



MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

In reply please quote: MOF17348, MOF16881, MOF1718

Mr Geoff Brown
ADI Residents' Action Group
PO Box 4134
WERRINGTON NSW 2747

10 JUN 2005

Dear Mr Brown

I refer to your email of 16 March 2005, and your letters to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Bob Debus MP, of 2 February and 2 March, concerning the size of the proposed St Marys Regional Park and asbestos and drainage basins at the site. Please accept this response on behalf of both the Minister and myself. I apologise for the delay.

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has provided me with the following advice on these issues.

Size of the proposed Regional Park

DEC advises that the proposed Regional Park at St Marys is 848 hectares in size, while the Residual RNE lands are approximately 47 hectares in size. Following our meeting I had DEC officers undertake an additional assessment of the Residual RNE lands and DEC is now considering the inclusion of at least 30 additional hectares to the proposed Regional Park. This option would increase the size of the park to 878 hectares.

DEC further advises that regardless of final land tenure the remaining Residual RNE land must be managed to protect its listed values as set out in the St Marys Development Agreement (2002). Whatever Residual RNE land is not included in the proposed Regional Park, the St Marys Development Agreement (2002) requires the Landowner to protect the listed values of the Residual RNE land in accordance with a plan of management.

Asbestos contamination

I understand that, through its historical searches, ADI identified certain areas within the larger St Marys site as being contaminated (for example areas where landfills, munition and fuel storage areas, bunker areas, and buildings and laboratories had been located). These areas were assessed and remediated by the Commonwealth between 1993 and 1997.

The remediation included removal of surface infrastructure, decommissioning and demolition of buildings and off-site disposal of wastes such as contaminated soils from the landfills. Geophysical surveys were also undertaken to locate metallic items (for example, munitions) which I understand were then excavated, identified and disposed of appropriately.

I am also advised by DEC that at the completion of the remediation in 1997 stockpiles of materials - mainly building waste and some remediated soil - remained in some areas of the site. (Building waste from structures built between 1945 and the mid-1970s commonly includes asbestos from, for example, roofs, walls and pipes.) ADI signalled its intent to reuse some of this material in the site redevelopment for purposes such as filling and contouring and road base but only after undertaking appropriate asbestos surveys of the material.

State Environmental Planning Policy 55 – Remediation of Land and the Managing Land Contamination: Planning Guidelines makes it clear that planning authorities should consider land contamination to ensure sites are suitable for their intended use. In this regard I understand that DEC has briefed Blacktown Council on the environmental history of the site and that Council has advised that it is aware of the remediation issues and has plans in place to deal with them. Council has also advised that a site auditor has signed off on the suitability of the remediated sectors for the end uses proposed and that, in his audit, the site auditor considered chemical contamination, munition waste and asbestos issues.

I understand that Council will require reassessment of the stockpiled areas after the stockpiles have been removed as well as those areas underlying old buildings remaining on the site following their demolition. I also understand that the site auditor has advised that a contamination management plan has been developed to manage any contamination (including asbestos) that may be discovered during site redevelopment and that before the land is released there is to be a final assessment by an occupational hygienist qualified in asbestos assessment.

As you are aware, the eastern part of the ADI site was not able to be fully remediated due to the presence of areas of high biodiversity conservation significance. As your correspondence accurately indicates, full remediation would have had a major and adverse effect on these areas.

Nevertheless, a site audit statement was issued for the area proposed as the eastern section of the park. The statement certifies that it is suitable for use as a conservation reserve with restricted public access subject to conditions, including fencing of the area, restriction of visitor movements and the undertaking of further targeted searches.

Drainage basins

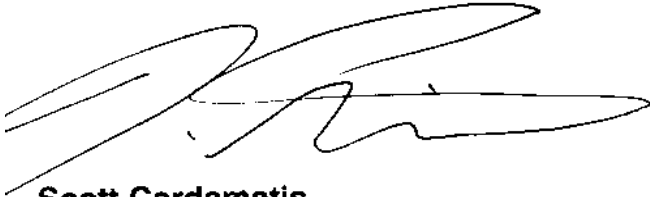
I am advised that under the existing Regional Environment Plan a number of areas on the site are zoned for the purpose of drainage basins. This is not a new feature of the planning outcome for the site.

However, following the decision to include additional lands in the Regional Park, I understand that some of these basins have become surrounded park land. Given the

related reduction in potential development at the site, there is also a clear need to re-consider the likely future drainage requirements.

I am told that the landowners are therefore currently investigating whether all of the drainage basins are still required and whether drainage basins may be required in alternative locations. Depending on the outcomes of that work, the location of the basins may need to be refined. I understand that this could be done as part of revisions to the Regional Environment Plan which are to be considered later this year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Scott Cardamatis', written in a cursive style.

Scott Cardamatis
Policy Advisor to the Minister for the Environment