POSITION PAPER
ON
FREMANTLE VILLAGE
June 2004

Department of Health
City of Fremantle
Department of Environment
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POSITION PAPER ON FREMANTLE VILLAGE

1. PRELIMINARY

This position paper serves to outline the agreed position of the Department of Health, Department of Environment and City of Fremantle (the signatory agencies) regarding the ongoing operation of Fremantle Village (the Village), which is situated at 1 (Lot 50) Cockburn Road, South Fremantle on the southern portion of the former South Fremantle landfill site. This position paper outlines the ongoing management actions that are required for the continued operation of the Village, identifying parties responsible for implementation and auditing of those actions.

It is acknowledged that the Village owner has implemented a number of actions to reduce the possibility of landfill gas build-up or residents being exposed to underlying landfill wastes. Further, the Village owner has been responsible for a number of initiatives to ensure any risk has been minimised (eg Health Risk Assessment – PPK, 1995; Management Plan – PPK, 2002; Gas Monitoring – PPK, 2003).

This position paper was produced in consultation with the Village owner, representative residents of the Village and the signatory agencies.

Broadview Nominees Pty Ltd (the Village owner) is the current owner of the Fremantle Village.

1.1 General ‘Policy’ Position on Use of Former Landfill Sites

The prevailing view of the State government agencies is that unremediated former landfill sites should be revegetated or only used for passive recreation, and including associated building structures, unless remediated to eliminate any health risks.

1.2 General ‘Policy’ Position on Fremantle Village

The decision to allow Fremantle Village to deviate from the above ‘policy’ position has been made based on a number of mitigating factors. These include the awareness by government that the Village has been allowed to operate continuously on a former landfill site since 1986, with management measures having been used to prevent gas build-up under structures and to mitigate exposure risks. Further, it is not likely that remediation at the scale that would be required to entomb/remove contamination could be undertaken without requiring residents to be relocated off-site, causing undue stress and concern. In view of these circumstances, and the lack of evidence to indicate that Village users are at an increased exposure risk, it is considered appropriate that the status quo be maintained with the Village being allowed to operate as a caravan park and camping ground subject to certain further management measures being implemented.
Operation of the Village, on a portion of the former South Fremantle landfill site, should not continue without implementation of comprehensive management measures to further minimise potential harmful exposure risks. This position is based on the fact that the site has not been remediated to ensure that exposure risks are reduced to negligible levels and the nature of the fill and exposure risks have not been sufficiently characterised to show that the health risk for people residing long-term at the Village are negligible.

Responsibility for implementation of appropriate management measures lies with the Village owner. The City of Fremantle has inspection responsibilities in accordance with section 21 of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995 and the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.

Any change in use of the site from a caravan park and camping ground should effectively end the continued use of the site for anything other than passive recreation unless remediated to eliminate any health risks or as specifically approved by the responsible State and local government authorities and under the terms of the relevant planning scheme.

1.3 Background

The Fremantle Village, situated at 1 (Lot 50) Cockburn Road, South Fremantle was established on the southern end of the South Fremantle landfill site in 1986, to meet an anticipated shortfall in accommodation requirements for the 1987 America’s Cup. The State Planning Commission approved, on 11 March 1986, the proposed use of the site under the Metropolitan Region Scheme subject to two conditions:

1. “On-site landscaping and screening adjacent to Cockburn Road is to [be] provided in accordance with the requirements of Council.
2. The proposed development being carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Health Western Australia”.

The City of Fremantle had separately approved the proposed development under the City of Fremantle Town Planning Scheme No 2, subject to the following conditions:

(i) “The development shall comply with all the requirements of the Health Department of Western Australia.
(ii) The development shall comply with all the requirements of the Engineering and Health Departments of the City of Fremantle.
(iii) A detailed landscaping plan shall be submitted to the Council in the form of a separate development application.
(iv) The high tension SEC power lines in southern portion of the site shall be relocated beyond the southern boundary of the site”.

