



**The Lead Education and Abatement Design Group**  
Aiming to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in Australia  
by the year 2012 and to protect the environment from lead.



**global lead advice  
& support service**

**A GOVERNMENT – BUSINESS – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP  
TO PROTECT PEOPLE & THE ENVIRONMENT FROM LEAD**

# Prospectus 2006

**This Prospectus seeks government and business funding for The LEAD Group to operate the Global Lead Advice & Support Service (GLASS), which advises, and educates the community and professionals about the symptoms and hazards of lead and the ways people can protect themselves and minimise the damage from environmental lead exposure.**

## **Preventing Lead Poisoning –A Shared Responsibility**

This Prospectus provides government, philanthropists and corporations the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to a lead-safe community and environmental responsibility by entering into a government – business – community partnership to tackle the problem of lead poisoning.

GLASS Prospectus 2005

## Even low levels of lead are a health risk

**Lead poisoning is one of the greatest environmental health threats facing society today**

**Children are most at risk from lead poisoning**

Lead has been an extremely versatile and useful product since recorded history began. For almost as long, people have been aware that it is a health hazard, but wrongly assumed that only miners and smelter workers were at risk. We now know that the biggest population health risk is household dust contaminated by lead from older paints, leaded petrol exhausts or lead industries, mines and smelters.

Children are most at risk, particularly those of crawling age living in pre-1970 houses where leaded paint was almost certainly once used, or in mining or smelter communities. A major Sydney study found that in inner suburbs, a quarter of all preschoolers have too much lead in their bodies.

In 1993, The World Health Organization (WHO) has set a goal for populations to have a blood lead level below 10 µg/dL (micrograms per decilitre). This is a very small amount – about equivalent to a teaspoon of lead in a swimming pool. But any level of lead in the body causes damage. Ten years later, in 2003, WHO estimated that 120 million people globally had lead levels of 5–10 µg/dl in 2000, and about the same number had levels above 10 µg/dl. 240 million people have too much lead.

When lead is taken into the body via ingestion or inhalation, it initially attaches to the red blood cells. We naturally replace approximately 20% of these cells every 6-8 weeks, so our bodies expel some of this lead and it passes out of our bodies. However, it takes roughly 10 - 12 months to do a 'complete' change of the red blood cells, so the body has plenty of time to absorb some lead into its soft tissue such as kidneys and liver. The body treats lead like calcium, depositing some in bones and growing teeth where it has a half-life of up to 30 years and can be released into the blood years later.

**Children under the age of four** are most at risk because a child's brain and nervous system are still developing. Lead is a neurotoxin, damaging the central nervous system. Lead will do the greatest harm to those of very young age. Young children are particularly susceptible to lead poisoning because of their high level of hand-to-mouth activity, especially between one and two years of age. Any lead dust or leaded paint particles lying around are likely to get into their mouths and be ingested. Children also absorb more of any lead they ingest into their bloodstream and other parts of their bodies than adults do – about 50% of swallowed lead is absorbed compared with 8-10% for adults.

❖ **Pregnant women** are also at risk and can put their foetus at risk because lead absorbed into their blood will cross the placenta to the baby. Babies can be born with lead already in their blood. Even where women were exposed to lead well before pregnancy, their babies are at risk because lead stored in their bones can be released into the blood as the foetus needs calcium.

❖ **Fertile adults** are also at risk – women because of the potential danger to a future foetus and men because lead can affect sperm size, number, mutations and motility and health as well as causing problems with their libido.

❖ **People with high blood pressure** are at particular risk because lead can exacerbate blood pressure.

❖ **Menopausal women with past lead exposure** are at risk because lead can relocate from storage in bones back into the blood stream during menopause.

❖ **Older men with past lead exposure** are at risk because as they age, lead tends to come out of the bone in the same way that calcium does. Whereas in women this is more pronounced with menopause, in men there is a gradual rise in blood lead level with age. Blood lead levels in men are typically higher than in women due to higher lead exposure earlier in life particularly for people who have worked with lead.

People need to know who to call to get advice on situations they believe might be hazardous.

