


LEAD MITIGATION

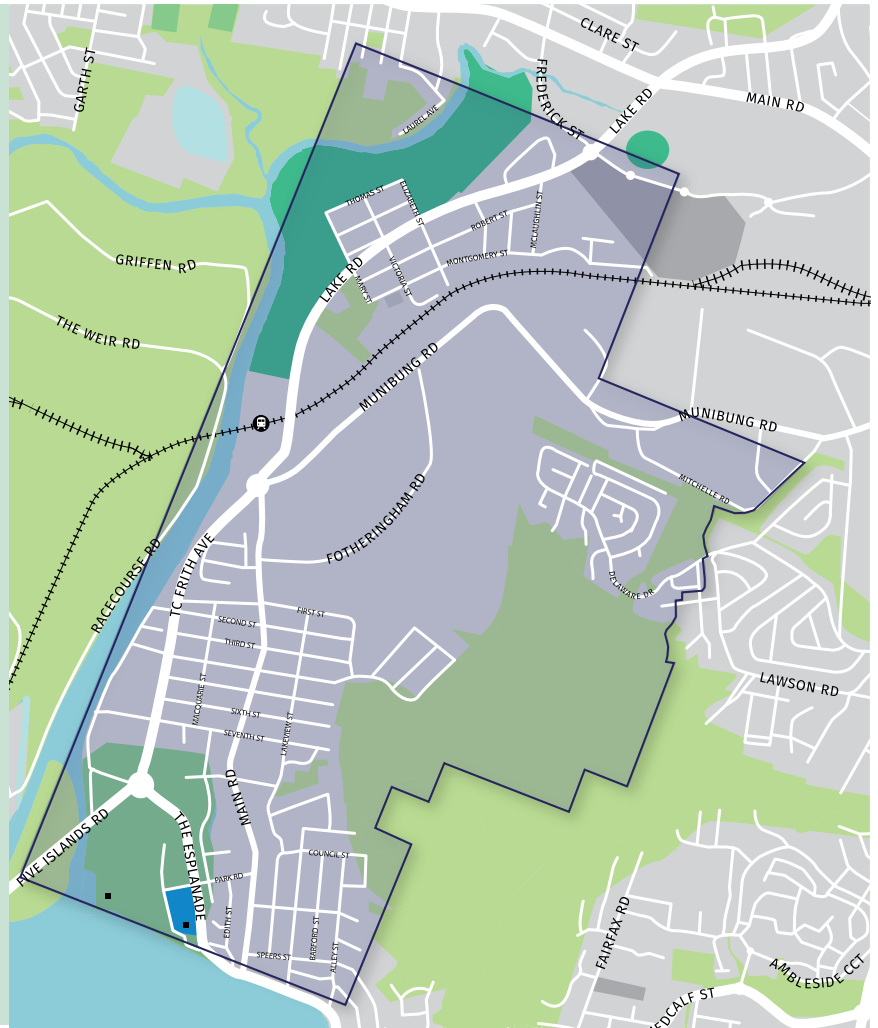
Grants guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Lead Mitigation Grant Program is funded by the NSW Government and administered through Lake Macquarie City Council. It aims to provide assistance for landowners or tenants of residential properties in the Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area (Figure 1) who have been adversely impacted by lead contamination from the former Pasmenco Cockle Creek Smelter by:

- Supporting the community to identify and understand their contaminated risk
- Supporting the community to appropriately remediate contaminated land

Figure 1: Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area highlighted by 



This guideline outlines the distribution of these grant funds. Grants are available to fund activities that reduce and/or manage legacy lead contamination at residential properties such as soil assessment and remediation works. Grants are paid as a reimbursement once evidence is provided that the works have been completed.

Applications are prioritised according to the associated level of health or environmental risk and are subject to funding being available.

Grants are available for activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2026.

For activities carried out between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2022 grant activities and amounts stated in the [2019-2022 grant guidelines](#) will be applied.

To enquire or discuss lead contamination in further detail please contact Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination) on 02 4921 0333 or email leadgrants@lakemac.nsw.gov.au. In addition, information sessions will be held at various times throughout the year and will be promoted on our website at [Lead Mitigation Grants - Lake Macquarie City Council](#).

TIMING

Grant rounds are held quarterly and will operate until 30 June 2026. Funding for grants will expire in June 2026. Grant activities can be undertaken at any point during the calendar year.

