

8th May 2013

James Billamoria
Visionstream

James,

Local CEPU Official Michael Anderson and I attended 13 Visionstream sites yesterday that had contractors undertaking work for the NBN rollout. We have found that there are serious OH &S breaches occurring and no onsite leadership from Visionstream at all.

Australian, State, Territory occupational health and safety legislation requires persons in control to consult with health and safety representatives and other workers at the workplace on occupational health and safety issues. This legislation sets out requirements for establishing these consultative processes.

As with all occupational health and safety issues, if ACM are to be removed from a workplace, there must be full consultation, information-sharing and involvement by everyone in the workplace, including employers, workers and contractors, at each step of the ACM removal process, using the established consultative mechanisms.

A number of questions need to be answered.

- Persons carrying out asbestos removal work should be trained so they can carry out this work safely and without risk to their own health or the health of others. Why hasn't asbestos awareness or removal training been delivered to **ALL** subcontractors that are doing pit & pipe work? All persons involved in the removal of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) must be competent for the tasks allocated to them.
- Is there a removal control plan for the Asbestos Containing Material? If not why not?
- Is there a requirement to have signage in the area where ACMs are being removed? The code of Practice states that there should be. We did not see any signage.
- Persons in adjoining properties that might be affected by the asbestos removal activities must also be consulted. Have they been?
- Is there a need for a clearance to be given once the area has been removed of ACMs?
- We were told by a number of the older civil tradesmen of the existence of "old town gas" which is in the suburbs around the western shore. They explained that there are old gas pipes in that area that have been

left in situ. The decommissioning process was not as successful as it should have been and there are pockets of gas contained in these pipes. They said that this old gas contains cyanide and chromium. Are you aware of this or is it an urban myth? If it is not a myth what steps have been taken to inform subcontractors of this and what precautions should be taken?

What we observed on the different sites was as follows and the information we gathered is from the workforce on site.

- Battery point– Rock solid excavation and Apex Communication. No NBN ACM training
- Sandy Bay– NBN Co employees auditing a fibre join. All good
- Hampden Rd Battery Point– Chaplain Construction. No NBN ACM training and had cleared around asbestos pit. They had broken a water pipe so the ACM was being kept wet. See photo below.



- Hampden Rd Battery point– Visionstream. One bloke had not received any ACM training!
- Hampden Rd Battery Point – Link Communications. No NBN ACM training. No gas detector in pit. The man hole cover was open but the individual would have to had leant into the pit to access the fibre!



- Hampden Rd Battery point/ De Witt St –Core transmission Australia. Working for ABC (?) who are contracted to VPL. The blokes were splicing cable and there was no gas detector in the pit, it was in the work van.
- Bellerive – R&J Excavations had completed the required training

- Bellerive – Point Construction. No NBN ACM training. Had cleared around pit and were going to leave site to attend VPL yard for the ACM Training leaving the pit exposed. They said they were leaving immediately.



- Percy Street Bellerive– Spectran. 3 blokes , one ACM Trained. The contractor was cutting the concrete footpath to install pit & pipe. They had blocked off the council car park as they were cutting the driveway/ crossover. We observed that they were hosing the slurry and run off into the gutter that was then running into the storm water drain. The only environmental bund that was in place was insufficient for the task. When I pointed this out they threw a hessian bag over the storm water grate!!



- Clarence Street Bellerive– Landworks. Had ACM training
- Redwood Rd Kingston – 20th Century Plumbing. No NBN ACM training. Had just removed and bagged an ACM Pit. They had a Leighton Contracting Safety Handbook that they were following as the process for removing the ACM Pit.
- Balamara Street Rosny – Bullock Contracting. Toolbox talk at casino about asbestos.



- Clarence Street Bellerive –PSG, Hayes. Training has been delivered. Blokes said that Cable has been pulled through ACM Pits. The Hayes blokes said that they have done about one and a half days inductions and training for the NBN work and have not been paid for the training.

There are many OH&S issues that have been raised and we want to understand why workers under your control have not been adequately trained. What do you believe your duty of care is to your workforce, subcontractors and the community?

Why should work continue on the pit and pipe component of your contract by workers who have not been adequately trained?

Do you have procedures for pretesting and constant monitoring of pits/man holes when workers are accessing them? If so who enforces it?

What sort of auditing of subcontractor OH&S procedures occurs at VPL and are you meant to be compliant with AS/NZ 4801?

Please contact me so we can discuss these urgent issues

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