

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



GPO Box 2607 Adelaide SA 5001
250 Victoria Square Adelaide SA
T (08) 8204 2000 F (08) 8204 2020
Country areas 1800 623 445

EPA endorses smelter improvements

5 August 2010

The Environment Protection Authority has approved steps by Nyrstar to improve the control of lead emissions from its Port Pirie smelter.

Nyrstar has revised its Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) – required under its EPA licence - to include a range of actions to improve infrastructure and processes, which will be put in place progressively over 12 months, with a number of actions already underway or completed.

Improvements already completed or underway include:

- installing 'real time' dust monitors at two boundary sites to provide feedback to plant supervisors so that immediate action can be taken in the plant if emissions are excessive
- developing and implementing new response procedures to provide greater clarity for plant operators in the event of high emission events
- significant maintenance works, including a plant shutdown, to make the plant operate more efficiently and reduce the risk of high emissions
- installing an additional scrubber in the sinter plant to improve emissions capture

In addition, Nyrstar has met the requirement to provide the EPA with an analysis of the causes of emission spikes which occurred late in 2009.

Further improvements over the next six-12 months will include:

- further works on the blast furnace fume capture system
- fume minimisation works in the slag fuming plant
- additional staff training in environmental management techniques

EPA Director Regulation and Compliance Keith Baldry said the EPA was satisfied that, if all steps are implemented, this should improve lead emissions from the plant.

"We recognise that some steps cannot be put in place immediately and we have agreed to the timeline for implementation proposed by Nyrstar," Mr Baldry said.

The EPA will continue to assess the situation and work with Nyrstar to reduce emissions.

The EPA is separately in the process of conducting a formal investigation into emissions spikes which occurred towards the end of 2009 to determine whether there has been any breach of *the Environment Protection Act 1993*.

Contact: Melinda Clarke 0434 609 394