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Hazardous Materials Management in ACT Public Schools

Drop-In Session Presentation

10-13 May 2021



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- In mid May 2021 the Education Directorate held four evening drop in sessions on hazardous materials in ACT public schools. The sessions were held in Dickson, Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden.
- The sessions were open to all members of the community.
- **David Matthews**, Deputy Director-General ACT Education presented the information in this document, with questions taken from the audience throughout the evening.
- Also present were **Andrew Parkinson**, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure and Capital Works, and Macquarie University's **Professor Mark Taylor**, a member of the Education Directorate's Expert Panel on Hazardous Materials.



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ACT Public School Infrastructure

- The Education Directorate manages **89 schools** located across more than **100 sites** catering for more than **50,000 students**.
- The oldest is Telopea Park School in Barton which opened in 1923.
- Evelyn Scott School in Denman Prospect is the newest, opening in 2021.

BELCONNEN

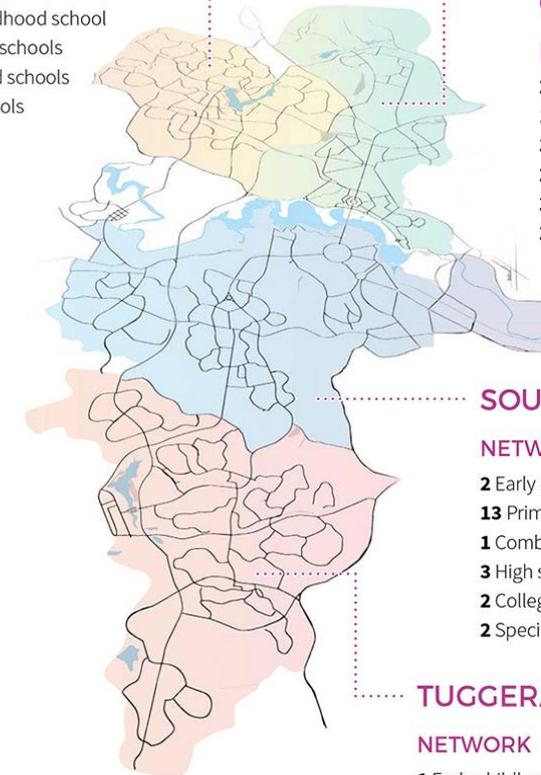
NETWORK

- 1 Early childhood school
- 15 Primary schools
- 2 Combined schools
- 3 High schools
- 2 Colleges

NORTH/ GUNGAHLIN

NETWORK

- 2 Early childhood schools
- 10 Primary schools
- 3 Combined schools
- 2 High schools
- 2 Colleges
- 2 Specialist schools



SOUTH/WESTON

NETWORK

- 2 Early childhood schools
- 13 Primary schools
- 1 Combined school
- 3 High schools
- 2 Colleges
- 2 Specialist schools

TUGGERANONG

NETWORK

- 1 Early childhood school
- 12 Primary schools
- 3 Combined schools
- 2 High schools
- 2 Colleges

Note:
Jervis Bay School and Cranleigh School are included in the North/Gungahlin Network.



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Hazardous Materials in Public Schools

The two most common hazardous materials in our public schools are:

Asbestos Containing Materials

- **Asbestos** was once widely used in residential, commercial and government buildings across Australia
- Asbestos is not a risk if it is in good condition and has not been disturbed
- Asbestos **becomes a risk** if it is disturbed or has deteriorated and fibres are inhaled
- Nearly all asbestos in ACT public schools is non-friable asbestos, such as bonded asbestos sheets or fibro

Lead Paint

- **Lead** was added to **paint** to accelerate drying and increase durability
- Lead paint is not a risk if it is in good condition
- Lead paint **becomes a risk** when it deteriorates, is damaged or disturbed, and is subsequently inhaled or swallowed
- We use standards in line with best international practice, developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the US Environmental Protection Agency



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Schools List

- A list of public schools with confirmed lead paint and/or asbestos has been published on the [ACT Education website](#)
- 85% of our schools are on the list due to the era in which they were built.

Schools without hazardous materials	Schools with both lead and asbestos	Schools with either lead or asbestos
13	69	76



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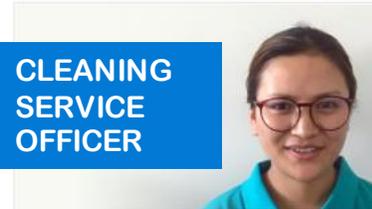
Managing Hazardous Materials

The people in our schools that help manage hazardous materials include:



**BUSINESS
MANAGER**

- Co-ordinates repairs and maintenance
- Engages and ensures contractors are aware of hazardous material information



**CLEANING
SERVICE
OFFICER**

- Since 2020 are ACT Government employees
- Clean each day to keep learning spaces safe



