

Our toxic timebomb

Protest at South Fremantle

By **JIM KELLY**

A SOUTH Fremantle woman is mounting a lone protest against the excavation of a contaminated former industrial site.

Bobby Wilson says LandCorp has ignored community fears about excavation work at the 4ha former Robb Jetty rail marshalling yard at South Beach.

Protesters recently picketed Jim McGinty's electoral office and demanded a stop to the work.

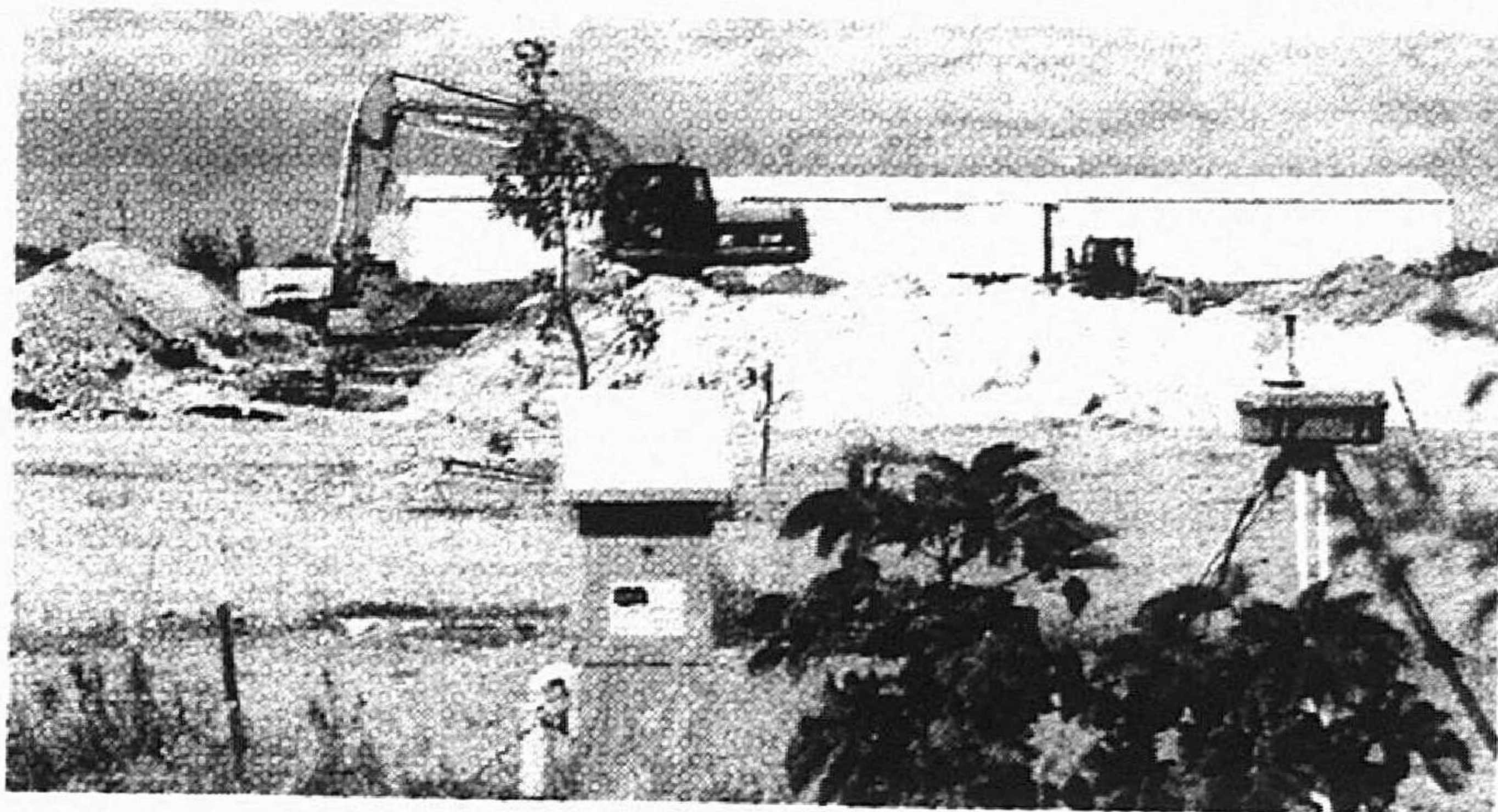
The beachside land is one of three adjoining, contaminated industrial sites due to become upmarket housing estates.

LandCorp has reassured residents the long-overdue clean-up of the rail site is being closely monitored.

The department's environment business manager, John Yeates, said site testing for contamination had exceeded Department of Environment requirements.

"The onsite works are constantly checked by an independent project manager as well as environmental consultants who visit and review work at least twice a day," he said.

But Ms Wilson claimed the



TOP: Bobby Wilson. ABOVE: Work at the old rail yards.

LandCorp site, which is next to a former smelter, was heavily contaminated with lead.

Several residents have moved out of South Fremantle, rather than risk exposing their families to the toxic dust.

Alarms set up to monitor dust levels have been triggered on several occasions.

Lead "hot spots" were found on the site before the clean-up began, but Ms Wilson claimed the level of contamination could be much greater than tests had shown.

She said LandCorp had refused to extend its testing program in order to avoid alarming the community.

Ms Wilson said LandCorp had ignored demands for extensive testing of soil removed from the site.

LandCorp's chief executive Ross Holt said the work would eventually transform a blighted beachside industrial strip into a development of which the community would be proud.

He said the development had strong local support.

"This part of South Beach has for too long been alienated from the Fremantle community because of its past uses," he said. "Now we can get on and provide community infrastructure that will support coastal living."