

# Media Release

## Environment Protection Authority



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### **State's rivers and creeks assessed**

The Aquatic Ecosystem Condition reports released today on the health of South Australia's rivers and creeks represent a significant breakthrough in the way water quality is measured and reported in this State, according to EPA Acting Chief Executive Tony Circelli.

The reports set out findings made by Environment Protection Authority (EPA) scientists at sites including creeks and rivers in several NRM Regions – Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges; SA Murray Darling Basin; Northern and Yorke; Eyre Peninsula; South East; and Kangaroo Island. Reports are also available for sites around the Lower Lakes. In total 219 reports have been released.

These reports assess the condition of waterways as ecosystems, including the water quality and the plants and animals that depend on it and provide a summary of information on each location; presenting the scientific findings as well as the key pressures and management responses.

"These new Aquatic Ecosystem Condition reports capture a more comprehensive picture of what is happening to the animal and plant life at those sites than we have had in the past, and they present the findings in a new, on-line format that is easier to access," Mr Circelli said.

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

The reports introduce a new 6 level grading system that rates every site from excellent to very poor, with good and fair being the medium level.

Mr Circelli said the reports confirmed what was expected in terms of overall trends and the ongoing impacts of land clearing and urban development.

"These are long-term legacies from more than 170 years of European settlement and it is important to remember there are no quick fixes. It has taken a long time for them to get into this condition, and rectifying the situation is going to involve a concerted effort by government, industry and the community over the long-term too," he said.

As part of this process the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board has formed a collaborative agreement with the EPA to monitor and report biennially.

The Aquatic Ecosystem Condition reports will complement a series of reports produced by each of the NRM Boards which provide information on the state of the region and NRM Board's progress in achieving targets set in the region's 20-year NRM Plan.

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**For further information please contact the EPA Senior Media Officer : 0434 609 394**

This is the first stage in the release of the new style reports. Future reports are planned for release every year and these will be based on monitoring data collected the previous year. For example, reports will be released during 2012 that are based on 2011 monitoring data.

Future Aquatic Ecosystem Condition reports will cover other NRM regions such as the Arid Lands and also include near-shore marine waters.

***The report cards are available online via the EPA website. You can access them the 'what's new' panel on the home page at [www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au). Further information is also available by phoning the EPA on (08) 8204 2004 or freecall (country) 1800 623 445.***

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