



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.

Lead *Advisory* Service Australia



LASA



**A GOVERNMENT – BUSINESS – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM LEAD POISONING**

Prospectus 2003

**This Prospectus seeks matching government and business funding so
The LEAD Group can operate LASA, a national advisory service,
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 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.

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.

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

The community-based LEAD Group currently operates a national advisory service – the Lead Advisory Service Australia – that is the most credible source of information on lead in Australia and an empowering network of people and information to solve lead problems. Our Technical Advisory Board contains most of Australia’s lead experts.

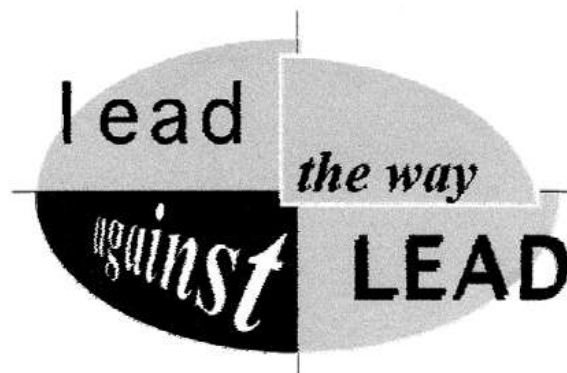
Donations to The LEAD Group’s Lead Education and Abatement Fund (LEAF) are tax deductible.

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.

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Even low levels of lead are a health risk

Lead poisoning is one of the greatest environmental health threats facing Australia 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, Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) set an Australian goal for ALL Australians 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.

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 children'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 is 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.

What needs to be done

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

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 from toxic substances.

In view of Australia's 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. **LASA has and must continue to fill this gap.**

Without LASA, people might call several government departments or non-government groups when seeking information, wasting time as they pass from person to person, often emerging unsatisfied. No one but LASA is equipped for handling complex inquiries about lead. LASA is a national referral service, an efficient way of providing environmental health services.

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, LASA was able to give credible and appropriate safety advice on managing lead-contaminated ceiling dust to homeowners, emergency workers and builders. LASA's 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).

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

The history of The LEAD Group and LASA

LASA 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 in Australia and protecting the environment from lead.

LASA commenced in 1995 under the name of LEADLINE with one year's funding from the Federal environment agency. During FYs 1996-2000, LASA 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 LASA extended until November 2000.

Over the past seven years, The LEAD Group received over one million dollars in government support for LASA's predecessors. The problems have not gone away. This level of funding is needed for the next three years.

Over this period, LASA has handled some 30,800 calls about lead hazards. We have developed the systems, technology and staff to provide an efficient and credible service that assists public and professionals alike with information, advice and referrals.

LASA 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.

What LASA can do

1. Information & referral	LASA handles about 400 calls a month from people needing advice and referral, as well as post, fax and e-mail inquiries from over 40 countries.
2. Library	LASA has the largest specialist library on lead in Australia with books, brochures, clippings and journals on lead
3. Lead Resources database	Over 6800 lead references are stored in our indexed database, the largest publicly accessible source in the country.
4. Referral database	Over 4080 products, service providers, community groups and experts are recorded on our searchable database.
5. Information development	Pamphlets, newsletters, articles and lists are developed to meet specific demands (eg nursing mothers, tenants, ageing, ceiling dust)
6. Call records	Our on-line call database has recorded the nature of all contacts allowing easy monitoring and performance appraisal of over 30850 calls
7. Information distribution	Information packs are assembled and sent to inquirers without charge. Bulk copies are provided to events, hardware stores, vet & doctor surgeries, etc.
8. Web site	Our web site (www.lead.org.au) with over 1000 hits per WEEK, allows people to find out about lead hazards, news and lead safe behaviours for themselves

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. Their breadth of coverage limits their capacity to provide detailed toxic advice. They are not designed to give advice about or referrals to service providers.

LASA's role is different – we deal with topics and issues on which standard educational materials are inadequate. LASA complements Pollution Lines and similar services. LASA 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 LASA. These include at least 53 local councils, 53 NSW authorities, 20 authorities in other states and 19 federal government authorities.

LASA has five 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; LASA's experienced officers, ourselves parents of lead poisoned children, deal 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.

LASA has eight components to its service.

In FY2002, 18% of LASA's new clients were referrals from government and 10% were from business.

LASA 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 LASA 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, LASA is designed and operated as a professional community service.

Service quality protocols

Over five years of operation, LASA has developed a comprehensive manual of protocols to guide staff in all aspects of service provision. These cover a diversity of topics including:

- Phone answering manner and referral procedures
- Recording calls and reporting to funding bodies
- Staffing matters
- Confidentiality and complaints processes.