**BUSINESS
SERVICE
OFFICER**

- Supports ongoing repairs and maintenance
- Monitors condition of buildings



**ICW
NETWORK
OFFICER**

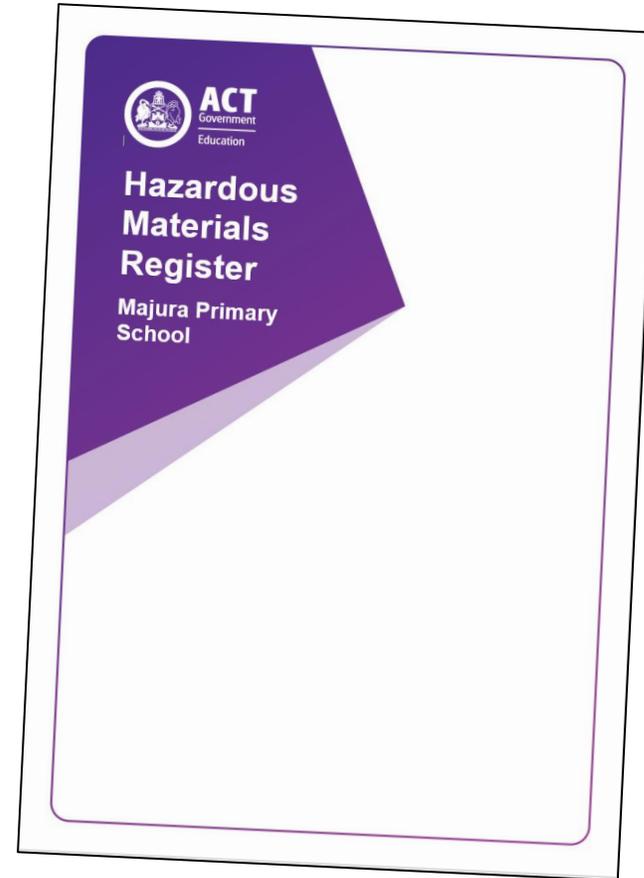
- Supports Business Managers and Building Service Officers to deliver building works and maintenance
- A dedicated officer for each region



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Hazardous Materials Register

- A *Hazardous Materials Register* is a collection of reports about what hazardous materials exist in a school, where they are, and how they are being managed
- It is used by contractors doing maintenance or upgrades so they know where these materials are located
- Registers are kept at a school's front office and are public documents
- The registers can include specific ***Asbestos*** and ***Lead Management Plans***

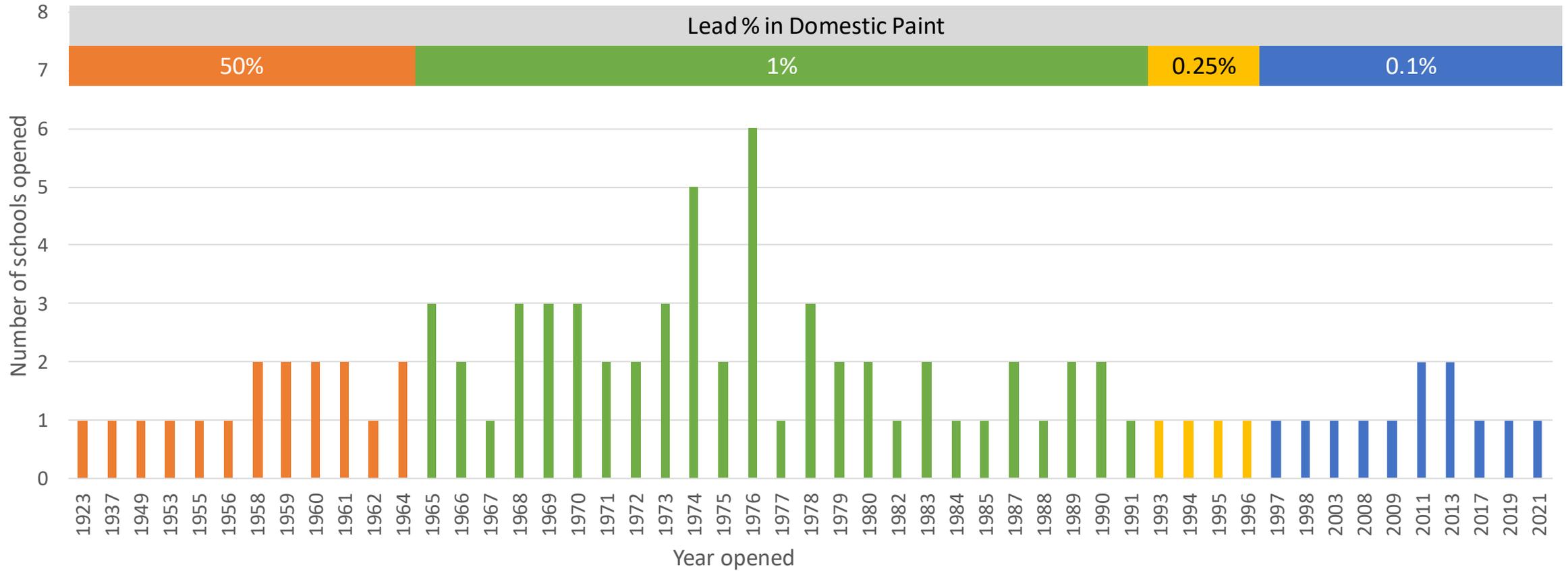




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Age Profile and Lead % in Paint

ACT Public Schools Opened by Year





Managing Lead Paint

There are four main strategies* for managing lead paint:

Strategy	Example
Leave in place and monitor condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If lead paint is in good condition it can be left in place.• The area is recorded and monitored as we know it will deteriorate over time.
Stabilise the paint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If lead paint is starting to deteriorate, it may be possible to stabilise by painting over it using a non lead paint. This is known as encapsulation.• The area is recorded and monitored as we know it will deteriorate over time.
Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the paint is in very poor condition and cannot be stabilised, then it is removed.• We can either remove the paint or the surface itself (e.g. removing a window frame painted in lead paint).
A combination of these options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A tailored approach is taken depending on the type and extent of work required and recommendation of experts.

