

Living Brooklyn: more breathing space for Melbourne's west

One of Melbourne's pollution hot-spots, the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct, is set for a comprehensive cleanup, thanks to a business plan incorporating expert advice from Victoria University Research Fellow, Professor Roger Jones.



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'Heavy vehicles throw up dust clouds from work sites and track dirt onto roads, where trucks and cars throw even more dust into the air,' says Prof Jones. 'But we are looking at plans to transform the site into a world-class eco-industrial park.'

In an eco-industrial park businesses cooperate with each other and with the local community to cut waste and pollution, share resources and help achieve sustainable development.

A tour of the Brooklyn site to look at transitions from old, heavy and dirty to new, clean and green will be a highlight of this week's [Australasian Industrial Ecology Conference in Melbourne](#).

The precinct is responsible for 350 tonnes of dust particles being thrown into the air every year from suburbs such as Footscray, Brooklyn and Yarraville. The well-being of about 17,000 people is affected by poor air quality and the social costs in terms of health consequences and loss of amenity is an estimated \$750 million over 20 years.

The 300-hectare site near Kororoit Creek in Brooklyn contains abattoirs, current and closed tips, heavy-recycling industries, vacant land, container yards and small business including light industrial, retail and manufacturing.

'Even though it's an industrial site, it acts like a really big construction site,' said Prof Jones, who is assessing the cause

of the pollution and helping develop the business case. 'EPA monitors confirm that most of the air pollution from the site is dust from old tips and unsealed roads.'

Invisible, tiny particles – identified by their size as particulate matter (PM) 10 and PM 2.5 – are thrown into the air by traffic within the sites and from surrounding roads. (These tiny particles escape the body's natural filtering mechanisms in our respiratory passages and find their way deep into the lungs.) They are worst between the hours of 6–10 am when winds are from the north.

'Those particles are associated with respiratory and heart problems; they hit the very young and the very old, and asthmatics,' said Prof Jones.

The joint project called Living Brooklyn is led by Brimbank City Council. It will use water as the catalyst to improve the precinct's health and prosperity.

More than 1650 megalitres of water fall on the site as rainfall each year. This results in 150 tonnes of sediment being swept into the creek and other sediment being scattered over the site as mud, which later dries to dust. The plan includes a \$15 million Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM) to capture and recycle stormwater, halving dust levels. Revegetation of the site and an alliance of businesses on the site to encourage reduction of pollution

'The environmental and social benefit in today's dollars of the new water system, and the resulting halving of dust levels, are estimated to exceed \$340 million over 30 years,' said Brimbank Council's John Watson. 'The overall aim is a world-class eco-industrial park that is pride of place for the people working and living in Brooklyn.'

Source: Victoria University

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