



Media statement



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Port Augusta ash dam penalty

Statement from EPA Chief Executive Tony Circelli

The EPA is continuing to work towards making sure Flinders Power takes steps for a sustainable, long-term solution for the rehabilitation of the ash dam.

This penalty should not be seen in isolation; it is part of a much broader and extensive regulatory process to ensure that Flinders Power takes all possible steps to ensure that the former ash dam is rehabilitated.

The penalty applied to Flinders Power for the dust event does not relate to the extent of the dust, but rather to the company's ability to have prevented it. The fact that the company had applied dust suppressant, which was washed away in severe weather conditions in December 2016, impacted on the amount of the penalty. The amount of the penalty is calculated using a set process, which is publicly-available on the EPA website https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/our_work/civil-penalty-calculation-policy.

The civil penalty imposed is in addition to further regulatory actions taken at the time of the dust event, including an Environment Protection Order, which was issued in January 2017.

The EPA is continuing to monitor and regulate Flinders Power to require it to take action to prevent dust impacts on the Port Augusta community. The EPA has taken extensive regulatory action over the past two years, since the power stations closed, to ensure that Flinders Power is taking all reasonable and practicable steps to prevent further dust impacts on the community.

While the power stations were operating, it was not possible to begin rehabilitation of the ash dam. The 220-hectare dam (equivalent of 2 km x 2 km) has since been covered in topsoil and the community is no longer exposed to ash dam dust. A seeding program to revegetate the site is underway.

Detailed information about the EPA's regulation of Flinders Power can be found at: https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/business_and_industry/industry-updates/flinders-power-port-augusta (click on 'reported dust events' for information and a detailed report on the January 1 2017 event)