



Coffs Harbour bypass

Transport for NSW

Fact Sheet

Asbestos management | June 2023

The Australian and NSW governments are funding the \$2.2 billion, 14-kilometre Coffs Harbour bypass project. The bypass will boost the regional economy and improve connectivity, road transport efficiency and safety for local and interstate motorists.

During major construction for the Coffs Harbour Bypass, asbestos containing materials (ACM) were found at several locations within the project boundary. The ACM must be removed and relocated safely. The project has engaged experienced asbestos management experts to carry out this work.

What is asbestos?

Between the 1950s and 1980s, many construction products were made with asbestos fibres because it was light, cheap, durable and fire resistant. Many homes and public buildings – including schools and hospitals – built before 1980 will likely contain asbestos. It was commonly used in flooring, kitchens, bathrooms, ceilings and walls. Australia phased out asbestos use from the 1980s and banned its use, sale or import in 2003.

Why has ACM been found within the project boundary?

It is relatively common to find ACM when building major infrastructure projects. In fact, asbestos impacted soil is one of the most common types of soil contamination in Australia. This is often the result of illegal dumping, landfilling and poor management practices used during demolition or construction.

You can report illegal dumping on 131 555.

Why is asbestos dangerous?

In most cases, soil contaminated by bonded ACM (such as old fibro) is quite safe when properly managed. When asbestos products deteriorate or are disturbed, tiny fibres are released into the air. These fibres can be dangerous when inhaled or swallowed because they can become trapped in the body and may cause cancer or other diseases many decades later.

How do we manage ACM?

The safety of workers and the community is our highest priority and there are strict measures in place to minimise risks and reduce harm. All ACM work will be carried out in line with the relevant legislation, SafeWork NSW codes of practice and the Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) Asbestos Management Plan.

We have engaged an experienced and licenced contractor to carry out the work which will be supervised and cleared by an independent hygienist. All work will take place inside the project boundary and these areas of our site will remain closed to all other construction activities until the ACM have been removed.

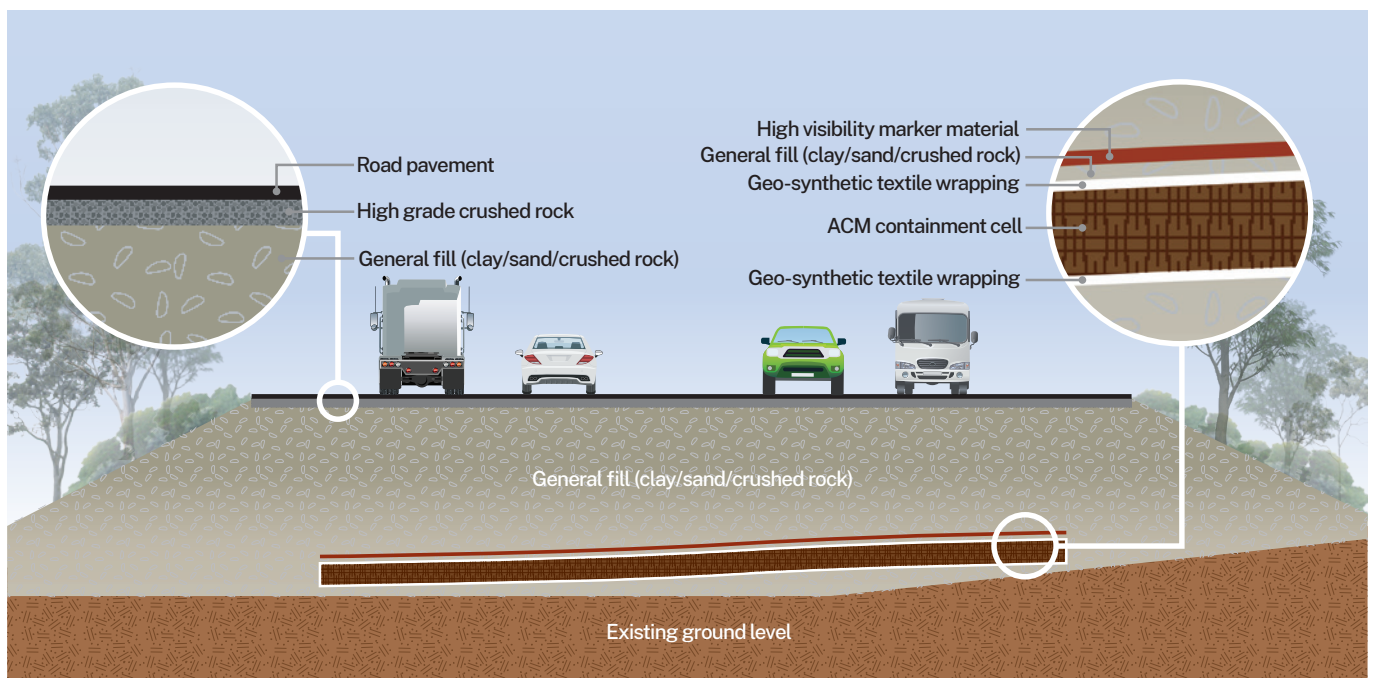
The site is contained with fencing and signage, and all workers will be equipped with appropriate Personal Protection Equipment. Dust will be managed with water, plastic covers and soil binder and work will be stopped in heavy winds. Air quality monitoring will be carried out to confirm the controls in place are working. All ACM leaving site are wrapped in layers of black plastic or contained within a Hazibag.

Where will the ACM be disposed of?

Some of the ACM will be removed and safely transported to a licenced waste facility. The remaining ACM will be relocated and buried under the new road corridor, as close to where it was found as possible. This is determined based on suitability requirements, including the nature of the contamination, size and scale, and whether other contaminants are present. Containment involves securing the material in a fully lined cell which is then buried and surrounded by general fill, as illustrated below. This approach is legal and the methodology for use of the encapsulation cells has been reviewed by an accredited EPA Site Auditor.

Why is some of the ACM being relocated and buried under the road corridor?

Burying the ACM within the project boundary improves safety and environmental outcomes by minimising transportation and reducing the space occupied in licenced waste facilities. Under the road corridor, the ACM is in a known, secure, and approved location where it is less likely to become disturbed in the future. This work is completed in line with our Remediation Action Plan and all containment cells are incorporated into the long-term planning of the Pacific Highway. It will not compromise the safety of community or the integrity of the road.



Cross section of ACM containment



Contact us

If you have any enquiries and complaints, please contact the project team on 1800 550 621 or community@chbteam.com.au



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