Table 1: Important dates

Grant round opens	Grant round closes	Grant Panel meets to assess applications	Applicant informed of grant status	Grant activities to be completed
February ¹	4 weeks after opening	Within 10 business days of grant round closing	Within 5 business days of grant panel meeting	6/12 months after application ²
May ¹				
July ¹				
November ²				

¹ No grant round in 2023

² No grant round in 2026

³ Pending the activity type the applicant has either 6 or 12 months to complete the grant activity. Any approved grant activity not completed within the grant period is eligible for reapplication during grant future rounds.

Note: You can apply for grants retrospectively after completing the activity. Please contact Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination) to check your eligibility and discuss in further detail.

Program

Table 2 outlines when grant activities are open until 30 June 2026.

Table 2: Grant round timing

Grant category	Program timing
Reporting by a Suitably Qualified (contaminated land) Consultant	Open during grant rounds only
Remediation activities	Open during grant rounds only
Acute health risk	Open at any time
Garden beds	Open at any time
XRF testing	Open at any time

The Acute health risk, garden beds and XRF testing can be claimed at any time throughout the year. See Acute Health Risk and Lead Mitigation Raised Garden Bed [grant guidelines](#) for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

The Lead Mitigation Grants are only available to land owners or tenants of residential properties within the Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area. This includes suburbs of Boolaroo, Argenton and parts of Speers Point, Macquarie Hills and Edgeworth. Tenants must have written approval from landowners to conduct works associated with these grants

Depending on the contamination status of your property, you may be eligible for financial assistance through this dedicated Lead Mitigation grant program. You can find the contamination status of your property on Council's website [Property Enquiry: Lake Macquarie City Council](#), or by contacting Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination).

Funding activities available through the grant program include;

- Assistance with formal reporting by a suitably qualified (contaminated land) consultant. Formal reporting activities may include;
 - Detailed Site Investigation
 - Remediation Action Plan
 - Validation reports
- Assistance with remediation activities. Remediation activities may include:
 - Tipping fees – Cost to remove lead contaminated soil from the site and safely dispose at a waste disposal facility that accepts contaminated soil.
 - Installation of hard stand capping
 - Maintaining capping - Maintenance of grassed or mulched areas is required to ensure contaminated soil does not become exposed. Grant funds may subsidise new top soil or other maintenance works on containment areas.

All residents of the LAS are eligible for the following activities that are available year-round;

- Raised garden beds – Assistance with purchase of raised garden beds.
- X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) testing of soil, carried out by Council staff to provide indicative levels of lead in your soil.

There are provisions for any application where an acute health risk is identified to assist with the cost of temporary housing and remediation of land. Please see Lead Mitigation Acute Health Risk Grant Guidelines document for further information.

Households that applied for Lead Mitigation Grants in previous funding rounds may be eligible for funding under these guidelines, please see section 'exclusions and ineligibility' or contact Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination) for further information.

GRANT ACTIVITIES

Table 3 outlines the grant activity and associated funds available.

Please note you may submit multiple grant applications over the period July 2023 – June 2026, however, the funding limits for each category will be applied and adhered to for the total period of the grants (July 2022 – June 2026).

Table 3: Grant funding available for Lead Mitigation Grant Activities

Grant category	Grant activity	Funding available for each grant category
Formal reporting by a suitably qualified (contaminated land) consultant ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed Site Investigation Remediation Action Plan Validation reports 	Up to the total value of \$7,500
Remediation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tipping fees Transporting contaminated soil for disposal Capping Contractors to undertake remediation works Civil works – hire of plant and equipment 	Up to the total value of \$10,000
Maintenance ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining capping 	Up to \$1,000 (annually)
Garden beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of raised garden beds 	Up to \$1,000 (annually)
XRF testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XRF testing of soil 	Once per residence

⁴ A suitably qualified (contaminated land) consultant is a consultant that is certified to schemes that are recognised by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). A list of EPA recognised contaminated land consultant schemes is available on the EPA website [Engaging a consultant \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/engaging-a-consultant)

⁵ The total value available for this grant category includes all reporting types listed in the activity's column and not \$7,500 for each report.

⁶ Maintenance of current lawn or mulch capping.

