

Questions and Answers - Asbestos in Molonglo Valley

Updated 15 April 2011

You may have seen details in the media during December 2010 and in recent days about the discovery of asbestos-contaminated material on the site of the North Weston Pond construction project.

The Land Development Agency (LDA) appreciates the concerns that many purchasers may have on the issue of contamination. The LDA would like to confirm that this issue does not affect land sold or currently under development by the LDA in Wright or Coombs.

Some of the media reports may have created some confusion. To help address any concerns you may have, we would like to provide the following clarification on this matter.

- The contaminated material within the area of the North Weston Pond is NOT located within the residential areas of Wright and Coombs;
- Neither ACT Health nor the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) have requested that the works on the North Weston Pond project be suspended due to any health or public safety concerns.
- Work on the North Weston Pond project was temporarily suspended by Department of Territory and Municipal Services, which is responsible for the delivery of the pond project, to enable the government to investigate the best and most cost effective redesign of the pond to meet environmental objectives and deal with the contaminated material.
- Subsequently engineering studies have established the amount of asbestos-contaminated material on the site and work is underway to remove the material and complete the ponds and parkland.
- The removal of the contaminated soil has been carried out under a Remediation Action Plan overseen by the EPU.
- The design of the pond has also been modified from its original size of 280 mega litres into two ponds of a total 260 mega litres connected by 30 hectares of parkland (see images below); and
- There are no impacts on the design or delivery timeframe for the LDA suburbs of Wright and Coombs.

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Exclusive Selling Agents:



Colliers International (ACT) Pty Ltd
ABN 90 008 480 475
Ground Floor
21-23 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2600

GPO Box 449
Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone 1800 123 230
Fax +61 2 6257 2937



NORTH WESTON POND LOCALITY - NOV 2009

Original Design - North Weston Pond



NORTH WESTON POND LOCALITY - MAR 2011

Revised Design - North Weston Pond

Q. I am confused, what should I do?

You do not need to do anything. The LDA and Colliers International will remain in contact with purchasers of land in Wright and Coombs and inform you of any issues.

The LDA will be updating the Molonglo Valley website with new information as it becomes available – www.molonglovalley.com.au

Should you have any specific concerns please call our appointed Sales Agent for Wright, Shane Radnell at Colliers International on 1800 123 230 or email sales@molonglovalley.com.au

Q. Did the LDA do enough checking or investigations prior to release of Wright?

A. Prior to the 2003 bushfires, the area of Wright was a pine plantation. It is most unlikely, therefore, that this area was used to dispose of builders' rubble. However, an environmental assessment was undertaken to determine whether or not Wright and Coombs were suitable for residential development. The Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) independently considered this investigation and endorsed for residential development all land sold or currently under development by the LDA in Wright and Coombs.

Q. Did the LDA know that there was contamination in the area of the North Weston Pond?

A. Yes. Information regarding contamination in the North Weston Pond area is on the public record and was reported in the media and on websites in 2009. However, the North Weston Pond is well away from the suburb of Wright. None of the contaminated material was found within Wright and Coombs.

It is important to note that work on construction of the North Weston Pond was suspended in December 2010 because of concern about the cost of the project and not because of a contamination issue.

Q. Is this a health issue for the people who have purchased in Wright?

A. No. The asbestos that has been found is being treated in strict accordance with the relevant Occupational Health and Safety; and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) requirements, so it does not pose any public health risk.

Q. How far is the contamination away from the blocks released in Wright?

A. The contamination is about 700 metres away from the closest block in Wright. Refer to the map at the end of this document.

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Q. How can I be sure that the LDA has taken all steps to meet its due diligence responsibilities?

A. The LDA has undertaken stringent due diligence procedures to satisfy its responsibilities associated with the sale of the land, and in order to obtain support from the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU).

Additionally, all major construction projects such as Wright and Coombs typically implement what is known as an 'unanticipated discovery plan'. This plan establishes procedures for dealing with the discovery of items such as heritage artifacts or contaminated material. It is not unusual when undertaking construction projects of the large scale as Wright and Coombs that 'unanticipated' items are found.

Q. I would like to cancel my land contract with the LDA. Is this an option and am I entitled to compensation?

A. The LDA sales contract that purchasers have signed includes provisions for purchaser rescissions where significant changes to the property occur. In this instance the asbestos management under the proposed North Weston Pond does not affect the property and is in fact, located well outside the suburb of Wright. On that basis the location of asbestos does not give an automatic right to rescission.

Q. Will the contamination issue affect the timings of construction or settlement on the land sold in Wright?

A. The North Weston Pond is not required to treat storm water runoff from Wright and Coombs. As such, any delays to the North Weston Pond project will not impact on the timings or construction or settlement for your block.

Q. Will the contamination affect future releases in Wright and Coombs?

A. No. Apart from wet weather, there have been no impacts on the design or delivery timeframe for the LDA suburbs of Wright and Coombs. Notwithstanding, contract settlements are still scheduled to occur within the date ranges included in the sales contracts. The LDA will continue to release land in accordance with the *ACT Government's Indicative Land Release Program*.

In fact the registrations closed on 21 March 2011 for 115 blocks as part of Wright Stage 2 and the Estate Management Plan for Coombs has now been submitted and the number of single residential blocks that will be available in Coombs Stage 1 later this year has been confirmed at 149.

Q. Where do I find out more information?

A. The LDA will be updating the Molonglo Valley website with new information as it becomes available – www.molonglovalley.com.au

Please call our appointed Sales Agent for Wright, Shane Radnell at Colliers International on 1800 123 230 or email sales@molonglovalley.com.au

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