
27 September 2022

Pumping at Dry Creek saltfield

Work will begin today to reduce the level of water in pond PA6 at the Dry Creek saltfield site.

Pumping is expected to continue for up to several weeks and is being undertaken based on scientific assessment by the Environment Protection Authority and the site's mining regulator, the Department for Energy and Mining (DEM).

EPA Acting Chief Executive Keith Baldry said that since mangrove dieback was identified at St Kilda, the EPA had been undertaking scientific monitoring and providing advice to DEM.

"The monitoring from 2021 to date has given assurance that there has not been ongoing environmental harm, and surface salinities in the salt marsh area outside the ponds have been generally reducing," he said.

"Government maintained the capability to intervene, and in the event of a response being required, DEM would manage any intervention on behalf of the government.

"EPA monitoring this month indicated a rise in surface salinity at one location in the salt marsh area, adjacent to pond 6 just south of St Kilda. Following further scientific assessment, the EPA and DEM agreed to proceed with pumping of surface water from the pond, to reduce the level of water and reduce the risk of any environmental harm."

The EPA issued a Clean Up Authorisation yesterday to enable DEM and its contractors to access the site.

Water will be pumped from the pond to the sea via the Bolivar outfall and work may continue for up to a month, depending on how quickly water levels reduce.

The EPA will continue to undertake scientific monitoring outside the saltfield to assess salinity and will provide any assistance needed to DEM in support of its activities.