

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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Contamination found in Edwardstown-South Plympton bore water

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The Environment Protection Authority is writing to more than 2200 residents of South Plympton and Edwardstown after hazardous chemicals were found in ground (bore) water in the area.

Residents are being advised to stop using bore water for any purpose until further notice.

While only about 30 registered bores are known in the area, the EPA is taking the precaution of notifying all residents in the affected area.

The chemicals which have been found are fuels and industrial solvents which were widely used in the past as a metal cleaner and degreaser. These chemicals have been found at levels above the Australian Drinking Water Guideline values.

The source is believed to be the former Hills Holdings site on South Road and is likely to be the result of historic waste disposal practices. Both Hills Holdings and the new owner of the site, Colonial First State Global Asset Management, have been working closely with the EPA, and have been conducting comprehensive assessments over the past 18 months to determine the extent of the contamination.

The most recent monitoring data from these assessments, provided to the EPA last week, showed contamination at levels that warranted the EPA restricting the use of bore water.

The EPA is undertaking and requiring further testing to determine the full nature and extent of the contamination and a testing program is being developed in consultation with health experts. This is likely to include testing soil and air inside a small number of homes to rule out any spread of the contamination to soil or air.

Environment Protection Authority Chief Executive Helen Fulcher said that the EPA was taking every possible step to protect the health of the community.

“Contamination investigations of this type are very complex and it may be some time before we know the full extent. We will keep the community informed of the results,” Ms Fulcher said.

The chemicals include petroleum hydrocarbons (petrol) and TCE (trichloroethene), PCE (perchloroethene), DCE (dichloroethene) and vinyl chloride. SA Health advises that long-term exposure from these chemicals can be harmful, if people are exposed to high enough concentrations over a long period of time, usually many years. These substances are already found in very small amounts in the environment, due to their use in paints, glues, solvents, dry cleaning and in cigarette smoke.

The area under investigation is bounded by Marion Road to the West, Oval Tce and Nelson Street to the South, Railway Terrace to the East and Maxwell Avenue and Melville Street to the north.

For more information residents can contact the EPA on 1800 729 175 or the Department for Health on 8226 7100.