

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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EPA advice on bore water use in Allenby Gardens

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has yesterday advised residents in the Allenby Gardens/Flinders Park area of the proposal (under the provisions of section 103S of the Environment Protection Act 1993) to establish a groundwater (borewater) prohibition area.

Approximately 650 residents were letterbox dropped by the EPA yesterday to advise of the proposal and to invite them to an open house forum to express their views on the water restriction area.

Two open house forums will be held at the Flinders Park Community Hall at 167 Grange Road, Beverley on:

- Saturday 16 February between 9.30–11 am
- Monday 18 February between 6–8 pm

Residents will have the opportunity to meet with EPA staff and ask any questions or voice their views regarding the proposed groundwater prohibition area.

A 90-day community information period will follow.

According to EPA Director of Science and Assessment Peter Dolan the EPA is able to establish a groundwater prohibition area if it is satisfied that if the groundwater, if used, may harm human health and that an action such as prohibition is needed to prevent such use.

“This proposal is the first time the EPA has initiated this action and it needs to be stressed that it impacts on groundwater only and that the use of mains water and rain water are not affected by the prohibition area.

“This is yet another example of where historic activities such as the dumping of industrial chemicals have contaminated groundwater. In this instance clay materials were excavated from the area for brick-making purposes resulting in what is commonly referred to as pugholes which were subsequently filled with industrial and chemical waste.

“Historically, backfilling of excavation areas with waste was considered a suitable practice.

“So over time what has occurred is those chemical substances have moved into the groundwater, resulting in groundwater contamination. The proposed groundwater prohibition area includes the area of known contamination and a buffer zone surrounding the groundwater contamination,” said Mr Dolan.

For further information please contact Ros Agate: 0434 609 394

Soils from the identified source site have been remediated and a site contamination audit report prepared for the site has determined it is suitable for the proposed residential use.

The chemical substances detected in the groundwater are chlorinated solvents, including trichloroethene (TCE), dichloroethene (DCE) and vinyl chloride (VC).

Residents in the vicinity of the source site at Allenby Gardens were first advised by the then Department of Health in November 2004 of groundwater contamination and requested not to use groundwater for any purpose that may impact on human health.

Since that time groundwater sampling has been undertaken to establish the boundary of the groundwater contamination, which is known to extend up to 500 metres beyond the western boundary from the source site.

The known aquifers affected by the site contamination in the Allenby Gardens/Flinders Park area are the first and second Quaternary aquifers, referred to as Q1 and Q2 and are 10 metres and 20 metres respectively below ground level.

The contamination has been found in relatively shallow groundwater within the Allenby Gardens/Flinders Park area. The bore water used by the council and Flinders Park Primary School is sourced from a much deeper aquifer.

“This has been a very involved process and we are now seeking the community’s input into the proposed water prohibition area.

“The process from here will be upon completion of the 90-day community information period and taking into account comments from residents, a notice of the water prohibition area will be placed in the Government Gazette. Residents will also be updated via letter of their responsibilities.

“Under the proposal the penalty for using groundwater from the restriction area will be up to \$8,000, but as this is an issue that has the potential to impact on people’s health we expect that most people will do the right thing,” said Mr Dolan.

The EPA has published information as “Frequently Asked Questions” that are available on the EPA website (www.epa.sa.gov.au via the What’s New on the home page).

For further information on the proposed groundwater prohibition area and any contamination related enquiries, please contact the EPA on 1800 729 175 during weekdays between the hours of 8 am to 8 pm.