Note: Council has developed a Standard Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for LAS residents. The Standard RAP is a free template remediation plan that outlines how a property impacted by legacy contamination from the Pasmaico Cockle Creek smelter can be remediated during development. It replaces the need to engage a contaminated land consultant to prepare a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) and site-specific remediation action plan. Residents can choose to use the Standard RAP or engage a consultant to develop a site specific RAP.

Please see [Using the Standard Remedial Action Plan](#) for more information.

Am I eligible?

Please contact Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination) if you wish to discuss or clarify your eligibility for the residential Lead Mitigation Grants Program.

HOW OFTEN CAN I CLAIM FUNDING

Residential land owners or tenants who reside in the LAS are welcome to claim for funding during any grant funding round. Funding can be sought for each grant category up to the total funding amount available. For example;

- John at property A applies for grant funding for remediation activities including hire of plant and equipment, cost of contractors to remove contaminated soil and tipping fees to the value of \$10,000. John exhausts the funding available for this grant activity at property A and is not eligible to apply again for this activity. However, John can apply for other grant activities.
- Julia at property B also applies for remediation activities but applies for contractors to undertake remediation works and capping to the total value of \$7,900. Julia has \$2,100 remaining that can be applied for remediation activities during another grant round for property B.
- Ben is a new owner at property C and applies for formal reporting by a suitably qualified contaminated land consultant and remediation activities. However, property C is classed as a Notation 4 property, the site has previously been remediated and is below the threshold. Ben is not eligible to apply for formal reporting by a suitably qualified contaminated land consultant and remediation activities. Ben is eligible to apply for maintenance, raised garden beds and XRF testing.
- Lisa at property D applies mulch for capping maintenance to maintain a mulched area in the back yard. The property is classified as a Notation 3 and Lisa uses mulch as an effective barrier to minimise access to contaminated soil. Lisa is eligible to apply for capping maintenance up to \$1,000 annually.

EXCLUSIONS AND INELIGIBILITY

The Lead Mitigation Grants are only available to landowners or tenants of residential properties of the Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area (see Figure 1).

The only exception is XRF testing. XRF testing is conducted by Council staff. If you reside outside the LAS area and within the Lake Macquarie Local Government Area (LGA) and are concerned about lead contamination at the property you live at you can request for XRF testing to be conducted. Please note XRF testing is prioritised for residents of the LAS area.

Under this grant program funding will not be provided for

- projects that include modifications to land where written approval from the property owner and relevant development approvals have not been provided; or
- businesses, schools and government departments.

Table 4 outlines sufficient evidence must be produced to receive grant funds, this may include a paid invoice/ remittance clearly stating a business name and current ABN number.

If you have any questions or would like to clarify if an activity is not included in Table 4 please contact Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Contaminated Land) on 02 4921 0333 or leadgrants@lakemac.nsw.gov.au.

Table 4: What is included/excluded under each activity

Grant Activity	Included	Not included
Detailed Site Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging a suitability qualified consultant Consultant fees Detailed site investigation report (this includes soil testing) 	Reports by unqualified consultants
Remediation Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging a suitability qualified consultant Preparation of report Final report 	Reports by unqualified consultants
Validation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging a suitability qualified consultant Preparation of report Final report 	Reports by unqualified consultants
Transporting contaminated soil for disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of transporting soil by contractor Hire of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any fines Cost associated with any traffic incidents
Tipping fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to remove lead contaminated soil from the site and safely dispose at a waste disposal facility that accepts contaminated soil, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gate fees Disposal fees 	Disposal of anything other than lead contaminated soil, such as general household or garden waste
Contractors to undertake remediation works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor labour/hire costs to undertake remediation works 	Other civil works that are not part of remediation works
Capping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase of capping materials Contractor labour/hire costs to install capping 	Non-approved capping materials
Maintaining capping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase and delivery costs associated with capping materials (soil, turf, mulch only) Contractor labour/hire costs to install capping 	Non-approved capping materials
Civil works – hire of plant and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire of plant and equipment to undertake remediation activities 	Plant and equipment used for other civil works that are not remediation works
Raised garden beds	Setting up and maintaining raised garden beds including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden beds (prefab or other material's such as sleepers, timber) Soil and compost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeds, seedlings and established plants including Fruit, vegetables, shrubs, trees, flowers etc Other garden materials such as mulch, sugarcane etc. Equipment such as gardening gloves, trowels, shovels
X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) testing of soil	Council staff will arrange to attend your property to complete XRF testing. Simple report providing indicative levels including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the XRF testing Map showing location of samples 	Completion certificate or validation report



GRANTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Applications

Application for grants are completed online and submitted via Smarty Grants. Application forms are available once the grant round opens and are accessible online at [Lead Mitigation Grants - Lake Macquarie City Council](#). If required Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination) can assist with the application process.