Records of the final requirements imposed by the Department of Health have not been identified, but the primary requirements were communicated to the Senior Planner, City of Fremantle in a letter from the Executive Director Public Health dated 10 June 1985. Commenting on the conclusions of a document titled South Fremantle Tip & Foreshore Study by Hassel Planning consultants Pty Ltd the Executive Director Public Health made the following points:
1. “The short term development as outlined in Section 5 of the study appears feasible.
2. Before approval is given for such development, further gas testing must be conducted in accordance with CSIRO and Health Department guidelines”.
3. Gas testing must be particularly intensive in areas near proposed buildings such as change rooms/toilet facilities.
4. Detailed foundation design of such buildings must be forwarded to the Health Department for approval.
5. Any permanent development outside the proposed short-term use must be submitted with further details. Such development may require a Public Environmental Review to be prepared and accepted by the EPA before consideration by the Health Department. This will be determined upon receipt of the proposal”.

The Village has operated continuously since 1986 and has developed to include long-term residents in accordance with the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995. Concerns have been raised about the transition from an itinerant to a more permanent population residing at the Village. Further, the absence of formally agreed management measures to mitigate any exposure risks associated with residing on a former landfill site has been questioned. These matters have necessitated that current management practice at the Village be scrutinised with the desire to formalise management measures that serve to protect the health of people residing at and visiting the Village.

A number of investigation reports have been prepared to evaluate landfill gas emissions and assess health risks associated with operating the Village. And it is the considered view of signatory agencies that, based on the information currently available, operation of the Village can continue on the basis that appropriate control measures are implemented and the site continues only to be used as a caravan park and camping ground under and in accordance with the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995 and current licensing arrangements. It is considered that through the implementation of certain safeguards any potential exposure risks can continue to be managed to ensure the health of people using the site is protected.

1.4 Purpose of Position Paper

The purpose of this position paper is to provide direction from the signatory agencies as to the minimum control measures the Village owner needs to implement to manage possible health risks associated with the on-going operation of the Village.

This position paper will provide the framework for the development of a management plan which will be the mechanism for the on-going management of the health and environmental issues at the Fremantle Village site.
1.5 Scope of Position Paper

The scope of this position paper is to resolve longstanding issues of concern about the use of a former landfill site to accommodate caravans, park homes and camping grounds. The actions recommended throughout the position paper specify the minimum management measures expected and to identify the parties responsible for implementing and auditing management activities in the Village.

The actions recommended in this position paper are provided to assist the Village owner with a set of safeguards that will aid in minimising the potential public health risks associated with the continued use of the Village. It is considered the Village owners’ responsibility that the Village is managed in a manner to ensure that people entering or residing on the site are not put at risk when carrying out their normal daily activities as allowed for under the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995, and the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.

2. ROLE OF SIGNATORY AGENCIES

2.1 City of Fremantle

In relation to the Fremantle Village, the City of Fremantle’s responsibilities are as follows:

(i) Annual licensing and carrying out inspections in compliance with the specific requirements of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995 and Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.

(ii) Issuing of planning approvals for land use change and development on site, under City of Fremantle Town Planning Scheme No 3. This includes the filling or clearing of land, construction or alteration of buildings and signage.


(iv) Strategic planning and policy development – this includes the identification and formulation of plans and policies for local precincts or Fremantle as a whole, interpretation of state or regional plans and policies and administration of the appropriate statutory planning controls.

2.2 Department of Environment

The Department of Environment performs an advisory role regarding the development of landfill sites and other contaminated sites. It is not the role of the Department of Environment to legitimise long term residency at Fremantle Village or provide security of tenure to park home residents where landfill materials remain in place. Given that the issues relating to the continuation of residential dwellings on the landfill site relate to human health, the Department of Environment has sought and will continue to seek advice from the Department of Health on the regulation of this site.
Under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* (yet to be proclaimed), the Department of Environment is the lead agency for the regulation of contaminated sites. The Department of Environment will assist the Department of Health in co-ordination of the regulation of the site. It is proposed that the Department of Environment will list the site on its proposed Contaminated Sites database, however will take the advice from Department of Health in relation to any issues associated with human health.

