

Environmental Lead in Australia

“Lead has not gone away”



**global lead advice
& support service**

Run by



The Lead Education and Abatement Design Group
Working to eliminate lead poisoning globally and to protect the environment from lead in all its uses: past, current and new uses
ABN 25 819 463 114

Australians! Take action today. Is lead harming you & your kids? Buy low cost, NATA accredited laboratory lead test kits [here](#). **Sample your dust, soil, water, paint, toys, jewellery, ceramics**
NEW! Water Lead test Kits

Proceeds from our DIY Home Lead Assessment kit sales go towards the Keeping Australian Lead Out of Leaded Petrol Initiative.

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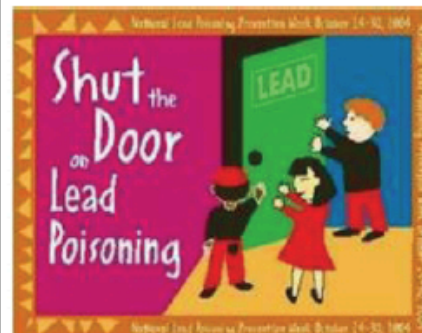
Lead information in [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#) and [Indonesian](#) now available

[lead poisoning hazard consumer product recalls](#)

**Australian Dust Removalists
Association (A.D.R.A) Incorporated**

Link re: [lead dust removal](#)

The LEAD Group Inc. campaigns for the removal of lead from petrol and other products and conducts an advice and information service about lead, the Global Lead Advice & Support Service (GLASS).



“Shut the Door on Lead Poisoning”
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US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

[Click here to donate to help achieve the end of leaded petrol globally](#)



“Reaching” [Closing the door on lead poisoning – Reaching for a Lead-Safe World] reprinted with kind permission of photographer & artist
Phillippa Jane Bolton, Sydney, Australia.

Professor Mark P Taylor
LEAD Group
& Environmental Science, Macquarie University
mark.taylor@mq.edu.au

Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment (Australia), 1992

SCHEDULE 4 - NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION MEASURES

General Purpose (objectives)

- (i) that people enjoy the benefit of equivalent protection from air, water and soil pollution and from noise, wherever they live;

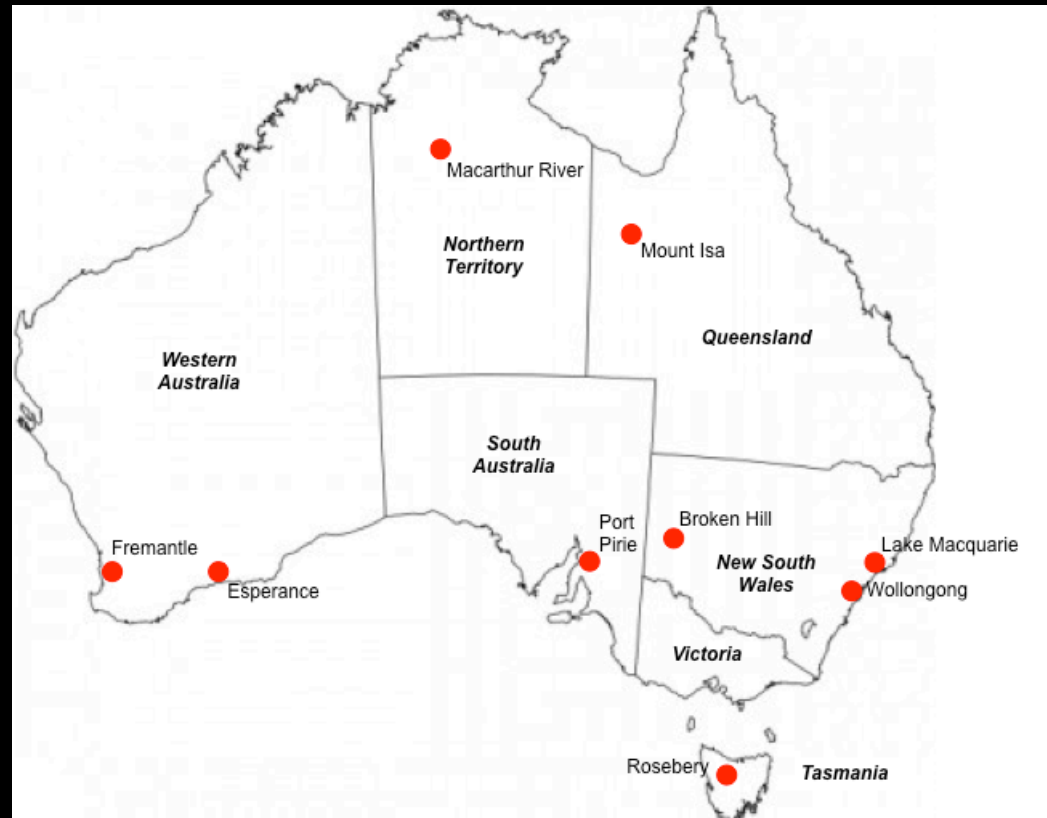
- (ii) that decisions by business are not distorted and markets are not fragmented by variations between jurisdictions in relation to the adoption or implementation of major environment protection measures.

