Our commitment
Safety of the community and our project team is the number one priority of the Metro Tunnel Project. Comprehensive health and safety systems are in place to ensure we deliver the western tunnel entrance in accordance with the project Environmental Performance Requirements, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Guidelines, relevant regulations and industry best practice.

Soil management
Construction requires the disturbance and excavation of soil. Working with, removing and managing contaminated soil is undertaken on a daily basis across most work sites in Melbourne and specifically at our work sites in Kensington.

It is common for soil found in the rail corridor to be contaminated given the age and industrial nature of the railways in Melbourne. In addition, areas in Kensington were previously a landfill site, which adds to the types of soil found.

There are strict rules for how we manage excavated contaminated material, including processes for identifying contaminants as well as a specific set of methods and procedures for safely removing them from site.

The Metro Tunnel Project has comprehensive management systems in place for:
- Soil testing
- Classification
- Handling
- Removal
- Disposal.

Soil testing
When we disturb soil or remove soil from work sites, we first sample and test the soil to understand the type and quality.

Sampling and testing is done as per Environment Protection Authority’s (EPA) Victoria Industrial Waste Resource Guidelines (IWRGs). This is a requirement of the project’s Spoil Management Plan, which is prepared in consultation with the EPA and audited by an Independent Environmental Auditor.

Soil testing is undertaken by qualified specialists and verified.
Classification

Once soil has been tested it is classified. Classifications include prescribed industrial waste (Categories A, B, C) and fill material (soil with low to zero contamination and safe for re-use). Categories are determined by the type and quantity of contaminants found. Category A being the highest level and Category C being the closest to fill material.

The results of soil testing conducted across Metro Tunnel works areas in Kensington show that most soil is designated as fill material. Not surprisingly given the area’s history, some Category A or asbestos-containing material has been found as part of sampling investigations, as well as some pockets of Category B and Category C materials. If disturbed, the Category A, B and C soils will be carefully managed and safely removed.

All classified soil will be separated out and disposed of in accordance with the EPA Guidelines and the project’s approved soil management procedures.

Handling

The Metro Tunnel Project has a comprehensive Health and Safety Management Plan to ensure that members of the community and our project team are not exposed to hazardous materials. Measures in place to ensure the safety of the community and project team prior to soil being removed include:

- Avoiding unnecessary handling of potentially contaminated soil
- Selection of equipment to manage dust
- Water carts to dampen the soil and manage dust
- Handlers to use personal protective equipment
- Stockpile management.

Air quality monitoring is also implemented to monitor local air quality during works. The air quality monitors will provide real-time measurements of air quality, including dust generated during construction activity and soil removal.

Removal

During the removal of soil, safety measures will include exclusion zones and water carts to dampen the soil and prevent dust.

Soil is loaded onto trucks using machinery such as diggers and excavators. All trucks used to transport contaminated soil are licenced by the EPA.

All trucks removing soil and material from Metro Tunnel work sites are covered to prevent dirt and dust escaping.

Disposal

Category A, B and C soil will be separated out and disposed of in accordance with the EPA Guidelines and the Project’s approved spoil management procedures. This material will be transported to a pre-determined location and facility that is licenced to accept each of the corresponding types of waste.

Fill material can be re-used on site or transferred to other project sites where it can also be re-used.

All soil handled and removed from site is managed by an EPA waste transfer certificate system. Each completed waste transport certificate is provided to the EPA.

More information

To find out more about the Metro Tunnel Project and register for future email updates:

- metrotunnel.vic.gov.au
- 1800 105 105 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Press 2 and follow the prompts
- facebook.com/metrotunnel
- Subscribe to eNews or construction notification emails: metrotunnel.vic.gov.au/subscribe

It should be noted that this information is current at the time of printing, however due to unforeseen circumstances, changes may occur. Please visit metrotunnel.vic.gov.au for the latest updates.