

PROJECT UPDATE July 2001

Thanks to all of you who have taken the time to complete our initial survey. We had a very pleasing reply rate of **67%**, with a total of 118 surveys returned.

We now have an interesting insight on how the lead issue is currently perceived and dealt with at local government level in NSW, which will allow us to effectively assist Councils in developing a feasible strategy to better protect the community from the hazards associated with lead.

A Summary of the Initial Survey Report is attached, as well as the full report detailing its methodology and findings.

The final draft of the EPA's document: "*Guide for Councils in Managing Lead Contamination in Home Maintenance, Renovation and Demolition Practices; including an example development control plan*" has been adopted and is soon to be published.

Visit the Project's website at
www.lead.org.au

It will be included in the "**Council Lead Tool Kit**", being prepared by the project team with a selection of sample materials and resources to assist in Councils in the preparation of their own lead policy documents and lead awareness promotion.

If you have not returned the survey, but are interested in receiving the Tool Kit, just get in touch with us.



Summary of the Council LEAD Project Initial Survey Report

A survey was designed by the project team and sent (by email and post) to all 173 Councils in NSW.

We obtained a very good overall response rate with 67% of NSW local Councils expressing their interest in the lead issue by responding to the survey. Very high response rate from Metropolitan Councils (89%) and Country Councils (87%).

Following are the major findings:

1- Ways in which councils are active in lead safety:

This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust..

- Lead is the object of much reporting by Councils, with the highest percentage of Councils discussing lead in their State of the Environment Report (SoE) being 19% for Metropolitan Councils. In Country and Shire Councils, as little as 5 and 6%, respectively, report to discuss lead in their SoE report.
- Metropolitan Councils have the most adopted lead safety guidelines for Council owned or operated properties, with 13% of Metro reporting having done so.
- Only 13% of Metropolitan Councils and no Country Councils report to have a Council Planning policy or document dealing with lead.
- Country (14%) and Metropolitan (13%) reporting Councils have been the most active in organising community awareness activities such public displays or distribution of leaflets on lead safety.
- Approximately a fifth of Councils (22% of Country Councils and 19% of Metropolitan Councils) report to have an officer who attended a regional workshop on Lead management held by the NSW Lead Reference Centre. However, as mentioned earlier, according to our records many more officers have been trained.
- Most of the reporting Councils (83%) have not issued a single Clean up or Prevention Notices under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act in relation to lead or other polluting incident. Only a few Councils have used these notices to address a particular issue, such as waste.
- Online information on lead is yet to be developed, with only 13% of Metro Councils, 3% of Shire councils and no Shire Councils having developed a website with lead information or links. None of the Councils have a link to the Lead Group website.

2- Constraints on Councils' lead activities

- Overwhelmingly lack of resources and 'Other Priorities' are cited as the major constraints upon councils inhibiting further lead activities;
- Close to 90% of Country and Shire Councils refer to 'Lack of resources' as constraint to lead activities;
- Metropolitan Councils (59%) refer to "Other Priorities" as the major constraint upon them.
- The increasing workload of Councils under the new environmental legislation with no matching increase in resources, as well as no need for such activities and lack of demand have been quoted by some Councils as other constraint on their lead activities.

3- Type of supports favoured by Councils

Of the 10 supports offered, the most favoured by councils (combining the highly preferred and preferred types of support) were, in order of preference:

1. How to" kit
2. Sample materials
3. Web resources
4. Telephone/email support during business hours
5. Network liaison