

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

Illegal Sand Dumping in the River Murray

21 January 2010

The illegal dumping of sand to build private beaches and boat ramps along the River Murray is causing environmental problems.

EPA Murraylands Manager Peter Scott said many people think that because there is already sand in the river, it is alright to add a bit more. But, the reality is that dumped sand is not natural to the river and it harms the ecosystem.

“Wind, waves and water traffic quickly move the sand from where it has been dumped and redistributes it along the river.

“This causes problems for boating by creating uncharted sandbars and has the potential for blocking irrigation channels and water supply intakes.

“The additional sand also affects the habitats and breeding sites of fish, worms and numerous other river species that rely on natural, healthy river beds for their survival,” Mr Scott said.

The EPA is working with the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation as well as local councils along the river to raise awareness of the problems that illegal sand dumping can cause. Sand dumping along the Murray River is not related to the issue of river bed slumping.

Mr Scott said there are plenty of other options for creating water access to the river such as the use of temporary inflatable pontoons.

“Anyone wanting to create access should contact their local council for information on how to apply for development approvals.”

More information on sand dumping can be found on the EPA website at www.epa.sa.gov.au

Contact: Melinda Clarke/Briony Spragg 0434 609 394