



WEST LAKES

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION

RELEVANT TO THE DISPERSAL OF SLUDGE DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST LAKES

West Lakes is a major residential area of Adelaide that was developed in the 1970's. The development works included extensive earthworks to reclaim low lying land for residential development and to provide significant waterways and public open spaces.

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) on behalf of the Environment Protection Authority has collated historical and anecdotal information relevant to the assessments currently being carried out in relation to the dispersal of sewage sludge from the Port Adelaide Wastewater Treatment Plant during the development. It should be noted that there are some gaps in this information and that the EPA will continue its research and add further information as it comes to hand.

The following synopsis has been collated from:

- Documented information provided by SA Water;
- Anecdotal information provided by various persons including local residents, dredging operators, and other persons who were involved in the development works;
- Aerial photographs searched for and supplied by the Department of Environment and Heritage, Resource Information Group;
- A Delfin brochure on West Lakes, provided by a member of the West Lakes Community Consultative Committee; and

NOTE: The statements printed in bold have been confirmed by documented information and substantiated by anecdotal information. The statements not in bold are interpretations from aerial photographs and/or unsubstantiated anecdotal information.

1970, September

Commencement of the West Lakes development earthworks.

1970 to March 1977

Development earthworks at West Lakes

[Aerial photographs dated 29-5-74, 20-6-75 and 15-5-77 represent the various stages of the development earthworks through to completion.

Note: The 15-5-77 aerial photograph indicates that the western sludge lagoon is intact and still operational but the majority of all earthworks including the waterways (apart from the inlets in the north and south extremities of Delfin Island) and Delfin Island have been completed. Housing development is well advanced in the Housing Trust area of Semaphore Park, West Lakes Shore and the Woodlake area south of the Riverside Golf Course. It is noted that an area in the northern part of Delfin Island appears to be contained within a raised bund.]

1977, March 18th

Official opening of “West Lakes” by the Hon Des Corcoran, MP, Deputy Premier & Minister of Marine.

1977, September

Disposal of sludge into the lagoons at the Port Adelaide Wastewater Treatment Plant discontinued, to allow West Lakes Limited to remove the sludge from this lagoon and facilitate development of a portion of the lagoon for residential housing.

September 1977 to approximately June 1979

Removal and disposal of the sludge from the western sludge lagoon, development of the western portion of this lagoon for residential land use and rehabilitation works within the Port Adelaide Wastewater Treatment Works. This work included:

- **Pumping of the supernatant liquid from the lagoon to Delfin Island between September 1977 and December 1977. Approximately 31% of the total sludge from the western lagoon was removed by the pumping process.**

[Note: The aerial photograph dated 3-11-77 indicates the pump operation from the lagoon and a dark shaded area in the northern end of Delfin Island (within the raised bund area) which may indicate sludge disposal]

- **Construction of bund wall in November 1977 across the western portion of the lagoon to delineate the extent of the area proposed for development to residential land use and the area to remain as part of the PAWWTP.**

[Note: The aerial photograph dated 3-11-77 indicates the bund wall across the western section of the western sludge lagoon]

- **Excavation and removal of the remaining sludge using a hydraulic excavator and tandem trucks.**
- **The areas of West Lakes where documents indicate that the sludge was disposed include:**
 - **The north western, south eastern and south western area within the Port Adelaide Wastewater Treatment Works;**
 - **The Newport area between Bower Road and south to the high voltage power lines;**
 - **Along the northern side of the northern boundary fence of the Riverside Golf Club; and**
 - **Woodlake 6 reserves [the development area immediately west of the PAWWTP] where clean material had been excavated for use as cover material within the PAWWTP.**
- The areas of West Lakes where documents suggest that the sludge may have been spread include:
 - Woodlake 6, possibly the residential areas immediately to the west of the former sludge lagoon.

[Note: The aerial photographs dated 3-11-77, 26-1-78 and 4-1-79 indicate the areas where the sludge was disposed and spread for drying.]

Post June 1979

No information is currently available to indicate any areas where the dried sludge may have been subsequently trucked and disposed or the final fate of the sludge. Information suggests (and substantiated by Wooltana Fertiliser Industries) that a limited quantity of sludge was picked up and used, together with other extraneous materials, in the making of fertiliser products.