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Further investigations for West Lakes groundwater

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is planning to expand its groundwater testing program to determine the extent of impact to shallow groundwater and deeper aquifers in West Lakes and parts of Royal Park.

The EPA has sampled lake water, stormwater, fish and crustaceans, and groundwater in the West Lakes area after elevated concentrations of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) were found in soil, groundwater and sewage sludge samples near the former Port Adelaide wastewater treatment plant.

The lake water and fish testing results were available in September, (see <https://engage.epa.sa.gov.au/westlakes>), and now testing undertaken as part of the groundwater study has confirmed that shallow groundwater (bore water) is contaminated with dissolved metals and PFAS.

EPA Director Regulation Peter Dolan said groundwater salinity and groundwater quality is highly variable across the study area and on that basis further investigations are needed.

“Based on the latest test results, we think it likely that elevated concentrations of PFAS are present in areas where sewage sludge was spread during the West Lakes development.

“These areas were previously identified as having elevated metal concentrations (particularly cadmium) in soils and management measures were implemented on affected private properties in the early 2000s.

“We’re now planning to contact residents and landholders in the area about an extension of our groundwater assessment program in early 2021,” Mr Dolan said.

“Because groundwater in portions of West Lakes is contaminated with PFAS and dissolved metals above drinking water guidelines, residents are advised not to use their bore water for any purpose. Rainwater and mains water are not affected.

“To establish the extent of the contamination, we are planning to extend the monitoring well network to new areas of West Lakes and to parts of Royal Park. The proposed monitoring area covers 815 land titles, including 697 residential properties.

For more information or a copy of the groundwater monitoring test results visit:
<https://engage.epa.sa.gov.au/westlakes>

If you live in the West Lakes area and have questions regarding your bore water please email:
engage.epa@sa.gov.au or call 08 8463 4799.