

Thursday, 6 February 2020

## If you use bore water, remember it's best to test

With home bores getting their biggest workout in late summer, the Environment Protection Authority is reminding all bore owners to make it a priority to have their groundwater tested regularly.

EPA Manager Site Contamination Andrew Pruszinski said without regular testing by a professional, accredited laboratory, bore users couldn't assume the water was safe.

"Bore water tends not be used for drinking in metropolitan Adelaide, but if you're using it to irrigate your home-grown produce or your lawn, or to fill your pool, chemical contamination can still be a serious concern," Mr Pruszinski said.

"There are several accredited labs that can test your water for a fee.

"Over the years, there has been a wide range of industry and manufacturing operating in the Adelaide region, and chemical handling procedures have not always been as robust as they are now.

"As well as unintentional spills and leaks, there was a widespread belief that chemicals would evaporate if poured onto the ground.

"Chemicals like hydrocarbons, heavy metals, nitrates, pesticides, and PFAS from firefighting foams have leached into the soil in some areas, and some of these, like TCE and PCE, are associated with serious human health risks."

Dry cleaners, foundries, metal processors, timber processing plants, airports, landfills, refrigeration factories, petrol stations and fuel stores have all been associated with groundwater contamination.

Mr Pruszinski said just because residents had not been notified of contamination did not mean they could assume their groundwater was safe to use.

"People in a number of areas in metropolitan Adelaide have been asked not to use their bore water for any reason," he said.

"These include five EPA assessment areas where testing is currently under way, and another five groundwater prohibition areas where contamination is so widespread and severe that bore water use has been completely banned.

"But it's important to remember that these are not the only contaminated sites.

"And once groundwater is contaminated, it is likely to remain so for many years as aquifers are exceptionally difficult to clean up, so if you have ever been told not to use your bore water, you should not start to use it again unless it has been confirmed to be safe."

Rainwater and mains water are not affected by groundwater contamination.

For more information on site contamination and bore water, visit

[https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/environmental\\_info/site\\_contamination/groundwater](https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/environmental_info/site_contamination/groundwater)

For more information on current assessment areas and groundwater prohibition areas, visit

[https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/data\\_and\\_publications/site\\_contamination\\_monitoring/assessment\\_areas](https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/data_and_publications/site_contamination_monitoring/assessment_areas)