

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

IMPORTANT NOTICE - 25 August 2000

Dear Resident

West Lakes is a major residential area of Adelaide that was developed in the 1970s. As you would be aware, 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 has become aware that sewage sludge originating from the Port Adelaide Wastewater Treatment Plant was distributed across some areas of the West Lakes development nearly 30 years ago. This information has come to light following information received from the City of Charles Sturt as part of routine investigations carried out by Council on their Depot site located at the corner of Frederick Road and Lochside Drive, West Lakes.

Chemical analysis revealed that the sludge contained cadmium. As a precautionary measure, it was decided to conduct a sampling and testing program on a representative sample of public reserves to investigate the distribution of sludge and to determine whether further investigation may be warranted.

The results from the preliminary investigation were forwarded to the Department for Human Services (DHS) for advice as, in some instances, raised concentrations of some heavy metals, particularly cadmium, were detected in the soils from the reserves.

The DHS has advised the Environment Protection Authority (the Authority) that there is no immediate or acute risk to health. There may be health concerns from the possible long-term uptake of cadmium through fruit and vegetables or poultry produce grown on site, but given the nature of the residential development at West Lakes, the concern is likely to be small.

As a precautionary measure, the Authority will undertake further investigations to assist in more accurately defining the nature and extent of the issues. In line with its environmental responsibility, the Authority has decided to advise residents about this matter and of the imminent conduct of the further investigations. The results of this further work and the subsequent advice from the DHS will be provided to residents in due course.

In the meantime, an information line has been established. Should you wish to discuss this matter further with officers of the EPA or DHS, please contact 1800 730 128 between 1pm and 9pm today (Friday 25); between 9am and 4pm on Saturday, August 26 or between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday from next week.

A series of community meetings will be held over the next few weeks and bookings can be made by telephoning (08) 8239 8132.

Regular updates and newsletters will be published by the Authority to keep everyone briefed on progress and information will also be regularly updated at web-site:

www.epa.sa.gov.au/westlakes.html.

Yours Faithfully

Max Harvey
Acting Executive Director
Environment Protection Agency
Member, Environment Protection Authority