

# The Ravenhall Prison Project

## EIANZ & ACLCA Seminar

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Title: Deputy Project Director  
Date: 20 October 2014

TRIM ID: CD/14/352055



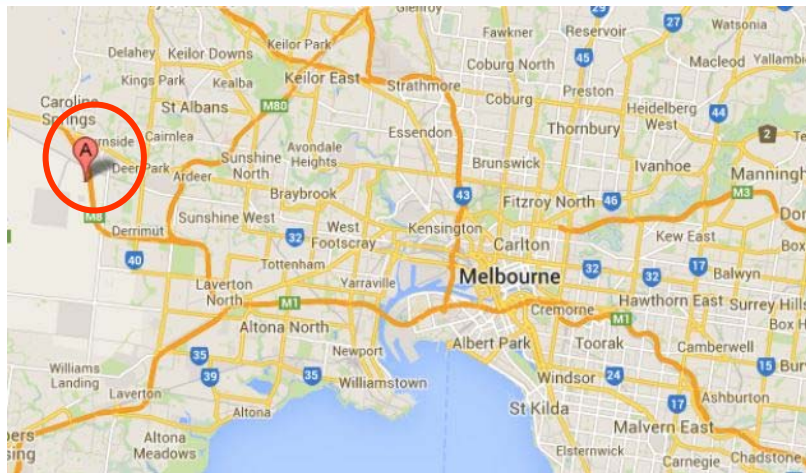
## Project introduction

- In May 2012, the State Government announced plans to build a new medium-security men's prison at Ravenhall, in Melbourne's West
- Needed due to increasing demand on Victoria's prison system
- Contract just signed with the GEO consortium as a public private partnership agreement providing a 1300 bed prison with initial operation for 1000 prisoners

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## Project introduction – the site



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## Why this site?

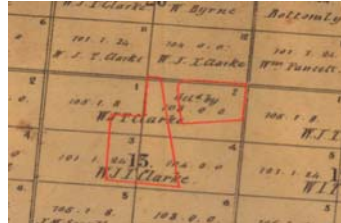
- In metropolitan Melbourne
- In an area with existing use for correctional facilities
- Accessible for staff, visitors and others
- Buffered by conservation reserves and quarry



<4>

## Project introduction – site history

- Open rural landscape on land traditionally occupied by the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation
- Following European settlement, land primarily used for grazing
- The site housed the Ravenhall Magazine and Storage facility during WWII and the associated rail link and was used for munitions testing and destruction



<5>

## Project introduction – site history

- Explosives and rocket motor testing until the early 1990s
- The Australian Space Research Institute (ASRI) used Site 1 to conduct testing in the 80s and 90s
- Site purchased from the Australian Defence Industries by the Victorian Government in 1994



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## Project introduction

- 1994 - Site purchased from Australian Defence Industries by the Victorian Government.
- 1996 – Dame Phyllis Frost Centre opens

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## Metropolitan Remand Centre

- Concerns remained about threatened flora and fauna
- Adjoining degraded farmland purchased
- Conservation reserves created with further construction site developed



## A red herring ...

### Radioactive Material Stored at Ravenhall (Question No. 3750)

Mr Barry Jones asked the Minister representing the Minister for National Development and Energy, upon notice, on 16 February 1982:

(1) Is it a fact that radioactive material is stored at Ravenhall, as well as at Derrimut, 18 kilometres west of Melbourne.

(2) If so, did this material come from atom bomb testing sites at Maralinga, South Australia, and on the Monte Bello Islands.

(3) What (a) high level (b) transuranic and (c) low level wastes are stored at Ravenhall and in what quantity.

(4) What guarantees can the Minister give that these wastes do not constitute a health hazard to people in the area.

Mr Anthony—The Minister for National Development and Energy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) No radioactive material is stored at Ravenhall or Derrimut.

(2), (3) and (4) See (1) above.

Extract from Commonwealth Hansard  
Tuesday, 9 March 1982

168

SENATE

Thursday, 17 August 2006

### Radioactive Waste (Question No. 2144)

Senator Malac asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 12 July 2006:

(1) Were the former Department of Defence sites at Ravenhall and Derrimut in Victoria used to store radioactive waste at any time, if so, what was the quantity and type of radioactive waste stored at each site.

(2) Is there any radioactive material currently stored at these sites; if not, when was it removed and where is it stored now.

(3) What other potentially hazardous materials were stored at each site.

(4) Are these sites contaminated with radioactive or other hazardous materials.

(5) What is each site being used for now.

(6) How each site been checked for background levels of radioactivity; if so, when did this take place and what were the results.

Senator Ian Campbell—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(1) No radioactive material has ever been stored at Ravenhall. Radioactive material was stored at Derrimut from the late 1950s to 1979.