Standards/guidelines etc

- Leaded petrol removed from sale 2002
- Surface paint (1997) 0.1 % (1000 mg/kg)
- Primer paint (1997) 0.2 % (2000 mg/kg)
- SOIL – residential standard – 300 mg/kg
- Lead in air – 0.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ averaged over a year
- Dust – Australian Standard in houses of 1000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^2$
- Cosmetic standard – 100 mg/kg if greater must carry the word “poison”
- Blood lead NHMRC goal – 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$

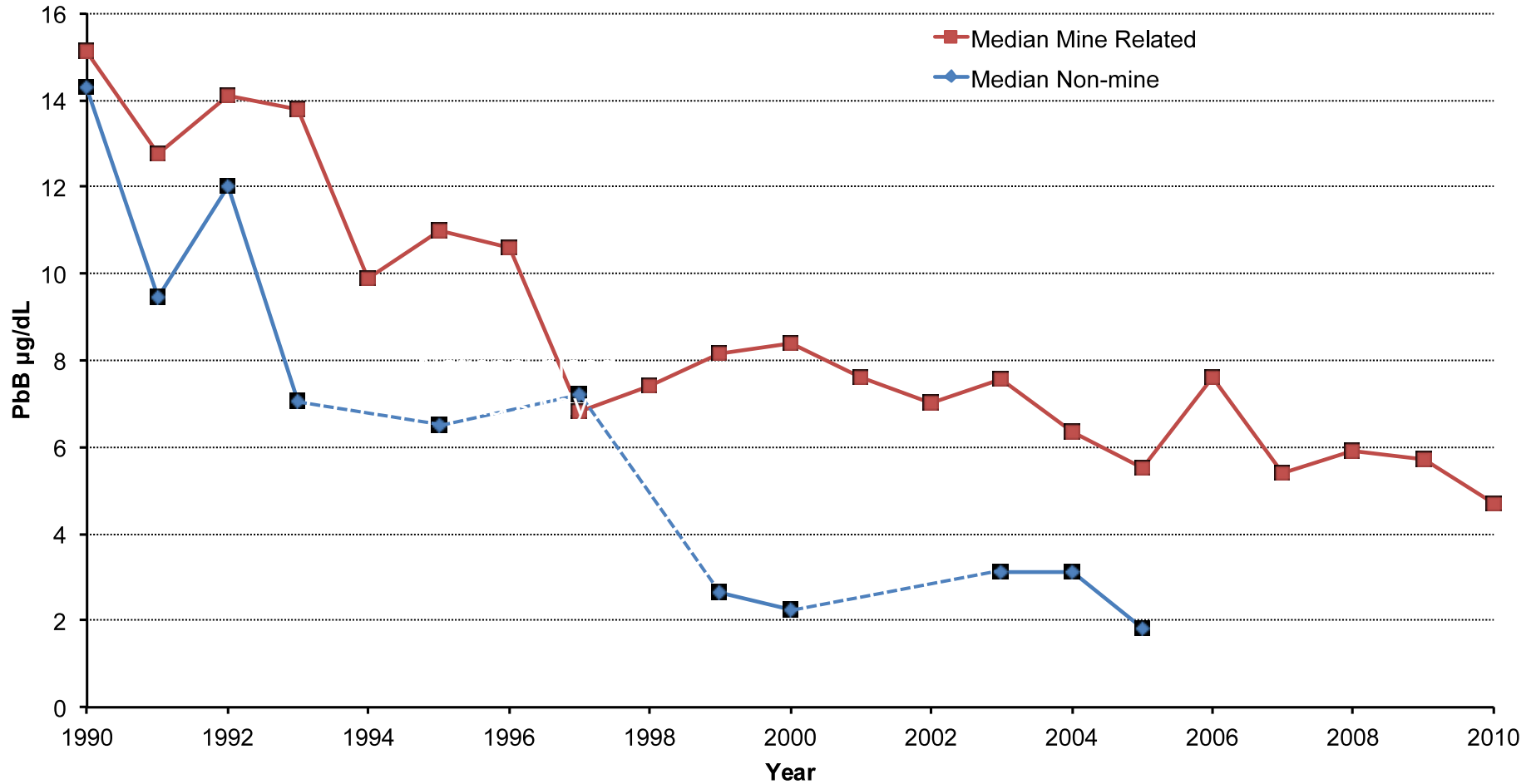
Mining and smelting Australia

- Major Australian mining and smelting cities:
 - Broken Hill (NSW)
 - Mount Isa (Queensland)
 - Port Pirie (South Australia)
- Lead and other environmental contaminants – e.g. arsenic, cadmium and sulfur dioxide.