## What needs to be done

**A credible information service is needed to respond to continuing community concerns about the prevalence of lead hazards in homes, public buildings and workplaces.**

Commonwealth initiatives such as the Clean Seas and Oceans and Clean Air campaigns, together with a myriad of actions at the State and local level, demonstrate that the community is increasingly prepared to invest in protection of water and air from toxic substances but dust is the main culprit & closer to home.

In view of Western Societies' rapid increase in the percentage of the population over 50 years old, a clearinghouse is needed to keep abreast of research into best management practice for lead stored in bone.

Governments and industry need to invest in providing a credible information service. **GLASS has and must continue to fill this gap.**

Without GLASS, people might call several government departments or non government groups when seeking information, wasting time as they are passed from person to person, often emerging unsatisfied.

**No one but GLASS is equipped for handling complex inquiries about lead.** GLASS is an international referral service, and a cost-efficient way of providing credible environmental health services that people trust.

The 1999 hail storm damage to 20,000 Sydney roofs and ceilings showed the importance of integrated telephone advice when hazardous circumstances arise. As a community information service, GLASS was able to give credible and appropriate safety advice on managing lead-contaminated ceiling dust to homeowners, emergency workers and builders. GLASS' work led to a report on ceiling dust by WorkCover NSW and to the development of an industry association for ceiling dust removalists - the Australian Dust Removalists Association (ADRA). See [www.lead.org.au/bblp/Ceiling-Dust/index.htm](http://www.lead.org.au/bblp/Ceiling-Dust/index.htm).

GLASS has been serving the community's need for lead advice and support since 1995.

## The history of The LEAD Group and GLASS

GLASS is the community information service on lead managed by The LEAD Group, a community organisation incorporated in 1992 with the aim of eliminating childhood lead poisoning and protecting the environment from lead. GLASS commenced in 1995 under the name of LEADLINE with one year's funding from the Federal environment agency. During FYs 1996-2000, GLASS operated in NSW only, funded as a core part of the NSW Government's Lead Management Action Plan. This four-year program ended in June 2000, with funding for GLASS extended until November 2000.

As of May 2005, the LEAD Group has been operating for exactly ten years. We have received over one million dollars in government support for GLASS' predecessors. However, the problems have not gone away. A similar level of funding is needed for the next three years to also allow security of employment. Over this period, GLASS has handled some 41,194 calls about lead hazards. We have developed the systems, technology and staff to provide an efficient and credible service that assists the public and professionals alike with information, advice and referrals.

GLASS is based in a two-room office in Summer Hill, Sydney, NSW, and operates with a national freecall phone number. The auditors are Hopkins Accounting.

1. Information & referral	GLASS handles approximately 300-400 inquiries a month from people worldwide seeking advice, information and referrals, including post, fax and email inquiries from over 60 countries
2. Technical network support	If GLASS receives an inquiry which we have limited knowledge of, we seek the advice of The LEAD Group's Technical Advisory Board, Global Lead Network, ABLES, Plumbism & Autism Network (PAN), Lodged Lead Shot & Bullet Support Group (LLSBS) & Lead Workers list services etc, and our aim is to answer every lead question put to us.
3. . Lead resources Database	Over 7,800 lead references are stored in our indexed Microsoft SQL database, the largest publicly accessible resource on lead in the world, soon to be web-published if funding allows.
4. .Referral database	Nearly 4,500 experts, products, service providers, community groups and responsible parties are recorded on our searchable database, soon to be web-published if funding allows.
5. Information development	Fact sheets, newsletters, articles and lists are continually developed and updated to meet specific demands (eg nursing mothers, tenants, on ceiling dust, health effects of lead, countries still using leaded gasoline etc) A proposed online Lead Forum and e-newsletter could also be easily developed if funding were provided.
6. Call records	Our call database records the nature of all contacts allowing easy tracking & performance
7. Information distribution	Information packs are assembled and sent to inquirers without charge, including to enquirers overseas. Bulk copies are provided to relevant events, conferences or other distribution points. GLASS has distributed 904,503 lead information products by fax, mail or email between June 1995 and June 2005.
8. Web site	www.lead.org.au has provided nearly 230,000 web-users with news and information on global lead poisoning prevention and provides GLASS with increasing numbers of email clients, providing 41% of the 1,200 new enquirers (clients) in the last 12 months. Enquirers from outside Australia made up 21% of our new clients in FY 2004-5.

