

## Nyrstar set to breach EPA licence

Nyrstar's Port Pirie Smelter will breach conditions of its new licence at the end of the year, based on current tracking of the smelter's lead-in-air emissions.

Nyrstar's licence for operations at Port Pirie was renewed on 1 July 2020 and included tougher lead-in-air limits and targets.

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) CEO Tony Circelli said based on current readings Nyrstar will exceed its new annual average lead-in-air limit of 0.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at Pirie West on 31 December 2020.

"Once this exceedance is confirmed, Nyrstar will be in breach of its new licence and this will trigger a formal EPA investigation," Mr Circelli said.

"As well as being on track to exceed a licence limit at the Pirie West compliance monitoring location, Nyrstar is also likely to exceed its annual average targets at the Ellen Street and Boat Ramp locations, and two three-month average targets at the Ellen Street and Pirie West locations.

"Once confirmed, Nyrstar will be required to provide a report to the EPA by 8 January 2021 detailing the cause of these targets being exceeded, and actions it proposes to take to eliminate future occurrences.

"Based on that information, and the EPA's own investigation, we will then determine what further enforcement actions are appropriate.

"The EPA applied significantly tighter licence conditions for Nyrstar at the licence renewal on 1 July 2020 – effectively requiring a 20 per cent reduction in emissions.

"The EPA considered the new conditions to be reasonable and practically achievable by Nyrstar, and also considered them important to drive improved environmental performance and accountability across key areas of impact.

"Breaching licence conditions is a serious matter and ultimately, Nyrstar is responsible for meeting the conditions of its EPA licence, including lead-in-air limits and targets imposed to protect the environment and human health.

"While the EPA investigates this matter formally, it will not be appropriate to comment or speculate on likely compliance outcomes. Suffice to say, this is an extremely disappointing outcome and indicates unacceptable discharges of lead to Port Pirie in 2020."

**See Page 2 for background information**

## Background information:

Nyrstar's EPA licence was renewed on 30 June 2020 for a period of 12 months. The conditions for operation of the Nyrstar smelter included:

- New lead-in-air compliance **limits**, specifying a reduction from 0.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 0.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> lead-in-air based on a rolling annual average, measured four times per year in March, June, September and December.
- New three month rolling lead-in-air average **targets** at four locations in Port Pirie, to be measured monthly from December 2020, to better focus efforts toward control of shorter emission episodes and peaks.
- Two annual average lead-in-air **targets** at two locations in Port Pirie, measured twice per year in June and December.
- A new requirement for Nyrstar to advise the EPA and the general public of any exceedance of **targets** within 72 hours of laboratory confirmation, as well as provide a summary report to the EPA detailing causes and proposed action to avoid future exceedances.
- A requirement to develop an Environment Improvement Programme (EIP) that includes agreed measures to be undertaken by Nyrstar to further reduce lead-in-air emissions. The EPA formally approved the Nyrstar EIP on 22 December 2020.

Key actions of the EIP address the following:

- A vastly improved real-time dust monitoring network, enabling detailed understanding of emission source attribution and rapid response to emission events.
- Improvements to key lead emission sources including:
  - TSL Furnace emission reduction works, including to tapping and casting operations
  - Slag Block handling and storage modifications
  - Slag Fumer Gas Train improvement works
  - Blast Furnace gas handling system improvements
  - Ship Unloader modifications.