

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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12 November 2010

EPA licence for Adelaide Desalination Plant

The Environment Protection Authority has set strict compliance limits and monitoring requirements as part of its environmental licence for the Adelaide Desalination Plant.

The licence requires the Adelaide Aqua consortium to continually monitor salinity levels at specified offshore monitoring points and report the levels to the EPA.

EPA Chief Executive Helen Fulcher said the limit ensures that salinity will be maintained at near natural levels.

"Natural salinity levels fluctuate, but for the Gulf St Vincent are usually around 37 parts per thousand. We have set a limit so that salinity at 100 metres from the outfall diffuser can be no more than 1.3 parts per thousand over those levels, well below the level at which any impacts would occur. This limit was set after extensive scientific studies, including by the CSIRO and University of Melbourne; we've set a very conservative limit" Ms Fulcher said.

If levels set by the licence are exceeded, the EPA must be notified urgently and saline water discharges from the plant must be temporarily suspended.

The monitoring will be independently verified, with SARDI (SA Research and Development Institute) maintaining the monitoring equipment and testing its accuracy. Raw monitoring data as well as analysis of results will be submitted to the EPA for checking.

The EPA licence was developed based on an assessment of local conditions, eco-toxicology reports, environmental modelling, baseline data of existing local conditions, and best practice standards of other plants in Australia.

The EPA licence also covers a range of other conditions, such as managing noise and odour.

The licence will be issued next week and a copy of the licence will be available on the EPA website at www.epa.sa.gov.au. Once the plant is operating, a summary of monitoring data collected as part of the EPA licence conditions will also be regularly published on the EPA website.

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