### 2.3 Department of Health

The Department of Health provides an advisory role on public health matters and in this capacity is facilitating consultation with the Village owner and Village residents to ensure that issues of health significance are addressed. Issues identified that are of health significance include: the release of landfill gases and potential for exposure to unsafe levels of gases, and exposure to landfill wastes, if not appropriately managed, during the continued operation of a caravan park and camping ground on a former landfill site.

A role of the Department is to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place to allow for the ongoing protection of Village users while a caravan park and camping grounds is operating on the site. This will be achieved through implementation of appropriate management measures, by the Village owner, which will be detailed in an agreed management plan. The Department will provide advice on the minimum management measures that need to be put into practice for the protection of Village users and is providing an evaluation service for the analysis and interpretation of scientific data.

### 3. CURRENT STATE OF THE FREMANTLE VILLAGE SITE

#### 3.1 Assessment of Structures

The need for adequate ventilation of buildings on this site to minimise impact from landfill gases has been required since establishment of the Village. The Village owner and Village residents have an interest in ensuring that there is no gas accumulation risk.

There is a need to create and maintain a record of the current state of structures at the Village and to identify any immediate risks that may require attention. The following assessments are required:

- **Ventilation** – an evaluation of all structures presently on site needs to be undertaken by a suitably qualified person to provide a record that shows each structure meets the requirement for adequate ventilation, to prevent the build up of hazardous landfill gases (e.g. methane). The lower and upper explosion limits for methane gas are 5% and 15% respectively and it is recommended that adequate ventilation be defined as having sufficient venting to ensure that the maximum methane concentration in confined spaces under a structure remain below 3%. Should the level be found to be at or above 2% then immediate retesting and remedial action is required.

- **Structural** – an inspection is required to assess all structures for subsidence damage that could present a hazard to Village users. This is considered appropriate to provide a record to show that subsidence has not compromised the integrity of existing buildings located at the Village so as
to present a physical risk. Visual assessment of structures is considered sufficient for this inspection.

- **Underground Services** – underground services should be subjected to practical inspection to ensure that they are not impacted by subsiding land, particularly where the service emerges from the ground or is connected to a building. When damage is observed appropriate repairs should be undertaken by a suitably qualified person.

In assessing ventilation adequacy the assessor should be cognisant of information on ventilation under buildings as detailed in the *Building Code of Australia*, which is designed for cross ventilation to reduce dampness under a building. The minimum area of venting for consideration is 6000 square millimetres (eg. 200mm x 30mm) per 1 metre of wall, located on all sides of the building and no further than 600mm from any corner. To maximise gas exchange for substances lighter than air the vents would need to be located as high as possible and where part of the wall is adjacent to an obstruction (wall of a building etc) then additional venting would be required to ensure overall ventilation is maintained. These specifications can be used as an initial guide as to the minimum requirement for purposes of reducing the risk of gas entrapment, but can be increased if upon testing the methane levels are determined to be higher than the prescribed level - as defined above.

Responsibility for engaging a suitably experienced independent inspector qualified to conduct the ventilation assessment is considered to lie with the Village owner. It is suggested that the inspector qualified to undertake the ventilation assessment could be engaged to carry out the subsidence damage inspections.

**Action 1**

The Village owner to conduct an assessment of the ventilation adequacy (including methane level measurements) and integrity of structures and services of all buildings presently on site.

An assessment report is to be produced and provided to the City of Fremantle and Department of Health for review and Department of Environment for their records. Responsibility for implementing any recommended actions, pertaining to individual structures, to mitigate any identified risks is to be borne by the owner(s) of the identified structure(s).

**Timeframe:** 3 months July-September 2004

*NOTE: Ventilation assessment undertaken October 2003 and report prepared.*

The assessment report produced will represent a basis for ongoing management of the site through a comprehensive risk management plan.

With respect to ongoing inspections of buildings and infrastructure the Village owner is to inspect onsite structures regularly (as specified under the management plan) for minimum ventilation requirements and subsidence damage, maintaining a log of all works carried out and reporting compliance to the City of Fremantle annually. The City of Fremantle is to review any reports generated and undertake impromptu visual Village inspections as a
part of their normal role to ensure compliance with the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995 and Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.

