

22 November 2019

Dear resident,

Whangateau Harbour Esplanade Reserve, Omaha - Surface clearance of asbestos containing materials (ACM)

Asbestos containing materials have been identified at surface on Whangateau Harbour Esplanade Reserve and in adjacent beach areas. These materials come from historic coastal structures that have degraded over time. Auckland Council sent previous communications to landowners adjoining the reserve in April 2016 on this matter and undertook surface clearance at the time.

Auckland Council has recently become aware that additional material has since migrated to the surface at the intertidal beach and grassed area, between the boat launching ramp and Broadlands Drive (as indicated in attachment 1). The ACM present are of a sufficient quantity and state of deterioration that require clearance.

The quantities of ACM found at surface have initially been assessed to present a low risk to the public and adjacent properties. This assessment is based on the relatively small quantity of material present and the asbestos fibres generally being bound by surrounding cement material.

In late October, we noticed sections of bare sandy soil (south of the dinghy storage) exposing ACM. As a precautionary measure we acted quickly to clear the area and erected construction fencing and signage accordingly.

We apologise for not communicating with you earlier on the works being undertaken. Our priority was to mitigate the health and safety risk by clearing the area as quickly as possible.

Clearance of the remainder of the reserve area will recommence shortly and will be undertaken in stages, moving south towards the tennis courts. We expect all surface ACM to be cleared and fencing removed between the boat launching ramp and the tennis courts by 20 December 2019. Work will also be undertaken to clear the area between the tennis courts and Broadlands Drive. This section may not be completed until early 2020.

Further investigation is also proposed to more accurately determine any residual risks of ACM following clearance and to inform any other methods of control.

We have halted mowing maintenance of the reserve as a precaution to not disturb the material. Mowing will recommence once the area has been cleared.

We appreciate that having this area fenced off impacts the enjoyment and amenity of the area and thank you for your patience while we undertake this important work

Future upgrade and renewal of the seawall from the boat launching ramp through to Broadlands Drive, will be considered as part of the first tranche of Coastal Compartment Management Plans (CCMPs) being prepared for the Auckland region. This particular plan will focus on the Whangateau Harbour and will include consultation with the Omaha community, stakeholders, Mana Whenua and the Rodney Local Board on options for

management of the coastline in this location. Funding to progress the required investigations and design is included in the coastal renewals work programme and will be made available from July 2020.

Further explanation of the risks and the way that these will be managed are set out below:

When is asbestos a health risk?

Asbestos is only a potential health risk when asbestos fibres are inhaled deep into a person's lungs, and generally in high concentrations. ACM (such as the fibre cement board that has been found) only becomes hazardous when the following conditions are met:

1. The asbestos containing material is in a form that fibres are released to air.
2. The fibres are able to be dispersed into the breathing zone.
3. The fibres are inhaled in high concentrations.
4. People handle the asbestos containing material

ACM, such as the cement product found at Whangateau Harbour Esplanade Reserve, is not generally in a form that readily releases fibres. Where the product is wet or the material is sitting in damp soils, the likelihood of fibre release is very low.

If I breathe in asbestos fibres will I get sick?

Everyone has breathed in asbestos fibres over their lifetime. Everyone, (even those that do not encounter it as part of their work) typically have thousands of asbestos fibres in their lungs because asbestos has been so widely used in the past and fibres will likely be present in the air. Exposure to asbestos fibres takes decades to result in ill health, which is why controls are put in place to remove repeat exposure to unacceptable levels.

What has Auckland Council done to check whether this site is safe for use?

Following the removal of ACM at surface, Auckland Council will be undertaking a more detailed site investigation to determine whether any further controls will be needed, other than clearance of surface materials, to manage the risk.

What controls are required?

The removal of visible ACM will be undertaken. Improved means to establish and retain grass cover over bare soil surfaces will likely be required to reduce materials migrating up to the surface and to limit potential dust generation should any materials remain deeper in the soils.

Further Questions

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Yours sincerely,
Auckland Council, Community Facilities.

Attachment 1: Indicative area where surface clearance of ACM to be undertaken

