UPDATE

PROGRESS OF DECONTAMINATION OF THE SOUTHERN SECTION CORRIDOR

BACKGROUND
In mid-2005 Roads and Maritime Services discovered significant fuel contamination along the proposed southern section road corridor which delayed property acquisitions in the contaminated section of the corridor. The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) then declared the following sites as significantly contaminated land under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997 (CLM Act).

- Former Mobil depot, Gosport Street, Moree (Declaration Number 21121, Area Number 3237)
- Former Golden Fleece/Caltex depot, Gosport Street, Moree (Declaration Number 21128, Area Number 3256)

The delays associated with the acquisition of the contaminated land led Roads and Maritime to propose the Gwydir Highway connection in order to make use of the completed northern section of the bypass. The Gwydir Highway connection allows vehicles to use Stage 1 of the bypass (bypassing the town centre) and travel along the Gwydir Highway (Alice Street) to reconnect to the existing Newell Highway (Frome Street).

The New South Wales Department of Planning approved the Gwydir Highway connection on 7 July 2010. A condition of the approval (Condition 18A) requires Roads and Maritime to update the community of the progress of the decontamination of the southern section road corridor.

The timeline below shows dates on which key events occurred:

- October 2005 - Roads and Maritime advised the EPA of the presence of contamination in the area of the former fuel depots.
- Roads and Maritime Services subsequently undertook additional contamination investigations between 2005 and 2007 and provided reports to EPA for review. EPA also requested additional investigations from Mobil.
- 1 June 2007 - Following assessment of the investigation reports, EPA declared the former Mobil depot an investigation area due to contamination of the groundwater from the historic operations.
- 16 November 2007 - EPA approved Mobil's voluntary investigation proposal to define the area impacted by the plume of fuel contaminated groundwater.
- 1 August 2008 - EPA declared the former Mobil depot a remediation site.
- August 2008 - Mobil commenced Stage 2 of the voluntary investigation proposal which consisted of field trials for the remediation of the fuel contaminated groundwater.
- September 2008 - Mobil advised EPA of further contamination on the adjacent former Golden Fleece/Caltex depot site. Remediation works cease pending further investigation.

EPA is regulating the management of the contamination of these sites under the CLM Act through the approval of Voluntary Management Proposals (VMPs) with the former depot operators (Mobil and Caltex). Roads and Maritime has no part in this process and therefore information provided on this page is already publicly available or has been provided by EPA, Caltex or Mobil.
• 17 December 2008 – EPA declared the former Golden Fleece/Caltex depot a remediation site.
• December 2008 – Mobil provided a soil validation report to EPA and Roads and Maritime which confirmed that the portion of the former Mobil depot site to be acquired for the bypass was suitable for use as a road.
• 22 June 2009 - EPA received Caltex's investigation report. Caltex confirmed its intention to remediate the groundwater contamination.
• 14 September 2009 - EPA received a Draft VMP from Caltex, and Caltex subsequently commenced discussions with Mobil on joint remediation approach.
• 14 May 2010 - EPA approved Caltex's VMP for the former Golden Fleece/Caltex depot.
• June 2010 – Caltex and Mobil confirmed that agreement has been reached to jointly manage the plume of impacted groundwater. Initial stages of work included sharing of contamination investigation data and screening of remediation technologies.
• May 2012 – EPA approved VMPs from Caltex and Mobil for the remediation of their respective depot sites, with a single remediation action plan and consultant appointed for the works.

CURRENT REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES
• The VMP approved by the EPA included Caltex and Mobil performing a detailed review of contamination data, assessment of remediation technologies, design and operation of a multi-phase groundwater extraction (MPE) system and post remediation groundwater monitoring program.
• Caltex and Mobil are continuing to work cooperatively, and have jointly engaged a consultant to prepare a strategy to manage the commingled groundwater plume beneath the two depots.
• As part of the current VMP:
  o Further gap analysis and groundwater delineation was completed at the site in May 2013;
  o Field trials of the preferred groundwater remediation technologies were completed in May 2013. The trials concluded that the intended remediation strategies would be ineffective in remediating the groundwater plume due to the hydrogeological conditions beneath the sites.
  o The risk assessment completed has confirmed that there are no immediate risks from the groundwater contamination.
  o The fate and transport modelling has shown the plume to be relatively stable and that additional future migration is likely to be minimal.
• The recent investigations performed under the VMP have concluded that there are currently no unacceptable risks to Roads and Maritime construction workers during the bypass construction or to off-site human health and the environment from the plume of fuel contaminated groundwater beneath the former depot sites.
• Caltex and Mobil are currently revising the existing VMP to develop a strategy to effectively manage the plume of fuel contaminated groundwater beneath the depots. This will likely require further detailed studies at the site and/or field trials.
• Implementation of the VMP will not impact upon Stage 2 of the bypass and the management of the contamination can be undertaken regardless of the status of the bypass.

FURTHER INFORMATION
For further information visit the EPA website and search under the Moree Plains Shire Council LGA.