3.2 Assessment of Landfill Gases

Landfill gas monitoring is required in different locations and the type of monitoring will depend on the specific situation/location. Monitoring beneath structures needs to occur during the initial inspection and again during periods when landfill gas generation would be at a maximum, i.e. mid summer.

Mid summer landfill gas monitoring and inspections

Following the initial inspection to determine minimum ventilation requirements and monitoring of methane levels, further monitoring and inspection should occur annually to provide assurances to the Village residents. This monitoring should take place over the mid summer period.

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<tr>
<th>Action 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Village owner is to engage an independent inspector to conduct a second inspection of all Village structures for ventilation adequacy at a time when landfill gases would be at maximum generation capacity, i.e. mid summer.</td>
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A report of the results is to be produced and provided to the City of Fremantle and Department of Health for review and Department of Environment for their records.

**Timeframe: December 2004-March 2005**

Non-methane organic compound monitoring

The levels of non-methane organic compounds being released to air, from representative areas where exposures are likely to occur, are to be determined so that the long term exposure risk can be estimated. The data recorded on methane levels from the initial building inspection exercise will provide an indication of landfill gas emission zones across the site. Monitoring for non-methane organic compounds is to be carried out in zones with high gas emission potential to simulate both typical and worst case exposure scenarios. This monitoring will encompass the collection of a limited number of samples from at least two locations at the Village and control locations (three 24 hour samples minimum at each location). The results will then be used to assess the exposure risk for both short and long term Village residents.

Responsibility for monitoring of non-methane organic compounds is considered to lie with the Village owner. However, given the Village history, contribution to monitoring will be agreed by negotiation between the Village owner, Department of Health and Department of Environment – with each having the ability to contribute to the monitoring programme.
**Action 3**

Monitoring for non-methane organic compounds needs to be undertaken in an area, and at a time, of high gas emission potential to simulate both a typical and worst case exposure scenario.

The Department of Health will seek advice from the Department of Environment Air Quality Branch on appropriate monitoring methodologies and will facilitate collection of results with the Village owner. The costs of fulfilling this action needs to be determined by the signatory agencies.

A report of the results is to be provided to the Department of Environment and Department of Health for review and a copy to the City of Fremantle for information.

*Timeframe: December 2004-March 2005*

**Action 4**

The Department of Health is to assess the results of non-methane organic compounds monitoring, conduct an exposure risk assessment and communicate the findings to the Village owner, signatory agencies and Village residents.

*Timeframe: April-May 2005*

**NOTE**: It is not possible to pre-empt the monitoring results and that an assessment of the results could lead to a recommendation to amend the present management actions.

**3.3 Clean Fill Layer**

The irregular depth of clean fill capping across the site makes surveying of depths to landfill wastes very difficult, with surface capping variability rendering a contour map of little use in providing practical information for a risk assessment. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, e.g. where a known amount of additional clean fill has been added to the camping ground, it will be assumed that areas with soil access could have the potential for landfill wastes at shallow depths and appropriate management measures need to be taken to minimise soil contact.

Increasing the depth of clean fill across the site should be pursued whenever the opportunity arises. Where this is not practical, a programme should be put in place to cover areas (with brick or other material) where the capping depth might be minimal or to have these areas reduced in size wherever possible. In the interim, every attempt should be taken to maintain sufficient grass or other vegetative cover over soils where the depth of clean soil is unknown. Maintenance of a vegetative cover would be greatly facilitated by provision of bore water from a suitable source to the site. Notwithstanding, to ensure that vegetated areas at the site are not over irrigated, an irrigation management plan for this site needs to be incorporated into the management plan to ensure that
irrigation applied to the vegetative cover does not result in excessive subsurface infiltration and acceleration of leaching from the landfill material.

**Action 5**

The Village owner is to actively make use of opportunities to increase the depth of clean fill across the site and maintain a record of the area and depths of added fill. Further, a programme to develop individual lots to reduce the opportunity for soil exposures is to be undertaken by the Village owner, with an emphasis being placed on hardstand areas, thick mulch or thriving grasses. Irrigation management controls are to be incorporated into the management plan to minimise leachate generation from the landfill site.