- In each of these cities there is significant historic contamination as well as ongoing sources.



Blood lead levels in Australia: 1990 – 2010

Historical Australian Median Blood Lead Concentrations: 1990-2010
Mining and Non-Mining Related Towns



Lead cases – Queensland 2010



Table 3: Causes of Non-Occupational Lead Exposure 2010

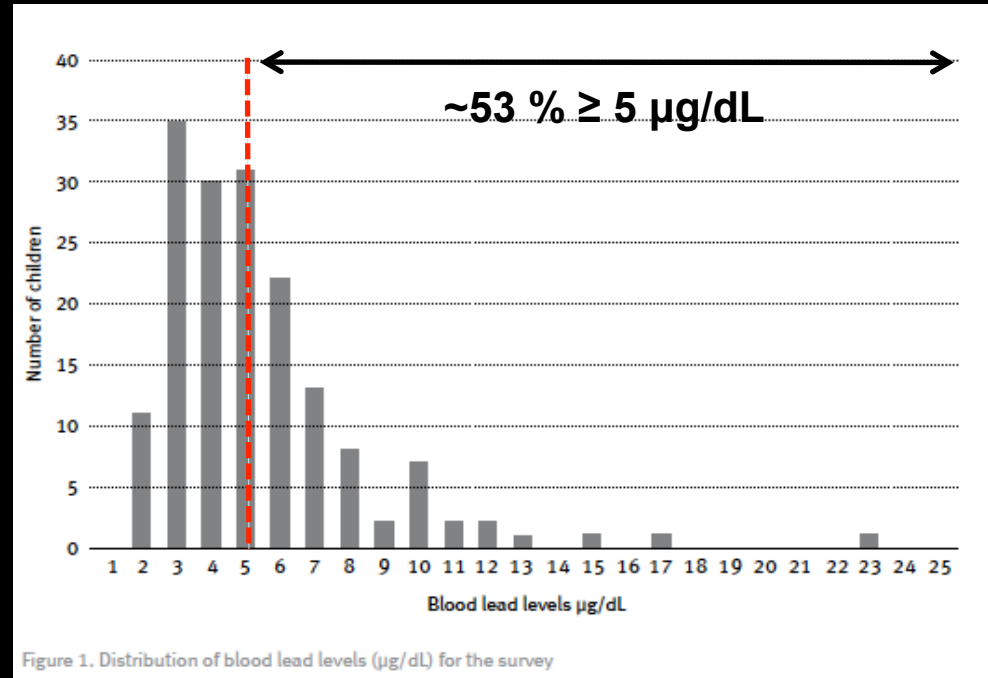
Causes of Lead Exposure	Cases	%	Children 0-4 years	%
Removal of Lead-Based Paint From Domestic Buildings	13	25.5%	1	6.7%
Mount Isa Resident - General Non-Specific Environmental Lead Exposure	9	17.6%	9	60.0%
Exposure at Indoor/ Outdoor Rifle Range	7	13.7%	0	0.0%
Making Lead Sinkers, Lead Toy Soldiers	1	2.0%	0	0.0%
Others*	8	15.7%	1	6.7%
Unknown Source of Exposure	13	25.5%	4	26.7%
Total	51	100%	15	100%

