfully completed.

The unique thermal desorption technology – approved by the NSW and VIC EPA - could be used extensively to clean contaminated chemical, manufacturing and petroleum sites around Melbourne.

It could also be a bonanza for the federal and state governments, councils, companies and authorities managing polluted sites across Australia.

Development of the technology supports the Victorian Government policy to remediate contaminated soil rather than send it to landfill.

The process is also cheaper and causes minimal disruption to neighbouring properties.

At a cost of \$6 million more than 20,000 tonnes of contaminated soil has been treated on the eight hectare Princes Highway site of Harvey Norman's largest home maker centre in Australia.

The contaminated soil was cleaned and neutralised by the Newcastle based Australian company Innova Soil Technology using its Direct Heated, Fast Quenched, Thermal Desorption (DFTD) process. A process that was developed in conjunction with Newcastle University

The process cleans the soil of hydrocarbon contaminants (Polychlorinated Biphenyl or PCB) by heating the soil in a rotary dryer to almost 500 degrees until the contaminants are vaporised and reduced to an "undetectable" level.

The evaporated contaminants are then heated to almost 1000 degrees and converted to harmless carbon dioxide, water and a small portion of acid gas gas, which is then neutralised.

The decontamination has been undertaken on a 24x7 basis cleansing an average of 15 tonnes of soil an hour since the plant was established on site in the mid year.

With completion of the decontamination in February this year the site will be removed from the Victorian EPA Priority Site Register enabling the \$300 million construction of the Harvey Norman store to commence.

Mr. Bruce Dawson, EPA executive director regional services said that on-site treatment means sending less contaminated soil to landfill.

He said independent monitoring conducted throughout the three-month remediation process verified the removal of contaminants while conforming to all emission limits.

“Tests so far on more than 250 samples of processed soil report levels of PCB below the limits of detection”, he said

Dr John Lucas, managing director of Innova, said the company’s equipment was designed to be moved to locations like Springvale, so remediation could take place on site.

”The success of the project shows the Innova system could be of benefit to the owners of many contaminated sites across the state.

“Innova Soil Technology has welcomed the close scrutiny of the EPA and other Victorian authorities over the Springvale remediation, and we are confident we’ve demonstrated the effectiveness of the technology and its potential benefit for Victoria,” he said.

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