



▶ FLINDERS POWER ASH DAM Community Update #1

Issued 6 January 2017

This is the first in a series of regular updates on the management and control of the dust from the ash dam located on Port Augusta Power Stations Site (Flinders Power). The Flinders Power site is regulated by the EPA under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* for several activities of environmental significance. A copy of the current EPA licences can be viewed on our website by following the links to Licensing and then searching on 'Flinders Power', or click here: [EPA13006](#) if you are viewing this publication online.

The EPA has been working on the closure of the power stations with Flinders Power, the Port Augusta City Council and a State Government Taskforce led by the Department of State Development for approximately 18 months. A key element of the power station closure is the successful decommissioning of the ash dam to ensure the community is protected from adverse impacts such as dust and groundwater contamination, with ongoing monitoring of both.

Dust control at the Flinders Power site

Dust control is the legal responsibility of Flinders Power, and since the announcement that the power station would cease operation, the EPA placed a number of conditions on Flinders Power to ensure it met environmental requirements, including development of a Closure Plan controlling dust from the ash dam. Conditions of the EPA licence include:

- Dust Prevention (S-9): develop and implement a Dust Management Plan approved by the EPA.
- Development and Implement Closure and Post-Closure Plan (U-251): to address environmental considerations at the site, including controlling dust from the ash dam and rehabilitation of the dams.
- Ambient Monitoring and Reporting (U-124): to monitor and report ambient pollutants including TSP (total suspended particles) and PM10 (particulate matter 10 micrometres or less in diameter).

All documents are available on the EPA website.



Whilst the power station was operational, dust was controlled by the ongoing pumping of an ash and seawater slurry onto the ash dam, producing a salt crust that was effective in sealing the surface. After the power station's closure in May 2016, this pumping arrangement was no longer effective, and higher than acceptable levels of dust were recorded in the following months during unfavourable weather conditions. Flinders Power then applied a dust suppressant, which required the dams to be dry in order for the sealant to adhere.

Flinders Power undertook aerial spraying in November 2016 as an interim measure until long-term rehabilitation with soil and revegetation, in accordance with the [Station Closure Plan](#). This longer term work will take around six months to complete and the dam has to be dry. Dust suppressant is the best option in the shorter term, with other options having been considered and determined not feasible.

Extreme weather in summer 2016-17

In late December, approximately 60 millimetres of rain fell over Port Augusta. Flinders Power notified the EPA and other key stakeholders that this rainfall event had damaged the dust suppressant layer. Following this, strong southerly winds caused dust from the ash dam to blow over the Port Augusta township.

On Monday 2 January 2016, the EPA made arrangements to mobilise staff to Port Augusta and requested that Flinders Power meet urgently to alleviate the impact on the community. On 3 January Flinders Power agreed to:

- evidence of dust suppressant order placed for full coverage
- dust suppression reapplication aerielly, informed by aerial photography and observations on source areas of priority
- actions taken and further plans in place to inform the community and respond to questions and concerns on immediate and long-term closure of the ash dam
- timing on installation and commissioning of continuous PM₁₀ monitoring stations at the ash dam and within the township (at locations approved by the EPA) for continuous air monitoring which informs the development of site-specific trigger values and remedial mitigation measures and determines exceedances as specified in Schedule 2 of the Environment Protection (Air Quality) Policy 2016
- McMahons and Flinders Power water carts on roadways and to suppress dust on edges of ash dam
- monitoring of weather conditions and proactive measures for dust suppression across the Flinders Power site; and
- close monitoring of polishing pond water levels, odour generation and application of odour suppressant.

Keeping the community informed

This week we have received a number of questions from the community and are working on a Frequently Asked Questions publication. This will be distributed to our email distribution list and posted to the website shortly. To receive a hard copy please contact us on the number below.

Health advice

[SA health](#) has established a hotline for residents with health concerns or questions.

Please **ph: (08) 8226 7100**. SA Health has also released a [fact sheet](#) on dust and your health which includes the following general advice:

- Stay indoors, and close windows and doors where possible
- Avoid exposure to outdoor dust clouds
- Seek medical advice if experiencing increased symptoms
- Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion in areas of high dust pollution
- Air conditioners are safe to use because of their filter systems
- The dust in Port Augusta will not reduce the safety of rainwater collected from roof catchments

The dust will not reduce the safety of water in swimming pools and recreational pools are safe to use.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:

Telephone:
(08) 8204 2004

Email:
portaugustadust@epa.sa.gov.au

Website: www.epa.sa.gov.au

(Click hyperlink if viewing this publication online) or follow the link at the bottom left hand corner to Port Augusta Power Station Site.

To request any of this information in the post, please do not hesitate to call us on the above number.

For health related information please contact:

Telephone:
(08) 8226 7100

Website: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

(Click hyperlink if viewing this publication online, or type into the search window 'dust Port Augusta'.)