. While general environmental phone services such as Pollution Line are useful as information sources for the general public, their role is principally as a disseminator of published environmental education materials.

GLASS' role is different – we deal with topics and issues on which standard educational materials are inadequate. GLASS complements Pollution Lines, Poisons Info, WorkCover and similar services. GLASS provides a place to which businesses, governments and information services can refer callers about lead, letting their staff focus on core business. The range of public authorities referring callers to us from across Australia illustrates the unique and valuable role of GLASS. These include at least **53** local councils, **53** NSW authorities, **20** authorities in other states and **19** federal government authorities.

### **GLASS has six special roles.**

- ❖ We give verbal and written answers to **complex questions** which require knowledge and a research capacity;
- ❖ We provide **advice and support** for people in distress as a consequence of finding out about contamination and poisoning; GLASS' experienced manager herself the parent of lead poisoned children and UN Award winning environmentalist, deals with notifiable cases where people's blood lead levels exceed 15 µg/dL.
- ❖ We can **advise on actions** that people can take, including ways of working with government agencies;
- ❖ We give **referrals** to services to address toxic hazards, seeking to promote reasonable and effective service providers;
- ❖ We can provide **site-specific advice** to relevant professionals and property owners /purchasers – those most able to act in many situations.
- ❖ We represent the community on the United Nations Partnership for Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV).

**In FY2004 21% of GLASS' new clients were referred to us from government and 11% from business**

**GLASS is the only service that provides information and ongoing advice to help the public and professionals deal with lead hazards**

## Maintaining a quality service

The LEAD Group is committed to operating GLASS as a professional, apolitical service. A number of processes have been established to ensure the service meets the highest quality standards.

While The LEAD Group is an advocacy organisation that campaigns for the elimination of child lead poisoning and the protection of the environment from lead, GLASS is designed and operated as a professional community service.

Over ten years of funded operation, GLASS has developed a comprehensive manual of protocols to guide staff in all aspects of service provision.

The LEAD Group has for many years had a Technical Advisory Board comprising most of Australia's leading lead experts. The Technical Advisory Board provides GLASS with an array of experts who assist in addressing complex issues and whose advice ensures that GLASS advice is current and accurate.

**GLASS is  
dedicated to  
community  
service not  
advocacy**

## Working with our partners

GLASS is a partnership with governments and industry to increase lead knowledge and reduce unsafe behaviour amongst citizens, workers and professionals.

The LEAD Group is well aware that such partnerships are founded not just on financial contributions but more importantly on developing trust between the partners. GLASS has three key mechanisms to develop and maintain a trusting relationship.

### **The GLASS Committee**

The LEAD Group has established a special management committee to direct and monitor GLASS. The GLASS Committee consists of a few experts in GLASS' lead and advisory roles and welcomes delegates from each of GLASS' sponsors. The GLASS Committee meets at least twice annually to receive a progress report from The LEAD Group on GLASS' operations. The GLASS Committee will advise us if operations need to be varied to improve performance and accountability.

### **Working with sponsors**

GLASS has been producing regular reports for the past ten years for our current and previous sponsors, the NSW Health Department and Environment Protection Authority, South Australian Department of Health and Environment Australia. Samples of past reports are available on request and the latest report is online at [www.lead.org.au/anrepmiv/anrep2004.html](http://www.lead.org.au/anrepmiv/anrep2004.html). GLASS will also provide an Early Alert service to sponsors, calling their delegate to advise if call patterns reveal issues of relevance to the sponsor. Such Early Alerts will be given prior to any action by The LEAD Group. GLASS will report twice a year to all sponsors.

## Phone lines

The central resource needed by GLASS is a phone line so that people can call for help. Remember, GLASS deals with complex lead problems where a brochure is often an inadequate or inappropriate response and where partial information provision can be positively dangerous.

