



# Botany Groundwater Cleanup Project

Fact Sheet 14

September 2004

Fact sheets are designed to provide the community with simple and easy-to-understand information on environmental science and technology. Readers requiring greater detail should contact Orica:

- by email to [info@oricabotanygroundwater.com](mailto:info@oricabotanygroundwater.com)
- by phoning our Community Feedback Line - 1800 025 138
- by writing to - Community Matters, 16-20 Beauchamp Road, Matraville 2036

## The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

### What is the Stockholm Convention?

The Convention is a global treaty aimed at protecting human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms and are toxic to humans and wildlife. The twelve worst POPs include pesticides, industrial chemicals and two families of unintentional chemical by products (dioxins and furans). In implementing the Convention, governments will take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs into the environment. The Convention entered into force on 17 May 2004.

The Convention encourages the use of "best available techniques". The concept of "best available techniques" is not aimed at the prescription of any specific technique or technology, but at taking into account the technical characteristics of the installation concerned, its geographical location and the local environmental conditions together with appropriate control techniques to reduce the release of POPs.

### How is the Convention relevant to the Botany Groundwater Cleanup Project?

Orica intends to use a process known as "thermal oxidation" to destroy the contaminants once extracted from the groundwater. The process is robust, effective and well used around the world.

Orica recognises Australia's commitments as a signatory to the Stockholm Convention. By using the Best Available Technology, as suggested by the European Commission in its "Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Reference Document", the generation of POPs is virtually eliminated.

In the IPPC document for Large Volume Organic Chemical Industry, the section on Ethylene Dichloride manufacture, discusses destruction of EDC and VCM vent streams. The recommended technology includes thermal oxidation.

Through the use of best available technology the operation of the proposed plant will not compromise Australia's obligations under the Convention and would not pose any significant health or safety risks to the community or the environment.

### Links to further references

Stockholm Convention website: [www.pops.int](http://www.pops.int)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Expert Group on Best Available Techniques and Best Environmental Practices – Third Session: [http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/bat\\_bep/3rd\\_session/Default.htm](http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/bat_bep/3rd_session/Default.htm)

European Commission *Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Reference Document on Best Available Techniques for the Large Volume Organic Chemical Industry*, February 2003:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ippc/brefs/lvo\\_final\\_0203.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ippc/brefs/lvo_final_0203.pdf)

Orica Fact Sheet 12 – Thermal Oxidation

Orica Fact Sheet 13 – Dioxins in the environment