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Environment assessment work in Melrose Park

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is undertaking environmental assessment work in Melrose Park following the discovery of groundwater contamination during routine ground investigations being undertaken for the South Road corridor upgrade.

Testing showed that groundwater in one investigation well is contaminated with chlorinated hydrocarbons including trichloroethene (TCE) at levels exceeding the criteria considered safe for drinking. For this reason, bore water should not be used in this area for any purpose.

EPA Director Regulation Peter Dolan said TCE is a volatile chemical that can be transported in groundwater and also as vapour in the air spaces between soil particles.

“In the coming weeks, environmental consultants engaged by the EPA will drill a series of soil vapour bores in streets in Melrose Park,” Mr Dolan said.

“The vapour extracted will be sampled and sent for laboratory analysis, with the results helping us predict if contaminated vapour has the potential to enter buildings at unsafe levels.

“If we predict there may be indoor air contamination, the EPA will seek permission from landowners to test on private properties.

“It’s important to note that many areas with groundwater contamination pose no or very low risk of soil vapour intrusion and are considered safe. Soil vapour is more likely to enter a building when a room is close to groundwater, such as in a basement.

“The EPA will keep the community informed as this work progresses, and will work with anyone who may be directly affected.

“In the rare instance that a property is affected by soil vapour intrusion, we work with landowners and tenants to help them manage the risk. This may involve simply increasing the airflow, or, in more significant cases, it may be necessary to install a ventilation system.”

For further information please contact the EPA community engagement team on (08) 8124 4216, or email engage.epa@sa.gov.au.