The phone service needs a 1800 (free call) number so that distant and rural callers are not financially disadvantaged. The LEAD Group intends maintaining its widely publicised GLASS phone numbers:

**Free call: 1800 626 086 Sydney 9716 0014 and 9716 0132**

## A functional office

The second core requirement for GLASS is an office where the extensive lead resources – library, computers and educational materials – can be stored, and from whence they can be dispatched. Adequate office space for people to receive and handle calls is important. The current office of The LEAD Group in Summer Hill, Sydney, consists of two small rooms and cannot fit the entire library. Adequate funding would ensure more adequate search capability of our archives.

## Computer and communication systems

GLASS at its core is a call centre, albeit a specialised one designed for complex calls. Over the past ten years, The LEAD Group has developed a local computer network that enables on-line call data recording and analysis of call patterns, as well as serving response needs (eg sending information packages).

The LEAD Group's website is an increasing source of phone or email requests for information on lead and our website provided 41% of our 1,200 new clients in FY2005. Our service was also discovered by 5% of new clients from government websites and by 15% of new clients from other websites. GLASS hopes to continue operating its computerised call centre functions and to extend the scope of its information readily available online, including searchable data.

## Staffing

The fourth element in the GLASS service is the staff. While The LEAD Group can provide a minimal level of service by having volunteers handle enquiries, it is not feasible to manage the current level of calls with volunteers, nor to be proactive with increasing links to our website and otherwise promoting the site.

Nor can we expect the skilled information and referral staff to work for nothing.

In managing GLASS, The LEAD Group will have to adapt staffing levels to that which income allows. Paid staff positions were terminated at the end of November 2000 when NSW EPA funding expired. The Commonwealth granted funding for three years to June 2002 at \$15,000 per annum and one year at \$20,000 to June 2003, and NSW EPA and Health as well as South Australian Department of Health granted funding totalling \$27,000 per annum for three

years up to June 2005 which allowed for internet and office costs, but did not pay for any staff. Our priority is to maintain continuity of service with retention of expertise.

**GLASS is now operating and will continue.**

**But the level of activity depends on sponsors.**

**Websites cost money to keep online and they generate lots of enquiries by phone and email.**

**Volunteers are not enough.**

**All the paid staff positions have been terminated due to the lack of funding. Your sponsorship will make it possible for us to pay staff again.**

## What Glass needs

Handling the expected international call rate effectively will require about \$250,000 annually with paid staff or sub-optimally \$27,000 or up to \$47,000 annually for continuation of the volunteer run service.

Cost Item	Annual Cost
Manager	\$55,000
Information & Referral Staff	\$45,000
Information Officer	\$18,000
Accountant/Admin	\$30,000
Resource Manager	\$18,000
<b>Total staffing</b>	<b>\$166,000</b>
Salary on-costs @ 15%	\$25,000
Relief staff	\$12,000
Rent	\$10,000
Phone & internet	\$12,000
Postage	\$6,000
Printing & stationery	\$5,000
Library acquisitions	\$1,000
Software development	\$3,000
Insurance	\$3,000
Other office costs	\$2,000
Travel & allowances	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

The legacy of past and current uses of this extremely versatile and useful product that is lead, is prevalent in the human environment. Without adequate community awareness, this residue of past industry can result in permanent brain damage and other adverse effects in young children and infertility and early death for adults.

**Become a sponsor of the Global Lead Advisory & Support Service to show your commitment to a lead-safe community and to the future of our children.**

**Contact Elizabeth O'Brien, National Coordinator of The LEAD Group to arrange a discussion or seek further information: (02) 9716 0014**

**Make cheques payable to the "Lead Education and Abatement Fund (LEAF)" for tax deductible sponsorship by businesses / philanthropists. Make grant cheques out to**

**The LEAD Group.**

Donations to The LEAD Group's Lead Education and Abatement Fund (LEAF) are tax deductible.

The LEAD Group Inc is endorsed as an Income Tax Exempt Charitable entity under subdivision 50-B of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997

The Lead Education and Abatement Fund (LEAF) is a public fund listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under Item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 and is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient under subdivision 30-BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

The LEAD Group Incorporated **A.B.N. 25 819 463 114**