

# Hunters Hill residents wary of latest announcement on uranium contamination

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PHOTO: [Rosemary says uranium contamination has caused her family years of stress.](#) (ABC News: Jade Macmillan)

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**Residents on Sydney's lower north shore have dismissed the Government's latest plans to clean up land contaminated by a uranium smelter more than a hundred years ago as "a hollow promise".**

Property Minister Victor Dominello announced \$30 million to remediate the waterfront land on Nelson Parade in Hunters Hill, the former site of the Radium Hill refinery, which closed in 1915.

The area was also occupied by a carbolic acid plant until the early 1900s and a tin smelter until the 1960s.

Residents have spent decades urging the Government to remove the affected soil, which the NSW Environment Protection Authority found was contaminated with petroleum hydrocarbons, coal tar pitch, arsenic and lead.

"Having this funding should give the community confidence that we are determined to remediate the site," Mr Dominello said, ahead of a public meeting of more than 200 residents on Tuesday night.

"The Government is currently considering suitable disposal locations for the waste, and is in discussions with the Federal Government on the possibility of using the proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Facility earmarked for development in South Australia."

The minister did not provide a timeframe for the works and a site for the radioactive facility has not yet been selected.

Rosemary Manusu, 80, who has lived on Nelson Parade for more than 50 years, said she had little faith in the announcement after years of inaction from successive governments.

"It's been promised and promised about three or four times. So, until they actually start moving it, I don't believe a word they say," she said.



PHOTO: [Rosemary Manusu said she had little faith in the announcement after years of inaction from successive governments.](#) (ABC News: Jade Macmillan)

Mrs Manusu said the contamination had caused her family years of stress and anxiety and had prevented her from being able to move out of the area.

"When my (late) husband's health was deteriorating we really needed to downsize but we couldn't sell," she said.

"It's hanging over your head the whole time, you're not free to do what you want to do. You're just stuck."

## Long history of government inaction

A parliamentary committee in 2008 called for a comprehensive remediation plan for the site and in 2014 the EPA issued a management order to Property NSW to commence the works, although it said the development consent still had not been issued.

A plan to move the contaminated material to Kemps Creek in Sydney's west was also abandoned in 2014 following a community backlash.

In a letter to constituents, the Planning Minister and local MP, Anthony Roberts, acknowledged the frustration of residents.



PHOTO: A public meeting of more than 200 residents on Tuesday night addressed the issue of uranium contamination at Hunter's Hill. (ABC News: Jade Macmillan)

"I know this has been a serious issue for many ... and a source of great concern over many decades and successive governments," he said.

"I've been working hard with my colleagues in the NSW Government to make this (funding) happen."

But Hunters Hill Deputy Mayor Ross Williams dismissed the pledge as a smokescreen.

"It's hollow. On the night that the community rallied to express their valid concerns, they come up with a half-baked solution," he said.

"How long does it take to act?"

Mr Williams said the council was still considering whether it could take legal action against the Government.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-21/hunters-hill-uranium-contamination-residents-wary/9468272>