



Media Release

4 December 2015

New technology to tackle lead issue

The Broken Hill Environmental Lead Program (BHELP) has taken delivery of an X-Ray Florescence (XRF) Analyser - a technology that will revolutionise the way that lead levels are measured in the local environment.

BHELP Project Manager, Peter Oldsen said that part of the challenge of reducing blood lead levels in local children is pinpointing lead's location in the environment, identifying the sources of contamination, and determining whether previous and ongoing lead remediation programs have been successful.

"The traditional approach was built on field-based sample collection, combined with laboratory analysis, and this will be replaced by the use of the new 'point and shoot' handheld XRF equipment – effectively bringing the lab into the field," Mr Oldsen said.

"The greatest benefit of the XRF is that it is a proven, cost effective and time-saving tool used for lead analysis.

"Results can be produced onsite and in real time – saving considerable time and money associated with transporting soil samples back and forth from the field to a laboratory.

"It will quickly identify and quantify lead in virtually all sample types such as soil, paint, sediment, dust, air, and more," Mr Oldsen said.

Mr Oldsen explained that the device will also be a beneficial tool for other local and State Government authorities.

"That's why we've invited representatives from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Far West Local Health District, Maari Ma and Broken Hill City Council to attend operational training with members of our BHELP team.

"It's all part of our commitment to work with local stakeholders to address the lead issue in the Broken Hill community and get our children's blood lead levels as low as possible," Mr Oldsen said.

The key priority areas for the XRF will be: analysing the home environments of those children identified with elevated blood lead levels through screening at Child & Family Health and Maari Ma; and pinpointing lead 'hotspots' as part of the research and public lands remediation components of the program.

**Media opportunity: XRF operational training session
Tuesday 8 December 2015, 1.30pm
Warra Warra Legal Service, 184-186 Argent Street**

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