



 **PORT AUGUSTA**  
Community information session

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Port Augusta Institute

6 February 2017

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## APPENDIX A - TALLY SHEET

# Background

On 9 May 2016, power generating operations at the Port Augusta Power Stations site ceased. The Port Augusta Power Stations site is regulated by the EPA under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* for several activities of environmental significance. A condition of licence requires owner Flinders Power to develop a closure plan to address environmental considerations at the site. This includes, but is not limited to:

- decommissioning and decontamination of coal burning equipment
- removal of coal from the coal stockpile and other coal handling areas
- ash dam rehabilitation
- assessment and removal of chemicals and hazardous materials
- removal of waste including appropriate disposal of asbestos.

Flinders Power is required to meet specified actions, timeframes and milestones in regards to each of the above environmental considerations. To minimise potential dust nuisance impacts to the community, consideration of dust management measures is also required.

While the power stations were operational, dust was controlled by the ongoing pumping of an ash and seawater slurry onto the ash dam. The slurry would spread across the ash dam, settle and compact to establish a crust on top of the ash. The crust was effective in sealing the surface.

When power generation ceased in May 2016, it was expected that a similar strategy would be successful in managing dust in the short term. In the long term, capping with soil and revegetating was proposed by Flinders Power to begin in 2017. Flinders Power therefore commenced new pumping arrangements to flood the surface of the ash dam with sea water to maintain the crust to manage dust emissions. This required different pumping arrangements as compared to when the stations were in operation.

The EPA was notified in July and August 2016 by Port Augusta City Council and two members of the community that dust from the ash dam was being experienced in the town. Photos taken by Council staff were provided to the EPA, and senior EPA staff met with the Port Augusta City Council Chief Executive on 30 August 2016.

## EPA regulatory response

The EPA undertook two site inspections in August 2016 to assess management of the ash dam and observe dust impacts, and met with Flinders Power management. During site inspections the EPA observed that the seawater pumping was forming channels on the dam, rather than spreading evenly across the surface as had occurred previously. After several attempts to alter the pumping arrangements, it was evident that this was not working effectively across the entire 220 hectare dam to suppress dust.

A total of nine site inspections to assess dust management actions and dust emissions during different weather conditions have been undertaken since August 2016.

Given the dust events and the ineffectiveness of sea water flooding as a dust control measure, the EPA required Flinders Power to reassess its dust management strategy for the ash dam. On 26 August

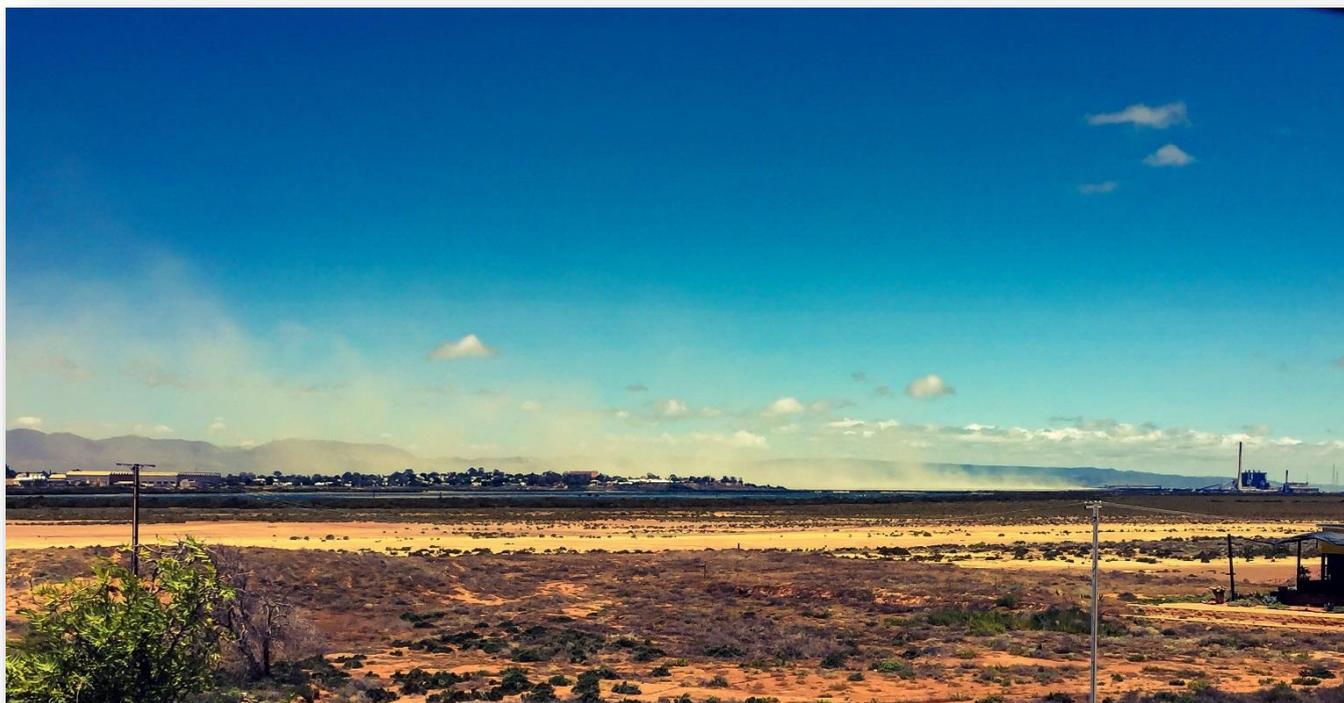
2016 Flinders Power sought advice from the EPA on the trial of a new dust suppressant chemical on a 15 hectare area of the ash dam. This trial proved successful and subsequently Flinders Power contacted the EPA on 6 October 2016 to advise that it proposed to apply dust suppressant by aerial application across the entire ash dam area.