The LASA Protocols are continually reviewed and refined to cover situations that may arise as LASA learns from its experiences.

The Technical Advisory Board

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 LASA with an array of experts who assist in addressing complex issues and whose advice ensures that LASA advice is current and accurate.

The LEAD Group's Technical Advisory Board

Prof Brian Gulson isotopic fingerprinting
Prof Chris Winder toxicology, occupational, health and safety
Dr Garth Alperstein community paediatrics
Assoc Prof Peter Newman science and technology policy, urban planning
Dr Ian Irvine lead contamination
Dr Chloe Mason public health, environmental protection, public interest
Dr Val Brown environment, consumers
Dr Jill Maddison veterinary research
Graeme Waller pathology, environmental assessment
Fred Salome industrial chemist, paint
Prof Graham Vimpani child and family health
Dr Karl Kruszelnicki medical and scientific commentator
Dr John Wlodarczyk statistician
Prof Geoffrey Duggin clinical toxicologist
Jack Haley automotive engineering, environmental impacts of vehicles
Michelle Calvert local government
Michael Mobbs environmental law
Elizabeth O'Brien community advocacy, international campaigning
Dr Kate Hughes political scientist, toxics campaigner
Dr Marc Grunseit professional and hobby (leadlighting) safety
Robin Mosman conflict resolution
Prof Michael Mira public health, general practice
Dr Ben Balzer general practice
Rosemary Ayoub early childhood education
Mike van Alphen public health and environmental investigation
Mariann Lloyd-Smith international toxics campaigner
Theresa Gordon community advocacy, international campaigning point source community
Carol Bodle lead assessment and occupational hygiene

Our Technical Advisory Board provides access to Australia's leading lead experts.

LASA is dedicated to community service not advocacy

Working with our partners

LASA 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. LASA has three key mechanisms to develop and maintain a trusting relationship.

The LASA Committee

The LEAD Group is establishing a special management committee to direct and monitor LASA. The LASA Committee will consist of a few experts in LASA's lead and advisory roles together with delegates from each of LASA's sponsors.

The LASA Committee will meet twice annually to receive a progress report from The LEAD Group on LASA's operations.

The LASA Committee will advise us if operations need to be varied to improve performance and accountability.

Working with sponsors

LASA has been producing regular reports for the past four years for our previous sponsors, the NSW Environment Protection Authority and Environment Australia. Samples of past reports are available on request.

LASA 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.

All sponsors can have a delegate on the LASA Committee

LASA will report twice a year to all sponsors.

LASA aids the development of an industry body for dust removalists

In 1998, the NSW EPA's Lead Reference Centre advised LASA that the development of an industry organisation was desirable to overcome complaints against contractors in the relatively new field of ceiling dust removal. Guidelines on ceiling dust waste disposal and Protocols for dust removal were needed to protect public, environmental and worker health.

For nearly three years, LASA assisted the development of the Australian Dust Removalists Association (ADRA) Incorporated. This had a direct benefit for LASA's referrals as LASA can now refer callers to members of the Association as a first preference.

To develop the association, LASA gathered the names and details of fifty current ceiling dust contractors using information from our callers, our library and our networks. There was no listing for these contractors in the Yellow Pages.

We then invited all contractors to a series of meetings and kept them informed of progress on government waste guidelines and OH&S guidelines, the industry Code of Practice and a training course developed specifically for ADRA. Finally in November 2000, the Association became incorporated.

The resources needed for LASA

Phone lines

The central resource needed by LASA is a phone line so that people can call for help. Remember, LASA deals with complex lead problems where a brochure in the mail is often an inadequate or inappropriate response and where partial information provision can be positively dangerous (see Case in Point).

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 LASA phone numbers:

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

The LASA phone number is promoted in the Commonwealth booklet Lead Alert: 6 Step Guide to Painting Your Home. This booklet has for several years been the most popular document requested from the Environment Australia Community Information Unit. LASA's freecall is also listed in the Lead Safe NSW factsheet series. LASA can be promoted in publications for specialist groups (eg factsheets to hand to families with notifiable blood lead levels) who are likely to have more complex questions or require more precise information than a Pollution Line or Health Dept switch is designed to provide.

A functional office

The second core requirement for LASA 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

LASA at its core is a call centre, albeit a specialised one designed for complex calls. Over the past seven 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 calls and emailed requests for information on lead providing over **15%** of our new clients in FY2002. LASA is and will continue operating its computerised call centre functions and hopes to be in a position to extend the scope of its information readily available online.

Staffing

The fourth element in the LASA service is the staff. While The LEAD Group can provide a minimal level of service by having volunteers periodically respond to telephone messages, it is not feasible to manage the current level of calls with volunteers. Nor can we expect the skilled information and referral officers to work for nothing.

