



12 MAY 2017

Leon Davis

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Dear Leon

Thank you for your emails of 15 March 2017 and 16 March 2017, to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- 1. I am requesting a copy of the risk assessment carried out for the asbestos removal works scheduled at Hobsonville primary school Hobsonville Auckland; and*
- 2. I am requesting information on funding and construction party's involved in the new school drop of zones completed and scheduled to be completed at Hobsonville Primary School in Hobsonville Auckland. Please also include dates that any future work is planned on being carried out*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The Ministry of Education prioritises the health and safety of students and staff at schools where asbestos is being, or has been removed. We are required to follow the Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016. We also apply our own Risk Assessment Process for Asbestos Management, which goes further than the Regulations in some areas. Both guidelines aim to ensure that exposure to airborne asbestos is eliminated as reasonably practicable, and if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate exposure, then to minimise that exposure.

It is not unusual for asbestos removal projects to take place during school time, however it is preferred that asbestos is removed outside of school hours. Air monitoring is continually carried out during removal to confirm the airborne asbestos contamination standard has not been exceeded and to determine the effectiveness of control measures. While Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016 require air monitoring for Class A removals only, the Ministry commissions air monitoring for all its removal projects, regardless of the size or nature of the removal.

An asbestos assessor is engaged to undertake this monitoring. This involves setting a number of air monitors along perimeter boundary lines. Monitors run continuously from before the job commences, throughout the removal of asbestos, finishing with a final clearance test once removal is complete. Test samples are sent to an accredited laboratory on a daily basis to ensure that there are no airborne fibres above the acceptable threshold of greater than or equal to 0.01 fibre/ml.

Where fibres are measured to be above the acceptable threshold, work is stopped and the area isolated until additional control measures can be put in place. Once removal is complete, an inspection is carried out by an independent licensed asbestos assessor before the area can be certified for reoccupation.

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We acknowledge the concerns expressed by some parents about the removal of asbestos at Hobsonville Primary School and we paused the work to provide more information to address those concerns. Ministry representatives met with the school community on Wednesday 5 April 2017, with experts present to answer questions about the planned works. The work resumed over the Easter school holidays, with the aim to remove all the contaminated soil. The ground will then be tested to confirm that the contaminated material has been cleared.

On 28 April 2017, Green Way Limited advised the Ministry that they were confident that all the contaminated soil had been removed from the site, with samples taken for testing to confirm.

The health and safety of students and staff is our top priority, and I want to assure you that we are confident this work was carried out safely.

The resource consent conditions for the removal work allowed for work within the hours of 7:30am - 6pm, Monday to Saturday. Removal works were stopped during student pick-up and drop-off times of 8:45 - 9:15am and 2:45 - 3:15pm. This allowed for minimal disruption to students, parents, caregivers and traffic in the area.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Education and the total budget is \$825,000, which now includes the cost of asbestos removal.

The construction contractors engaged to build the drop-off zone and to safely remove and dispose of the non-friable asbestos in the soil are:

- **Higgins Construction** is the main contractor building the drop-off zone
- **Green Way Limited** is sub-contracted to Higgins Construction. Green Way Limited are asbestos specialists who carry out all testing (air and soil), and monitor the site continuously to ensure it is safe
- **Beca Limited** is the project managers on site to ensure the work is carried out as quickly as possible.

The Risk Register requires officials to express their free and frank opinions of any risks they identify in the course of a project. The release of this document may prejudice officials' ability to provide full and thorough risk assessment for future projects. I am providing a summary of the contents of this document which are related to asbestos removal Under section 16(1)(e) of the Act, to give an outline of the Ministry's use of Risk Registers.

Summary of the Ministry's Risk Register

This document sets out the potential risk from contaminated soils, the actions being taken to address these risks, further actions that may be required, an assessment of the risk score once controls are in place and the consultation and communication undertaken.

The document notes that the main risks associated with the discovery of contaminated soils are asbestos dust and unauthorised access to the site. It lists the following health and safety measures that have been taken or will be taken during the asbestos removal work:

- Installing fencing with dust protection cloth
- Maintaining air monitors around the boundaries which will be checked every day, with results provided to the school and published on site
- Establishing exclusion zones around the construction area of at least 20 metres

- Stopping all construction vehicles from moving around the school during pickup and drop off times
- Keeping the soil damp while the material is removed
- Keeping the site safe and secure
- Assigning staff to assist with traffic management around the site
- Washing the wheels of trucks leaving the site

The Risk Register records the overall risk score as being 'Low' once these measures have been taken.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Kim Shannon
Head of Education Infrastructure Service