Quantity	Origin
Approximately one cubic cubic 60	Sealed radiography sources ex MRL
Approximately one cubic cubitum 776	Sealed sources, training pins and contaminated laboratory equipment ex ARL, MRI, Australian Defence Force, universities, hospitals and industry.
Approximately 200 milligram capsules 127	Sealed sources ex MRL.
Minor amounts of various radioisotopes (millicurie range or less)	Sealed sources and contaminated laboratory equipment ex ARL, universities and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation radionuclides, watches, compasses and miscellaneous equipment ex Australian Defence Force.

<9>

## A future prison site

Business case considered:

- Flora and fauna surveys
- Cultural heritage
- UXOs/EOW
- Contamination

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## Planning approval requirements – SUZ8

- Determined that planning would be held by government
- In Jan 2013 the Minister for Planning approved zoning the proposed site as SUZ8.
- Under SUZ8, a Correctional Facility Development Plan (CFDP) was required to be developed for Ravenhall prison



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## Planning context

- Special Use Zone Schedule 8 (SUZ8) – proposed site and neighbouring facilities
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) – Ravenhall Grasslands Nature Conservation Reserve (RGNCR)



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## Environmental Audit requirement

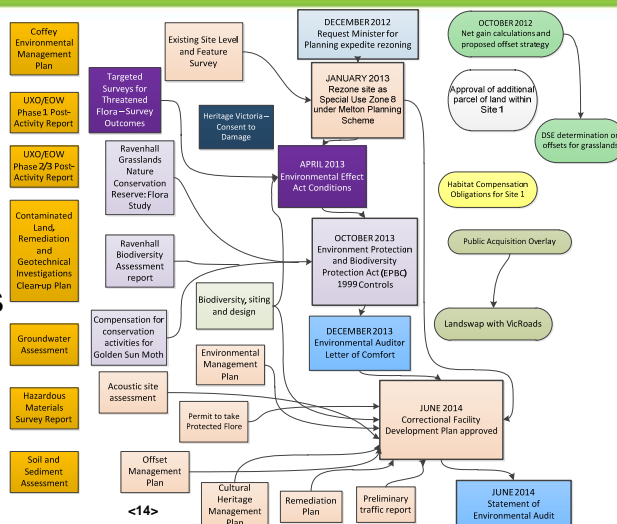
### Schedule 8 to the Special Use Zone – Section 5: Requirement for environmental audit before commencement of use or buildings and works



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## Approvals

The site was complex –  
a range of approvals, reports  
and conditions had to be met



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## Legislative requirements

- Commonwealth EPBC Act 1999
- State requirements:
  - Environment Effects Act 1978
  - Native Vegetation Management Framework
  - Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
  - Water Act 1989
  - Environment Protection Act 1970
- Melton Planning Scheme

### Advisers

- Department of Environment and Primary Industries
- Parks Victoria
- Commonwealth Department of Environment
- Legal advisers (Clayton Utz and VGSO)

<15>

## Site investigations overview

- Geotechnical and contaminated land investigations (Coffey)
- Flora, fauna, environment (Biosis)
- Cultural heritage (Biosis)
- Town planning advisers (Urbis)
- Environmental Auditor (Warren Pump – ERM)
- UXO/EOW investigations (Milsearch)
- Site level and feature surveys (Beveridge Williams)
- Demolition and site works (AusDecom)

<16>



## Public process

- A range of information was publicly available
- EPBC referral documentation online and advertised in local papers
- Community Advisory Group (CAG) kept up to date
- CFDP developed with the CAG and discussed at local council meetings
- CFDP a public document with all attachments available on web and hard copy



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## Stakeholder engagement

- The chicken or the egg?
- Conflicting requirements of ecological, geotechnical, cultural heritage and unexploded ordnance investigations
- Meeting crucial State timelines



<18>

## UXO/EOW investigations – process overview

- Geophysical surveys undertaken across both Site 1 and Site 2 using metal detectors linked to digital GPS
- Characterisation works followed to identify risk levels and materials on site
- UXO remediation activities carried out in areas of greatest risk



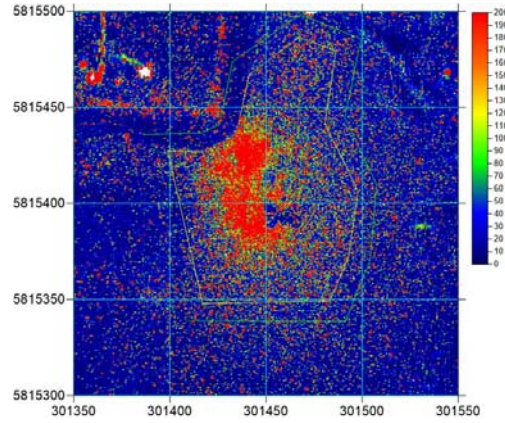
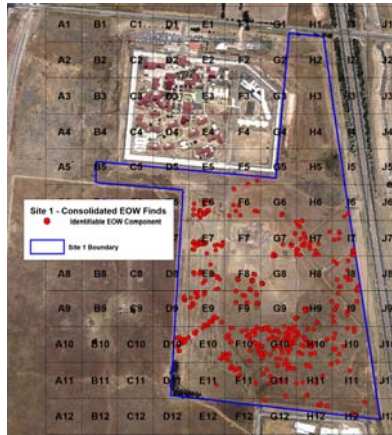
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## UXO/EOW investigations – Preliminary remediation