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

### 3.4 Leachate Production Controls

The control of leachate production is an issue for the entire former South Fremantle Landfill site and also from any other ground-polluting industries that have existed in the area. Control mechanisms to reduce leachate production need to be considered in this context.

**Action 6**

The Village owner is to actively pursue opportunities to direct surface water runoff away from the site and minimise water seepage through the soil surface. Irrigation management controls are to be implemented as per Action 5.

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

### 3.5 Groundwater Extraction

Samples from bores at the Village indicate that groundwater is impacted by contamination with levels of some metals in excess of irrigation criteria. This makes extraction of groundwater from under the landfill undesirable.

Restrictions are to be imposed on groundwater extraction from beneath the landfill unless a stringent treatment and monitoring regime is implemented to show that the groundwater is of a quality suitable for the intended purpose. From a public health perspective there are benefits of using groundwater reticulation to maintain vegetative ground cover and the Village owner is encouraged to explore the possibility of using an offsite bore for this purpose.

**Action 7**

Subject to appropriate investigations being undertaken by the Village owner to determine suitability of using the groundwater for irrigation, the Department of Environment is to explore the opportunities that exist for introducing a mechanism to prohibit groundwater extraction where the water quality is not suitable for its intended use i.e. irrigation purposes.

*Timeframe: Ongoing until assessed as not required.*
3.6 Development Proposals

The management plan serves as a mechanism to reduce the exposure risk for Village users and the type of development allowed should reflect the nature of the site with appropriate safeguards incorporated. Development of the Village must be consistent with the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* and the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997* with additional requirements introduced through the management plan to minimise leachate generation, contaminant exposures, ventilation of proposed structures, and the measures to be implemented should a development proposal involve disturbance of landfill wastes. Notwithstanding, the shallow depth to landfill wastes precludes development proposals involving underground structures, eg swimming pools.

Once the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* is proclaimed, this site will be classified in accordance with section 13 of the Act. Once classified a memorial may be placed on the Certificate of Title for the site advising of the site classification and any restrictions on the use of the land. Further, in accordance with section 58 of the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* (yet to be proclaimed) if a memorial is registered then the responsible authority (in this case the City of Fremantle) is not to grant planning approval for any proposed development of the site without seeking and taking into account the advice of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Environment as to the suitability of that land for development.

**Action 8**

The City of Fremantle and Village owner shall develop a protocol for lodging of development applications, which are to be submitted by the Village owner to the City of Fremantle for assessment of compliance with management plan requirements.

*Timeframe: 2 months for protocol development July-August 2004 and ongoing for submission of development applications*

4. MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1 Draft Management Plan

A comprehensive management plan should be developed to provide for the minimum safeguards to be implemented for the on-going occupancy of the Village site. Agreement from the signatory agencies needs to be obtained prior to finalisation, with Village residents having the opportunity for input into the process through a consultation draft.

The Village owner commissioned PPK Environment and Infrastructure to prepare a management plan for the Village. In March 2002 PPK produced the report “Fremantle Village Health Risk Review and Management Plan”. This report should be used as a basis for a more comprehensive management plan incorporating the actions detailed in this position paper.
The signatory agencies will assist the Village owner with details on the additional information required in a comprehensive management plan.

If additional amendments are warranted after the consultation draft has been reviewed and/or following the results of landfill gas monitoring these should be incorporated and the final document prepared for implementation.

**Action 9**

The Village owner use the management plan prepared by PPK Environment and Infrastructure (March 2002) as the basis for a comprehensive management plan incorporating the actions in this position paper and amendments recommended by the signatory agencies.

A copy of the draft management plan is to be made available to the Village residents for review, who will be able to provide feedback for consideration in the final draft.

*Timeframe: 3 months July-September 2004*

### 4.2 Implementation

Actions already identified in this position paper should be implemented by the Village owner as soon as practicable prior to finalisation of the comprehensive management plan. Once agreement has been obtained on the content of the final draft between the Village owner and the signatory agencies written endorsement of the plan will be provided.

