



Remediation and redevelopment of the Pasmaico Cockle Creek Lead and Zinc Smelter, NSW

Project Summary:

A heavily contaminated former smelting site near the Australian city of Newcastle in NSW is being redeveloped as industrial and residential land. The WSP Fitzwalter team was asked to manage both the planning and remediation strategies of the site which was used as a lead and zinc smelter for more than 100 years. The group's work began in 2003 with one of the biggest demolitions ever seen in Australia and is likely to continue for another 4-5 years as we manage the site's waste and water strategies, extensive remediation, stakeholder engagement, redevelopment, and transaction support.

The Client's Challenge:

The Administrators of Pasmaico Cockle Creek Smelter P/L required the services of a company who could manage the regeneration of the former smelter from end-to-end. This included the development of remediation and planning strategies, physical demolition and remediation works and extensive consultation with a variety of stakeholders including government, the community and media. The overarching goal – to maximise returns to creditors through minimal remediation costs and increased sale value.

Our Work:

To minimise planning and development risks, we carried out extensive site assessments prior to proposing a remediation solution. The solution involves the creation of a 20 ha containment cell (and associated long-term management framework) and also seeks to address the Significant Risk of Harm Declaration and Remediation Order placed on the site by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). We devised a pump and treat system for the management of contaminated groundwater in lieu of a cut off wall which saved the project millions. In addition a risk-based approach is adopted to address any contamination in the surrounding residential neighbourhoods – ensuring that community interests remain a priority throughout the project.

The Outcome:

Following the completion of the one of the largest-ever demolition projects in Australia, the remediation work is underway. Engagement with stakeholders and liaison with some of the highest levels of government has begun and tenders are now being sought for construction of the contamination cell. Our specialist water contamination advice saved the client millions of dollars but, most importantly, it was the work with the Administrators for the site's redevelopment that means this project is already well on its way to being a success.

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