

Thursday, 21 November 2019

Groundwater prohibition area for Thebarton and Mile End

The use of bore water will be banned in parts of Thebarton and Mile End in Adelaide's west from next month.

A groundwater prohibition area (GPA) takes effect on 12 December in an area bordered by South and Port roads, the River Torrens, and Livingstone and Rose streets (see attached map).

EPA Director, Regulation, Peter Dolan, said testing had been under way since 2017, and residents had already been asked not to use their bore water for any purpose.

"There are at least seven contaminated sites in this area, but the primary source is a former metal processor on George Street," Mr Dolan said.

"Testing has found a range of hazardous chemicals in the groundwater, including chlorinated and petroleum hydrocarbons such as tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE).

"PCE and TCE can cause serious health problems, including cancer, if people come into contact with them over long periods, but a bore water ban removes the major pathway for exposure.

"Mains water and rainwater are not affected by any of the contaminants, and it is safe to eat home-grown produce so long as it has not been irrigated with bore water.

"The water used by West End Brewing for its beer and in the community water fountain on Port Road is absolutely safe, as it comes from the much deeper, contamination-free tertiary aquifer."

Testing at one of the other contaminated sites, the former Amdel Laboratory at 25 West Thebarton Road, found heavy metals, including a small amount of uranium.

The lab analysed rock and mineral samples from Radium Hill and other uranium prospects around the state, and in the early 1950s, waste from the tests was disposed of in a nearby clay pit.

Most of the contaminated material was removed in the 1980s and '90s, and the pit was filled in and paved over for use as a carpark.

"Radiation is not a cause for concern for surrounding residents," Mr Dolan said. "We are talking about a very small amount of un-refined uranium, which contains only low levels of naturally occurring radioactive material.

"The groundwater contamination is localised to a single test well next to the clay pit, and there is no evidence it has moved off the Amdel site.

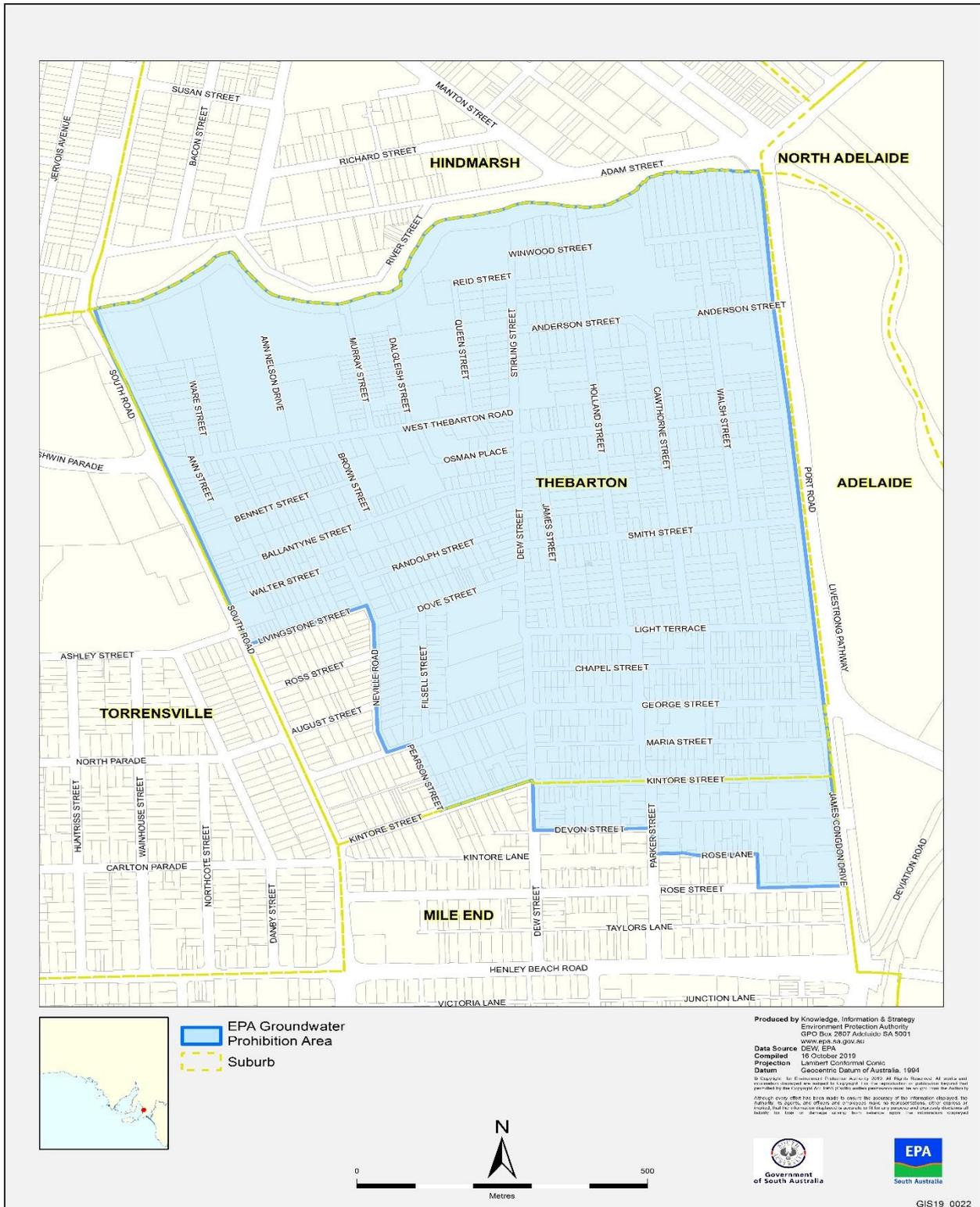
"On most of the property, radiation is no different from the normal background levels you'd find anywhere else in Adelaide. The risk would be from metal toxicity from drinking the groundwater.

GPA's already exist in several parts of the metropolitan area, including Edwardstown, Allenby Gardens, Glenelg East and Hendon.

In a prohibition area, it is illegal to use groundwater above certain depths for any purpose, and a maximum penalty of \$8,000 applies.

For more information, visit <https://engage.epa.sa.gov.au/Thebarton>

Thebarton and Mile End – groundwater prohibition area



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