



# Media release



Environment Protection Authority  
GPO Box 2607 Adelaide SA 5001  
211 Victoria Square Adelaide SA 5000  
T (08) 8204 2004  
Country areas 1800 623 445

12 March 2019

## Environmental licence for channel widening

The Environment Protection Authority has provided a licence to Flinders Ports to govern widening of the Outer Harbor shipping channel, with strict conditions in place designed to protect the marine environment.

EPA Director, Science and Information, Keith Baldry, said the environmental licence conditions took into account 85 submissions received from stakeholders and members of the community during a public consultation period late last year.

“Protecting seagrass is one of our biggest concerns, as it is vital to a healthy marine ecosystem,” Mr Baldry said.

“It will be monitored before, during and after dredging, with real-time alarms and stop-work triggers in place during the operation if the water becomes too cloudy.

“One of the main issues during the channel dredging in 2005-06 was seagrass loss due to sand and silt clouding the water and settling on the plants, preventing them from photosynthesising.

“In the new channel widening, dredging will not start until mid-year, when seagrass is naturally less active.

“Some loss of seagrass is inevitable, particularly in the area to be directly dredged, but the licence conditions aim to contain it to the immediate area either side of the channel as much as possible.”

Mr Baldry said Flinders Ports would also be required to satisfy Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) that they could minimise the risk of the spread of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS).

“Other licence conditions include the need for trained marine mammal observers on vessels to prevent harm to the Port River dolphins, reducing the risk of the spread of the invasive aquatic weed *Caulerpa taxifolia* from the river, and a requirement to make monitoring information publicly available in real time.

“Silt and other material dredged from the channel will be placed in an area approximately 30km off shore in Gulf St Vincent, at the same location as was used during 2005-06.”

The channel widening project is designed to allow larger ships to access the Port facilities.

The Minister for Planning approved the development application for the project in May 2018, having taken into account advice from the EPA and other State Government agencies.

For full details of the environmental licensing process, visit [www.epa.sa.gov.au/business\\_and\\_industry/industry-updates/flinders-ports](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/business_and_industry/industry-updates/flinders-ports)