Assessment

All grant applications are assessed by the Lead Grants Panel. The Panel is responsible for implementing Lake Macquarie City Council's Lead Mitigation Grants Program. Membership of the Panel includes two Council staff members, one NSW EPA representative and at least one community representative. The Lead Grants Panel meet within 10 business days after a grant round has closed to review and assess each application.

Notification Process

Council aims to notify applicants of the outcome of their grant application within 11 business days of grant round closing.

Payment arrangements

Grants are paid to applicants by Council once evidence has been received a grant activity is completed and approved by Council's Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination). Applicants are required to complete a New Creditor Request form prior to funding being deposited in the applicants preferred bank account. Please note, no cash payments will be made.

APPLICATION SUPPORT

Council encourages you to speak to the Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination) at any point during the application process for assistance or support.

Further information can be found

Website: [Lead Mitigation Grants Managing contaminated land](#)

Email: leadgrants@lakemac.nsw.gov.au.

Phone: Call 4921 0333

Drop in sessions: Council will hold grant drop in sessions through the term of the program. Session dates and times will be published on our website at Lead Mitigation Grants - Lake Macquarie City Council

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I find out the contamination status of my property?

To find out your contaminated land status and notation enter your address into Council’s Property Enquiry app by visiting [Property Enquiry: Lake Macquarie City Council](#).

Your contamination notation number will be included in the minor conditions section in the property report. If relevant documentation is held by Council, this information can be provided on request.

What do the different contamination notations mean?

There are six possible contamination notations for land in the City:

1. **Contaminated land** – Property that is known to be contaminated
2. **Potentially contaminated land** – Property is suspected to be contaminated as a result of past use or proximity to pollution sources
3. **Remediated land with contamination above the investigation threshold** – Property has undergone some remediation works, but contamination remains on site above investigation levels
4. **Remediated land with contamination below the investigation threshold** – Property has undergone remediation and soil testing has shown that contamination levels are now below investigation levels.
5. **Below contaminated land investigation threshold** – Property has undergone soil testing and found to be below investigation levels.
6. **No clear site history** - Council records do not contain a clear site history for the land or there is inadequate knowledge of uses that may have led to contamination or potential contamination.

How does a contamination notation affect my proposed building project?

If your property has notation 4, 5 or 6, there are no development restrictions related to contaminated land. If your property has notation 1 or 3, a Remedial Action Plan prepared by a suitably qualified consultant or using Council's Standard Remedial Action Plan (RAP) is required. Options for managing contaminated soil during building work generally require off-site removal and/or on-site storage and management. If your property has notation 2, a detailed site investigation such as a lead in soil test may be required. If the results reveal that contamination is above the relevant contamination threshold for the proposed land use, a Remedial Action Plan will be required.

What are the investigation thresholds?

The investigation thresholds are determined from the Health Investigation Levels (HIL) set in the National Environment Protection Measure (Assessment of Soil Contamination), which are endorsed by the Australian Government. There are four HILs which vary depending on how the land is used.

HIL	Land Use	Lead in soil threshold (ppm)
HIL A	Residential land with accessible gardens	300
HIL B	Residential land with minimal opportunity for soil access	1200
HIL C	Public open space	600
HIL D	Commercial/industrial	1500

How should I manage soil on my property?

Bare soil, dirt and dust are the biggest sources of lead exposure from contaminated soil. If your property has notation 1, 2 or 3, this legacy lead contamination can be managed by maintaining an effective barrier over the contaminated soil e.g. hardstand paving or turf. In order to maintain adequate grass coverage, you may be eligible for an exemption to water restrictions. Exemption requests can be completed online Apply for a [Smart Water Choices exemption](#) - Hunter Water, or by contacting Hunter Water on 1300 657 657.

If you're growing fruit or vegetables, it is recommended that you do so in raised garden beds filled with clean soil.

