



MEDIA ALERT

24 March 2022

National Capital Authority fences off Acton Peninsula walking track as precautionary public safety measure against asbestos

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has fenced off a significant portion of Acton Peninsula as a precautionary safety measure to protect the public from possible asbestos contamination.

A member of the community recently alerted the NCA to suspected asbestos surfacing on a walking track that runs next to West Basin on the way around the National Museum of Australia (NMA) on Acton Peninsula.

The NCA immediately engaged an expert who conducted visual inspection, soil sampling and lab analysis. The results came back positive for asbestos within surface soils but negative for asbestos in the atmosphere, meaning it is not airborne and air quality is safe. Air monitoring will continue and the NCA is extending the inspections and surveys to the whole peninsula.

The NCA is not aware of the origins of the asbestos or the length of time it has been present along the walking track. The NCA conducts regular hazardous materials assessment on national land, and the most recent survey in late 2019 yielded negative results for all areas tested including the Acton Peninsula walking track.

While inconclusive, it is believed the massive rains of the recent months may have contributed to soil erosion on the grounds, thereby bringing to the surface asbestos along the path that could have been buried for some time.

No asbestos-containing material including soil can be considered safe, and the risk increases when fragments are exposed to weather, crushing, compacting and abrasive disturbances to the surfaces through use by pedestrians and cyclists.

The NCA is following the advice and protocols of asbestos specialists and assessors. The area is fenced off to keep the public safe. The fence will only be removed once the experts confirm that Acton Peninsula walking track is safe from exposure risks.

The NCA advises the public to stay away from the fenced-off portion and would like to apologise for any inconvenience. Meanwhile, people can still take the footpath on Lawson Street to reach the Museum.

The NCA will provide the community with updated information including remediation plans once the full testing is completed. Please check the NCA website (nca.gov.au) from time to time or contact the NCA directly on info@nca.gov.au.

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