

EPA 05/17652

I write regarding your story "Suburb's Chemical Danger Zone Grows" in The Advertiser on Saturday, March 5.

This story is consistent with the EPA's advice, given on February 22, that hazardous chemicals from the former Hills Industries site may exist in domestic bores in the area.

With respect to the arsenic and chromium that were reported to have been found by The Advertiser in bore water adjacent to the Hills site and at the Morphettville Racecourse, the EPA advises that these chemicals, and other heavy metals, occur naturally in bore water at varying levels. The level of the metals present will depend on the properties of the soils and rocks that the groundwater passes through. Indeed, this is one of the key reasons for SA Health's advice to test bore water prior to using it.

Reports provided to the EPA thus far show that arsenic and chromium are not present in groundwater at levels above drinking water guidelines, either on the former Hills site or under nearby houses, and that the Hills site is not a source of these chemicals in groundwater.

The full extent of the groundwater plume has not been established and further testing is needed to determine the boundary, which the EPA advised residents and the media in February.

I am pleased to say that precautionary testing of bores at Forbes Primary School and Edwardstown Oval (which is owned by Marion Council), both of which source their water from a deeper aquifer, have been cleared of hazardous chemicals associated with the Hills Industries site. This information was placed on the EPA website last Thursday and is included in a letter to residents sent last week.

Anyone with a residential bore in the affected area should not use their bore for any purpose until further notice. Rainwater and mains water are not affected.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Helen Fulcher'.

Helen Fulcher
Chief Executive
Environment Protection Authority

Date: 6 March 2011