

---

Wednesday, 11 August 2021

## West Lakes groundwater monitoring update

Monitoring of the groundwater well network in the West Lakes assessment area has confirmed that shallow groundwater is contaminated and should not be used for any purpose.

The results show contamination with poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and dissolved metals (arsenic and copper).

### Fish and crustaceans (2020)

EPA Acting Director Regulation Andrew Pruszinski said that the EPA sampled lake water, stormwater, fish and crustaceans and groundwater in the area in late 2020. This was because 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 sampling in 2020 showed that PFAS and cadmium are not present at levels that would make fish unfit for human consumption. Results did, however, confirm that lead was found in both fish and crustaceans sampled, above levels that are set by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). SA Health has advised that fish fillets from West Lakes are safe to eat, but whole or macerated fish and mussels are not recommended for human consumption. The taking of mussels and all bivalve shellfish is banned in West Lakes under the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*.

### Surface water results (2020)

As reported last year, test results confirmed that the lake is safe for recreational use, with no detectable concentrations of PFAS in the water samples collected from West Lakes at any of the sampling locations. Traces of PFAS were found in stormwater, which feeds into the lake system, but at levels that were well below the national standard. These results confirm the EPA's previous advice that it is safe for swimmers and rowers to use the lake.

### 2021 groundwater (bore water) results

The results of the previous groundwater study showed that levels varied across the assessment area, so the EPA installed and sampled additional monitoring wells.

"The results from that monitoring have confirmed that shallow groundwater is contaminated with PFAS and metals," Mr Pruszinski said.

"We reiterate earlier advice that residents in the assessment area should not use their bore water for any purpose."

It is likely that the elevated concentrations of PFAS are due to the use of sewage sludge that was spread during the development of West Lakes.

Lake water, tap water and rainwater are not affected.

If contaminated groundwater is a risk to human health, the EPA can establish a Groundwater Prohibition Area. This has not yet been determined but would include community consultation.

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](mailto:engage.epa@sa.gov.au) or call 08 8463 4799.