

# Stony Creek recovery update

April 2019



## On-ground recovery works

We're continuing to work closely with our partner agencies to implement on-ground recovery works in response to the large industrial warehouse fire that occurred in August 2018, which, due to the nature and extent of contamination, will continue for some time.

In late March, we started the removal of at least 500 cubic metres of contaminated sediment between the fire site and Paramount Road. Contaminated sediment is being removed by excavators and temporarily stockpiled and contained at the fire site. It will then be treated for the safe disposal to a secure landfill.

To prevent contaminants being washed downstream while these works are underway, creek flows are being diverted around the immediate area via an above-ground bypass pipe and pumping equipment.

We anticipate that these desilting works will take approximately 8-12 weeks, weather permitting. Works are progressing well so far.

The delivery of this recovery work is being coordinated across multiple agencies and is guided by advice from contaminated land specialists. The recovery efforts are highly complex and has required careful planning due to many factors including ensuring the safety of all agency staff and contractors, the nature and extent of contaminants, treatment and disposal options of contaminated sediment, and access for machinery.

For more information on the recovery stage, visit Maribyrnong City Council's website at: <https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Residents/Emergency-Management/West-FootscrayTottenham-fire-recovery>. You can also subscribe to weekly updates.

Or you can contact Maribyrnong City Council via email at [recovery@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au) or call (03) 9688 0200.

For monitoring results, visit EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/our-work/current-issues/industrial-fire-in-west-footscray>.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Who pays for these remediation works?**

Melbourne Water continues to work closely with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria as well as the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Parks Victoria, Maribyrnong City Council, Hobsons Bay City Council, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Victoria Police to manage the clean-up.

## **Will or have the people responsible for this be held accountable?**

This is part of an on-going police investigation.

## **Will the sediment be tested?**

Further testing and assessment of sediment in and around the creek will be undertaken by EPA as works progress to ensure the creek is being remediated to appropriate levels.

## **What monitoring is occurring during these remediation works?**

The EPA continues to monitor the environment in the affected areas and provide advice around potential human health impacts. Air quality monitoring and water quality monitoring is being undertaken throughout these remediation works, and EPA officers continue to carry out regular inspections of the fire site and ensure appropriate risk controls are in place. Updated results of testing and monitoring are published on EPA's website regularly. Melbourne Water also continues to conduct regular inspections to monitor conditions in the creek.

## **Why didn't recovery works start at the fire site first?**

Our priority for desilting works immediately after the fire was focussed around cleaning up and preventing contamination downstream in the most publicly used part of the creek for public health and safety, which was Cruickshank Park. The decision to start in Cruickshank Park was made through discussions with Maribyrnong City Council, EPA, Friends of Stony Creek and Friends of Cruickshank Park and was based on many factors including high public usage of the park. We removed 70 million litres of water and 170 cubic metres of contaminated sediment from the creek, scraped the creek banks and pressure-washed rocks to remove contaminated material, removed affected trees, shrubs and other plants in the creek and along the banks, and placed barriers in the creek to collect and remove contaminants.

## **Why has the recovery work taken so long?**

The recovery efforts are highly complex and has required careful planning due to many factors including the nature and extent of contaminants, gaining access to the site, ensuring the safety of all personnel, and treatment and disposal options of the contaminated sediment. The recovery efforts have been made more challenging by the dense cover of vegetation around the creek, unstable banks and exposure to contaminants. The delivery of this recovery work is being coordinated across multiple agencies and is guided by advice from contaminated land specialists.

A lot of work has been happening at the site over the last few months, including:

- Contaminated land experts undertaking extensive sampling of sediments between the fire site and Paramount Road. This sampling has helped to inform the upcoming desilting works to remove at least 500 cubic metres of contaminated sediment;
- Creating access to the creek for machinery by removing large weed tree species within the creek corridor such as willows, poplars and desert ash to enable us to undertake the desilting works.

We appreciate the community's patience and understand your concerns. We know how valued Stony Creek is to the local community, and we're committed to restoring and enhancing it as best we can.