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Cleanaway Inkerman landfill approved for PFAS waste disposal

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has approved PFAS-contaminated solid waste to be disposed of at the Cleanaway Inkerman landfill, north of Adelaide.

It means that South Australia will now join the rest of Australia in providing a landfill site where PFAS-contaminated waste can be safely contained and disposed of.

The decision comes after a rigorous 2.5-year assessment process being undertaken alongside community engagement, including further work regarding the broader policy and operational management of PFAS-contaminated waste in South Australia.

EPA's Acting Director of Operations Steven Sergi said the decision was a positive move for the regulation of waste management.

"The Inkerman facility has undergone significant development assessment and technical assessment by the EPA and other authorities," he said.

"This includes the addition of PFAS to the site's annual groundwater monitoring program, commissioning a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment, and engagement with surrounding residents.

"Inkerman is a state-planned landfill site and the geotechnical environment at the site is suited to containment of the groundwater, primarily with the deeper sedimentary aquifer and slow-moving groundwater conditions.

"Inkerman is an engineered landfill that has undergone significant development assessment and technical assessment, by the EPA and other authorities and the materials which will be disposed of there have to meet stringent Australian standards."

PFAS are manufactured chemicals that have been used for more than 50 years and make products non-stick, water repellent and fire, weather and stain resistant. They have been used in a range of consumer products and firefighting foams, pesticides and stain repellents. This means most landfills in the world are likely to already contain levels of PFAS.

South Australia was the first state in Australia to ban all fluorinated (PFAS-containing) fire-fighting foams, which have been a key source of PFAS contamination around the world.

For more information visit: www.engage.epa.sa.gov.au/inkerman