* Others included: exposure from: use of lead based medicinal preparations, leaded petrol, welding with lead material, skin penetration

Mining, smelting, environmental health

Mount Isa blood lead study (2010)

- Australia's leading emitter of lead, copper, arsenic, cadmium and other elements to the environment.
- Elevated PbB levels -
 - A child every 9 days in Mount Isa is lead poisoned;
- Elevated dust and soil levels.
- No prosecutions for environmental pollution.



Source: www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/tphn/lead_report_2010.pdf

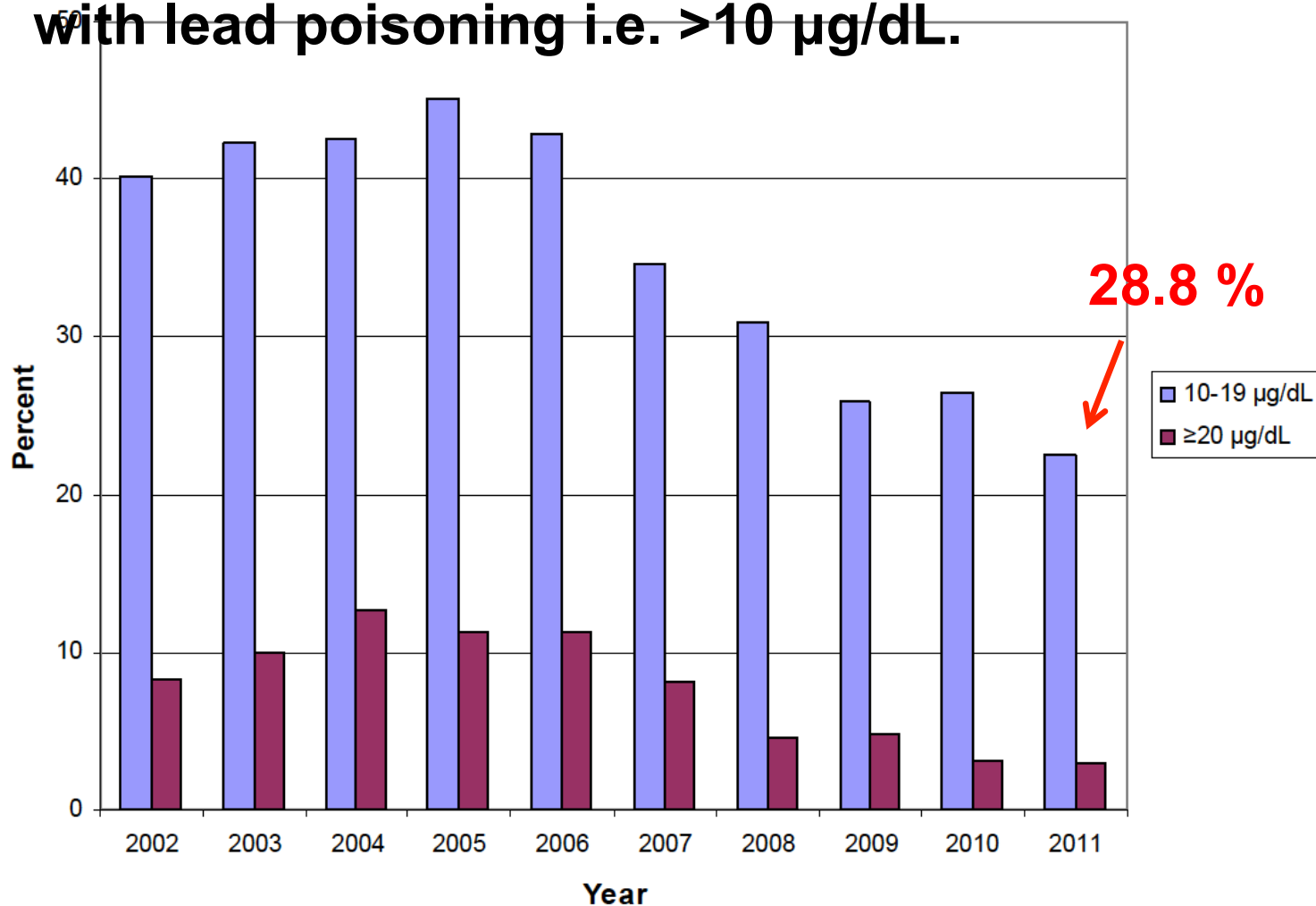


Pollution blowing across Mount Isa urban area, February 22nd 2012

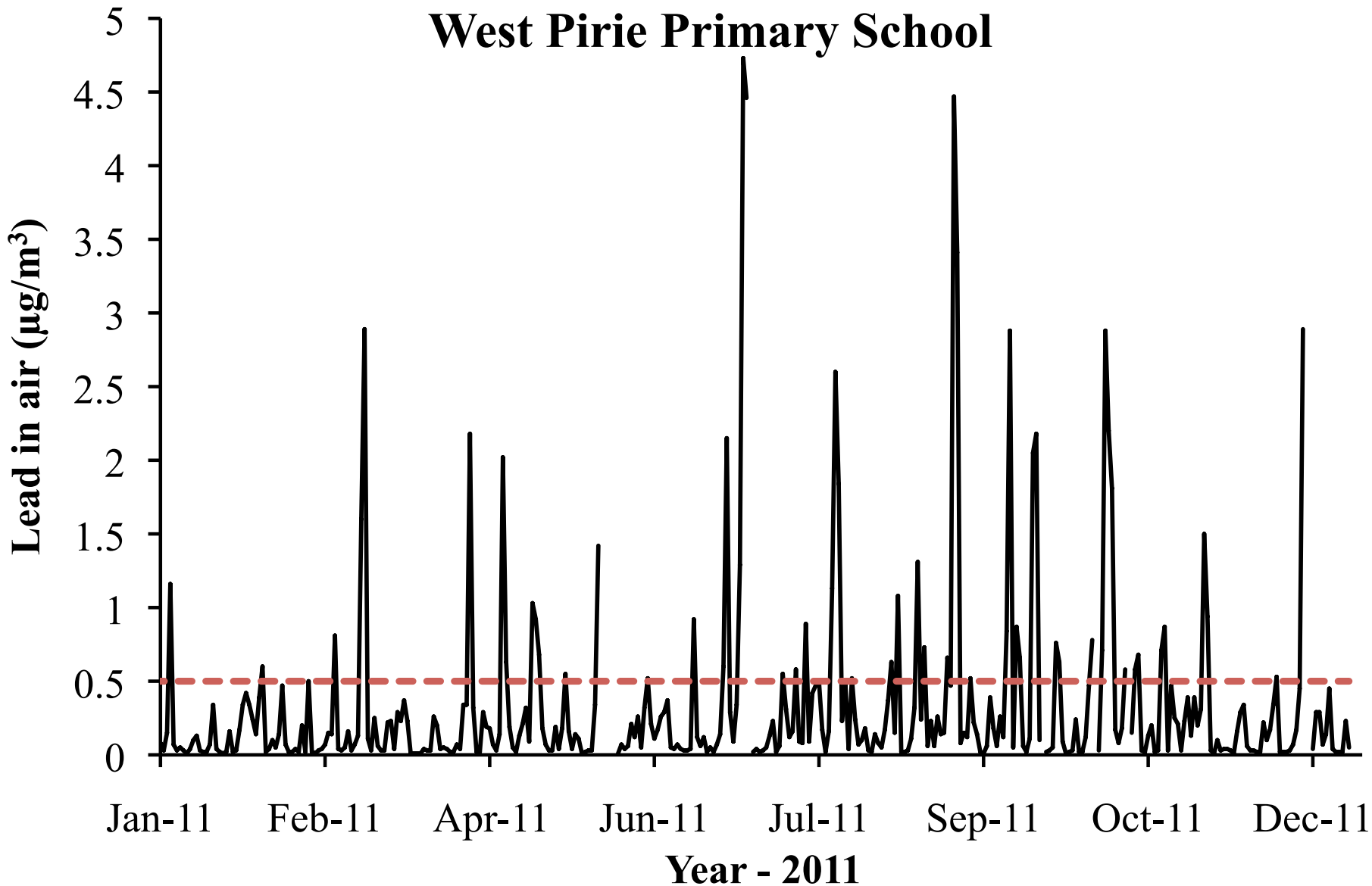
Port Pirie – blood lead levels in children < 5 years of age