More information on how to manage exposure to lead at residential properties is available from:

- [Hunter New England Health - Lead Issues including North Lake Macquarie | HNE Health](#) (nsw.gov.au)
- [NSW Environmental Protection Authority - Lead safety](#) (nsw.gov.au)

How can I dispose of lead contaminated soil?

Lead contaminated soil from the LAS area can now be deposited at any NSW EPA licensed landfill that receives general solid waste – including the Awaba Waste Management Facility in Lake Macquarie. The NSW EPA has removed the standard waste levy on this soil, resulting in a reduced cost for soil disposal. Please contact Council prior to disposing of lead contaminated soil at Awaba Waste Management Facility. You are required to pre-book disposal, and some additional requirements for transport and handling apply to this material. This waste disposal arrangement does not apply to black slag – the black gritty sand like material that is sometimes found in the area. For more information regarding disposal black slag disposal options, please contact the EPA on 131 555 or visit [Lead soil disposal for Lake Macquarie residents](#) (nsw.gov.au)

How do I find a suitably qualified consultant?

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) provides guidance for [engaging a contaminated land consultant](#), including details of consultant certification schemes.

What was the Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS)?

The LAS was developed by the Deed Administrators of Pasminco Cockle Creek Pty Ltd to find a suitable and workable solution to managing the lead fallout levels from soils in the community surrounding the former smelter. The Lead Abatement Strategy was designed to minimise exposure to lead contaminated soil on residential properties.

As part of the strategy, lead-in-soil testing was undertaken and abatement works were conducted, if necessary, to ensure there was an effective physical barrier between residents and contaminated soil. The physical barrier was established by using materials such as soil, turf, or concrete. Participation in the LAS was voluntary, and owners of approximately half of the nominated properties chose to opt out.

Property owners that participated in the LAS had soils on their property tested, and abatement works were undertaken where required. After the site was tested and an appropriate barrier between the residents and the contaminated soil was in place, the property owners received a "Certificate of Completion". It is important to highlight that this does not indicate that the site is free from lead-in-soil contamination, but rather, that works were conducted in accordance with the LAS. If you require any further information, please contact, Sustainability Engagement Officer (Land Contamination), on 4921 0333 or at leadgrants@lakemac.nsw.gov.au.

REVIEW

These Guidelines will be reviewed at least once each year by the Panel, and may be amended by resolution of the Panel or Council Portfolio Committee.

DEFINITIONS

Acute Health Risk - A acute health risk is identified when an applicant satisfies the health risk criteria including;

- A residential property where the lead in soil concentration is more than 300ppm and
 - A person who resides at the property and has confirmed blood lead levels of >5mg/dl, and/or
 - Children (0-5 years of age) who reside at the property who display pica (compulsive eating of non-foodstuff material). certified by a General Practitioner (Doctors Certificate).

Black Slag - Black slag appears as a black metallic sand and is visually identifiable. Black slag can be within a discrete layer, or co-mingled with other soils and both occurrences are considered contaminated.

Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area - Lead dust from operations at the Pasminco Cockle Creek smelter resulted in airborne lead contamination in parts of Boolaroo, Speers Point, Argenton, and some neighbouring areas. The affected region is defined as the Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area. Properties within the LAS area are considered to be potentially contaminated with lead until sampling and analysis results prove otherwise.

Remediation of Land - Remediation is required to reduce human health risks associated with lead contamination. The objective of the remediation is to render the Site suitable for residential land use and to ensure that development work does not result in unacceptable exposure to lead.

Standard Remedial Action Plan (RAP) - Addresses contamination of land and does not include contamination of buildings that may have occurred as a consequence of aerial fallout of lead oxide. The Standard RAP addresses only human health risks and does not address ecological risks to terrestrial ecology or groundwater dependent ecosystems.

Suitability qualified consultant - A contaminated land consultant has the relevant skills or qualifications in contaminated land assessment and remediation.

Tipping fees - Cost to remove lead contaminated soil from the site and safely dispose at a waste disposal facility that accepts contaminated soil.

Validation Report - A report that details the works completed to manage contamination at a site. Sampling results from the remedial works are compared against site criteria to validate that the remediation was successful in removing contamination.

XRF - XRF (X-ray fluorescence) is a non-destructive analytical technique used to determine the elemental composition of materials found in soil. Council staff who conduct XRF testing are licensed and qualified to carry out XRF testing to provide indicative lead contamination levels in surface soils on behalf of Council.