In managing LASA, 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 which allowed for telephone and postal costs, but did not pay for any staff. Our priority is to retain the attachment of as many staff as possible for as long as possible so that continuity of service can be maintained.

LASA is now operating and will continue.

But the level of activity depends on sponsors.

Volunteers are not enough.

Without adequate funding to support this Prospectus, current staff positions will have to be terminated.

What LASA needs

Handling the expected international call rate effectively will require about \$250,000.

Cost Item	Annual Cost
Manager	\$55,000
Information & Referral Staff	\$45,000
Information Officer	\$18,000
Accountant/Admin	\$30,000
Resource Manager	\$18,000
Total staffing	\$166,000
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
Total	\$250,000

Notes on the budget

Our Information and Referral (I&R) staff, as well as being skilled in lead issues with our extensive Training Manual, are trained to rapidly identify the needs of the caller. Callers are often seeking urgent help after having discovered a potentially threatening toxic situation and may need comfort and support as well as information on what to do next.

LASA receives about 400 calls a month and expects calls nationally could reach around 1000 a month (~50 a day) after a full year's national operations if funding allows for paid promotion and publicity. The average call duration is about 15 minutes, including recording, compatible with other call centre services dealing with complex issues. Thus, 15 calls a day will require 4 hours on-phone staff time while 50 calls need 12 hours staffing.

Between calls, the I&R worker liaises with important networks to monitor developments and promote lead awareness. She also undertakes case management of complex situations requiring repeated contact (eg a paint dust contamination by a contractor or neighbour).

A part-time Information Officer is needed to help record calls onto the Client database, dispatch required information packages, maintain the currency of the Lead Resources database and provide telephone backup when I&R staff are occupied. We anticipate distribution of about **100,000 information items** over a full year, based on levels of activity experienced by LASA (that is, **40,000 information items** distributed in FY2002).

A part-time Resource Manager is needed to maintain and index the library, and monitor stocks of resource information, keep the office and its finances operational and support the networked computer systems, including regularly updating The LEAD Group's website.

The LEAD Group will have to constrain the level of activity of LASA to within resources available.

Sharing the responsibilities

Combating lead poisoning and protecting people from lead hazards is a shared responsibility of governments, business and the community.

This Prospectus seeks commitment from government, business and philanthropists so that The LEAD Group can continue to advise the public and support all stakeholders in maintaining lead awareness.

♦ **Governments** at all levels must act to educate and advise their communities of how to manage common hazards particularly leaded dust from paint, petrol, industry, mining and smelting activities.

♦ **Businesses** that have manufactured or sold lead products must meet their responsibilities to warn the broad community of hazards people can encounter, in addition to their responsibilities for particular sites.

♦ **Philanthropic funds** concerned with environmental and health problems, particularly those affecting children, can validly support LASA.

♦ **Community groups** need to promote lead safe behaviours when communicating with key people in lead-hazardous communities – groups such as Nursing Mothers and Rotary have worked with LASA.

What you can do

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 donations from businesses / philanthropists. Make grant cheques out to The LEAD Group.

Number of Calls to LASA

FY 2001 to 2002

State	Calls	%
NSW	5407	61.91%
VIC	924	10.58%
Overseas	600	6.87%
QLD	533	6.10%
ACT	384	4.40%
TAS	367	4.20%
SA	255	2.92%
WA	173	1.98%
AU	46	0.53%
NT	44	0.50%
Total	8733	

Help us continue the good work. Read the feedback below

Thanks a lot for all your help [re: lead poisoning notifications] it's been absolutely marvellous. Mayor of West Coast Council, Tasmania

I really appreciate talking to you because you're so damn informative! It's great to have one stop on the phone. Mother of 2 year old

Thank you very much for all your help and information Father of child who ingested a sinker and had to have chelation therapy

Your librarian did a fantastic job at putting together information to send me Ceramicist who asked about heavy metals in glazes & silicosis from clay dust.

I'm glad the Lead Advisory Service is there to give me information on how to deal with lead paint, it has been so hard to get information. Parent

I congratulate The LEAD Group for article in "Sydney's Child" and "Melbourne's Child" newspapers for parents, for Lead Poisoning Awareness Day 2000 GP

You must be very strong to continue (to seek funding to run the LASA) mother of lead poisoned Broken Hill child

It's good that you run this service (providing ceiling dust contractor referrals and information) Renovator

LEAD Action News Vol 7 no 4 was brilliant - especially the way you reviewed all the government strategies on leaded consumer products 6 years down the track to see what had happened. PhD student (LASA) was really excellent the way (you) got back to me so quickly with advice about my neighbour's Lead Management Plan (for demolition) Resident.