**Action 10**

The Village owner is to commit to a comprehensive management plan that will receive endorsement by the signatory agencies.

*Timeframe: 6 months July-December 2004*

### 5. CONSULTATION

#### 5.1 Consultation Draft of Management Plan

The Village owner is to make available a consultation draft of the management plan for review as per Action Item 9. A meeting between Village residents, signatory agencies is to be facilitated by the Village owner to provide a forum to advise of the management approach being adopted and to address any issues that might arise.

**Action 11**

The Village owner is to facilitate a meeting of Village residents to communicate the measures being taken to manage the Village and make available the consultation draft of the management plan. Signatory agencies are to assist this process by attending the meeting to address issues raised.

*Timeframe: 6 months (Post Action 9)*
5.2 Communication of Exposure Risks

If circumstances arise that will create a risk of Village users being exposed to landfill wastes then there is a need for the Village owner to inform all site users of the actions required to avoid exposure. A mechanism is required in the management plan to inform Village users of the precautions required to prevent direct exposure to landfill wastes (e.g., when ground disturbing works are being undertaken) and the safeguards to be taken by the Village owner to prevent contact with exposed wastes.

The Village owner is to inform long-term residents (who are likely to reside at the Village for an aggregate period of six months in any consecutive period of 12 months) of the former landfill status of the Village. However, it is left to the Village owners’ discretion whether to inform short-stay residents of the former landfill status – subject to Action 12 being implemented. Short-stay tenants would typically not be undertaking activities that could result in landfill wastes exposure to warrant a requirement to inform them of the Village’s former landfill status. Action 12 is also intended to address situations when ground disturbing works are being undertaken by the Village owner, and the need to notify all occupants of the Village of such works, and any contractors undertaking such works.

**Action 12**

The Village owner is to ensure that a communication strategy is incorporated into the management plan to provide Village rules to minimise exposures (from landfill wastes) and to respond to the occurrence of events, and to reports/complaints from any resident, that could result in an exposure risk. Also the process of notifying long term residents of the former landfill status of the Village.

**Timeframe: Incorporated into Action 9 and ongoing**

Structural design requirements that serve to manage the methane ignition risk will reduce significantly exposure to other landfill gases. Levels of non-methane landfill gases have not yet been determined and the results that will be collected during the monitoring programme for non-methane organic compounds will be used to assess the long-term exposure risk. Notwithstanding, non-methane organic compounds typically contribute a small proportion to landfill gas emissions and it is not anticipated that the results will indicate a high exposure risk given the management measures that have been implemented since 1986.

**Action 13**

The Department of Health is to disseminate information to the Village residents on their assessment of results of monitoring for non-methane organic compounds and to convey the context of the results in terms of health risk assessment.

**Timeframe: Post Action 3 and as part of Action 4**
Action 14

The Village owner is to facilitate the holding of an annual meeting between signatory agencies and the Village residents to discuss implementation of actions and monitoring activities associated with the management plan.

Timeframe: Ongoing

6. AUDIT ROLE

The City of Fremantle will initiate an audit of the actions outlined in this position paper, and advise the other signatory agencies and the Village owner of the outcome of the audit. The audit is to be undertaken no later than 31 May 2005.

7. REVIEW OF POSITION PAPER

The Department of Health is to review the implementation of this position paper one year from the date of the signing of the position paper.

Any of the signatory agencies can request a review of the position paper at any time.

8. SIGNATORY AGENCIES

Signed by the signatory agencies on this day of 2004.

Ray Glickman
Chief Executive Officer
City of Fremantle

Robert Atkins
Director Environmental Management Division
Department of Environment

Michael P Jackson
Executive Director
Population Health
Department of Health
Action 14

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Timeframe: Ongoing

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time.

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Signed by the signatory agencies on this 16th day of June 2004.

Ray Glickman
Chief Executive Officer
City of Fremantle

Robert Atkins
Director Environmental Management Division
Department of Environment

Michael P Jackson
Executive Director
Population Health,
Department of Health