- 1.3ha area scraped and mechanically screened, including multiple burn/burial pits
- Removal of 41 items of Exploded Ordnance
- Approx 500kg of Exploded Ordnance Waste collected
- Asbestos detected and removed by a specialist contractor
- 46,000 discrete anomalies detected across both sites

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# Site 1 - UXO/EOW investigations – Characterisation works

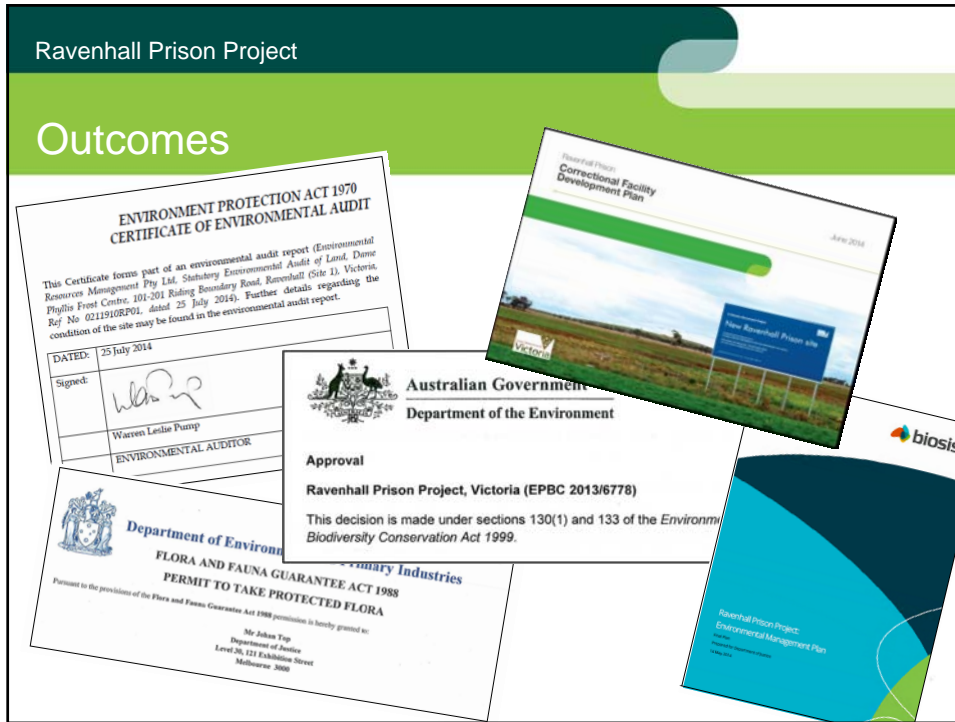


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# The Ravenhall Prison Project

Looking ahead

## Outcomes



## Current project status

- Agreement signed with GEO Consortium in September 2014
- 25 year contract period



## Economic opportunities

- Creation of 700 jobs during peak construction period and 600 ongoing jobs once operational
- Targeting 4 per cent Koori employees during construction and 5 per cent during operation



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## The facility

- Will operate with 1,000 prisoners, but has capacity for 1,300
- Flexible design to allow for changes over the 25-year contract period
- Surrounded by a perimeter wall, similar in appearance to nearby prisons
- Includes 75 bed forensic mental health unit
- Programs and services delivered at the prison and post-release

<26>

## The facility



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## The facility



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## Why does it all matter?

- Legislative environmental and planning requirements
- Conservation obligations
- De-risk site for construction
- Safety
- Preserve cultural heritage
- State as exemplar

<29>

## Where to from here?

- Construction begins – Early 2015 and complete late 2017
- GEO bound by provisions in Project Agreement relating to contamination
- Obligations under the Offset Management Plan, Environment Management Plan, EPBC conditions and Commonwealth and State requirements will continue throughout development



## The end?

- *If only . . .*
  - The consortium have advised that they may utilise part of the site to the west of DPFC during the construction period to assist in materials staging
  - So . . . we may get to do it again.
- 
- There have been lots of lessons learned for future projects

<31>

## Questions?

*Further information:*

Correctional Facility Development Plan  
available

[www.corrections.vic.gov.au](http://www.corrections.vic.gov.au)

Ravenhall Prison Project 8684 8300

Project Summary and other information available:

<http://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/Infrastructure-Delivery/Public-private-partnerships/Projects/Ravenhall-Prison-Project>