Graph 2: Percentage of blood lead levels 10-19 $\mu\text{g/dL}$ and $\geq 20 \mu\text{g/dL}$ without surrogates for each calendar year since 2002.

A child every 2-3 days in Port Pirie presented with lead poisoning i.e. $>10 \mu\text{g/dL}$.



Lead in air – Port Pirie 2011



Informed by proper advice?!

Residents told 'boil it'

Lead found in drinking water

TAPWATER in four Outback towns has been found to contain unhealthy amounts of lead, SA Water testing samples show.

Testing by SA Water between July 2010 and June last year, the results of which were obtained by the Liberals, showed unsafe lead levels in four towns along the Barrier Highway, north-east of Peterborough.

The highest reading of 0.104mg/L - more than 10 times the recommended safe level - was found in one of three samples taken at Mannahill.

Two samples from Oodlawirra were over the recommended level, the highest hitting 0.0289mg/L.

One sample at Olary returned 0.015mg/L and another at Yunta reached 0.0089mg/L.

Australian drinking water guidelines dictate water should contain less than 0.01mg of lead per litre.

Opposition regional development spokesman Dan van Holst Pellekaan said that residents had been told the water was safe to drink if boiled despite the fact "boiling does not remove lead".

"Regional South Australians deserve to have affordable, good quality water just like those living in metropolitan Adelaide," he said.

"The Government must explain whether these communities were told that they should not drink the water and that

POLITICAL REPORTER

LAUREN NOVAK



boiling the water would not reduce the lead content."

Water Minister Paul Caica deferred to SA Water for a response on the "operational matter".

An SA Water spokeswoman said the organisation tested non-drinkable water supplies, such as those supplied to the towns identified, on a regular basis and immediately reported unsafe results to the Health Department.

She said the water quality at Mannahill, Olary, Oodlawirra and Yunta had been discussed with the department.

"Under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines there are no immediate risks to public health with short-term exceedances or consumption of these metals," she said.

"A public advisory would not normally be required unless the concentrations found are so high that an acute health impact is possible."

A separate report released on Tuesday showed flooding in the Murray-Darling Basin made it harder for SA Water to meet standards for drinking water quality last summer.

RULING CHALLENGED: Nicole Medlin Mick Molloy.

LEAD Group goals

(Lead Education and Abatement Design Group)

Global

- Lead Poisoning Awareness Week
- WHO's and UNEP's Lead Poisoning Prevention Day of Action – ?October 2012, or otherwise ASAP

Australia

- Lower blood lead intervention level
- Adjust and improve environmental and consumer product lead standards