**Adapted from Australian Standard on Hazardous Paint Management (ASNZS4361.2:2017)*



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Lead Paint Stabilisation



Before stabilisation



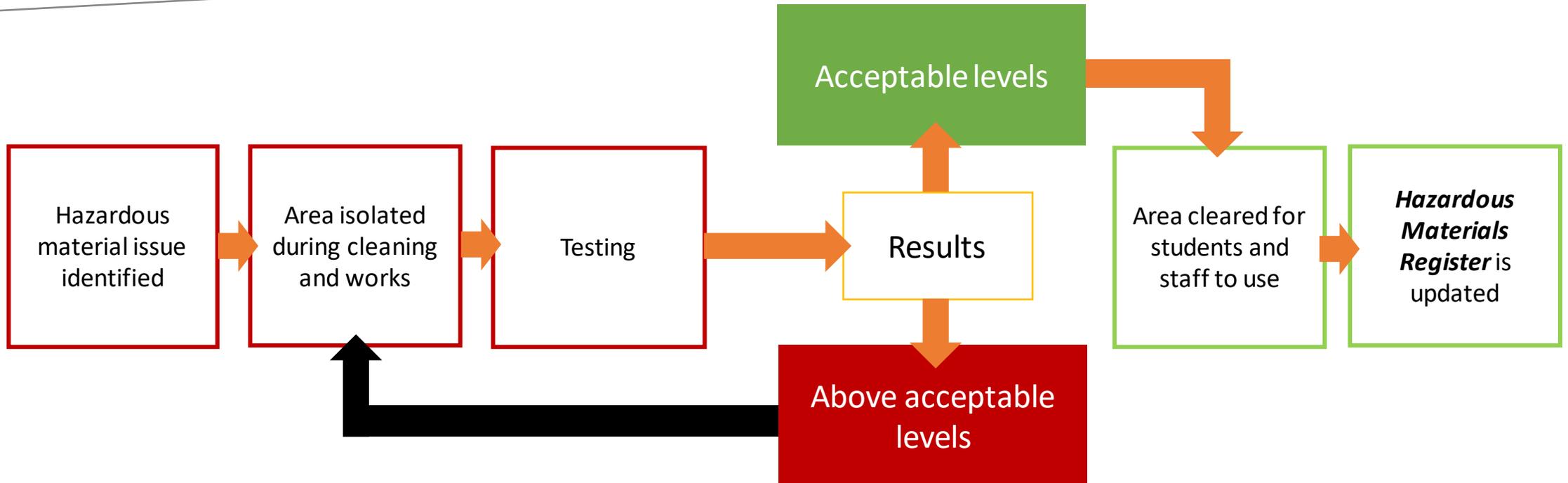
After stabilisation

Before and after photos of **encapsulating** lead paint. Flaking lead paint was identified and painted over with non-lead based paint.

Photograph: Yarralumla Lead Paint Survey, Robson Environmental



Testing and cleaning process



The area **does not** become available until testing confirms that it is safe.



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Continuous management

- Daily cleaning of desks, with carpets cleaned every week
- Regular monitoring and maintenance
- Before contractors begin work they need to consult the Hazardous Material Register to identify where hazardous materials are located. If uncertain the area must be tested before work proceeds
- Only licensed or qualified contractors can remove hazardous materials
- Major work to remove hazardous materials is carried out during school holidays
- Urgent maintenance is carried out as required



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Government Action

The Education Directorate has taken multiple steps to improve how we manage hazardous materials in schools such as:

- Establishing a dedicated *Taskforce* and *Expert Advisory Panel*
- Reviewing Hazardous Materials Registers in every public school to ensure they remain current
- Assessing the condition of paint in every public school known to have lead paint
- Adopting lead dust thresholds in line with international best practice
- Scheduling hazardous materials remediation and removal works during the school holidays



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Next Steps

- Delivering on the Government's financial commitment to providing safe, comfortable schools:
 - \$15 million over the next four years for accelerated hazardous materials removal
 - \$99 million over the next four years for building upgrades
 - \$20 million each year in repairs and maintenance
- Continuing to follow expert advice on how to best manage and remove hazardous materials
- Information on every school website about local hazardous materials and details of upcoming remediation or removals



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More information

- [**ACT Education Directorate Hazardous Materials website**](#)
- [**ACT Health Fact Sheets on Lead Paint and Asbestos**](#)
 - Lead exposure and your health
 - Environmental health (includes asbestos)