

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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State's rivers and creeks assessed

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has today released the second set of Aquatic Ecosystem Condition Reports (AECRs) on the health of South Australia's rivers and creeks.

The first release of AECRs was in October 2011 and represented a significant breakthrough in environmental monitoring and reporting in this state.

The AECRs present a new approach to reporting on the condition of the South Australian environment, assessing the condition of waterways as ecosystems, including the water quality and the plants and animals that depend on it and providing a summary of information on each location; presenting the scientific findings as well as the key pressures and management responses.

According to EPA Director of Science and Assessment Peter Dolan the next set of reports will cover 72 watercourse sites in the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges (AMLR) region based on 2011 monitoring data.

"While monitoring water quality has always been part of our work, the reports capture a more comprehensive picture of what is happening to the animal and plant life at those sites and present the information in an online format which easier for people to access.

"Importantly, they provide information which will help us benchmark progress in avoiding further degradation and improving the condition of our precious water resources," said Mr Dolan.

The reports use a 6-level grading system that rates every site from Excellent to Very Poor. The latest set of reports feature 1 Very Good, 10 Good, 27 Fair, 24 Poor and 10 Very Poor.

"It should come as know no surprise that our waterways are in need of improvement. We are dealing with long-term legacies caused by mankind over a long period of time.

"There is no quick fix but the important point is that we are the first generation that is dealing with improving the condition of our waterways and ecosystems," said Mr Dolan.

First Creek near Tunkalilla in the Mount Lofty Ranges was rated Very Good as it showed evidence of very little change in ecosystem structure and function.

The little Para River in the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges was given a Very Poor rating because there was evidence of major changes to both the animal and plant life inhabiting the area.

"There is a committed effort by government, industry and the community to rectifying the situation over the long term.

"The Natural Resource Management (NRM) Boards in particular are doing much of the work in improving the waterways and ecosystems," said Mr Dolan.

For further information please contact Ros Agate: 0434 609 394

The intention from now on is to release a new set of AEERs every year, based on monitoring data collected during the previous calendar year.

The reports are available online via WaterConnect and the EPA website (via the What's New panel on the home page at www.epa.sa.gov.au). Further information is also available by phoning the EPA on (08) 82042004 or freecall country 1800 623 445.