This proposal was assessed by specialist air, water and regulatory scientists of the EPA and approved as a short-term measure while the longer-term closure activities were being finalised. The EPA sought advice from SA Health on any health risks that may be associated with airborne aerosols from the dust sealant. SA Health advised that the sealant was a 'good temporary solution'.

Aerial spraying for full coverage commenced on 7 November 2016 and was completed on 22 November 2016. The dust suppressant was designed to be effective for up to 12 months as an interim measure until longer-term rehabilitation actions are completed. EPA observations undertaken at two site inspections in November and December in wind conditions between 30 and 35 km/h indicated that the dust suppressant was controlling dust from the ash dam. The EPA received no complaints from the community since the completion of the aerial application of dust suppression and before the January dust event.

To address site contamination investigation and assessment, the EPA has entered into a voluntary site contamination assessment proposal with Flinders Power. Since the announcement that the power stations were closing, the EPA placed a number of conditions on Flinders Power to ensure it met environmental considerations, including controlling dust from the Flinders ash dam.

Between 27 and 29 December 2016 about 60 mm of rain fell over Port Augusta as was recorded at the Port Augusta Aerodrome. There is some indication from radar imagery through this event that rainfall intensity may have been higher than was recorded at Port Augusta Aerodrome on the eastern side of Port Augusta. This coincided with wind speeds over 70 km/h for extended periods with especially strong gusts over 120km/h. This resulted in significant damage to the dust suppressant seal.



3 January 2017 - Photo courtesy David Finlayson

The EPA received **95 emails, 33 telephone complaints** and **8 telephone enquiries** between 30 December 2016 and 5 January 2017. All emails, telephone reports and enquiries were returned and a stakeholder database was developed for providing further information updates. The EPA met with Flinders Power on 3 January 2017 and inspected the site on 4 January to ensure that all possible measures were being taken to minimise the dust. Further information about the EPA's regulatory response to this dust event can be found on the EPA website.

Aerial reapplication of the dust suppressant over the entire ash storage area was completed by Flinders Power on 25 January 2017.

Community engagement after the dust event of 1 January 2017, before the community information session held on 6 February 2017 included:

- Established and maintain a stakeholder database
- Responding to phone and email enquiries 7 days a week
- Regular Community Updates published and distributed electronically and in hard copy to our stakeholder list
- Daily website updates
- Twitter updates
- Community Service Announcements put out on the radio
- Staff based in Port Augusta until sealant applied
- Personal meetings were arranged for residents with EPA engagement staff
- Personal meetings with the A/Chief Executive and Chief Executive were made with key community leaders
- Liaison with key stakeholders including SA Health, Council and Flinders Power
- Media releases distributed
- Doorknocking of the residential community immediately adjacent to the ash dam
- Liaison with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion
- DSD Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation invitation to Community Information Session.

## Community information session

The EPA decided that the level of interest from the community warranted a designated information session to be held in Port Augusta in order to provide residents with access to the key decision makers from the organisations responsible for the different elements involved in their concerns.

Representatives from the Environment Protection Authority, Department of State Development, SA Health, Port Augusta City Council and Flinders Power all attended the 12 hour community information 'drop in' session on Monday 6 February 2017 at the Port Augusta Institute.

The information session was **advertised in the Transcontinental Newspaper** on Wednesday 25 January and 1 February 2017. Television advertising was also aired **on Southern Cross television** on 18, 19, 22 and 23 January 2017 and then 1, 2, 4 and 5 February 2017.

The local community immediately adjacent to the ash dam were **letter box dropped with invitations**, and the Port Augusta Cinema placed an ad on screen, as well as distributing hard copies of the invitation to visitors of the cinema. Invites were also emailed and posted to the stakeholder distribution list created by the EPA, which went directly to around 200 people at that time.



## Feedback from attendees

### Tally Sheets

Two security staff from Spencer Gulf Security Services attended the event and were asked to record the total number of persons attending the display, with the breakdown they recorded as follows:

Total number of attendees: **165**

Cumulatively, the number of attendees that had visited by each hour are as follows:

12:30: **75**

14:00: **97**

15:00: **114**

17:00: **136**

18:00: **150**

19:00: **161**

20:00: **164**

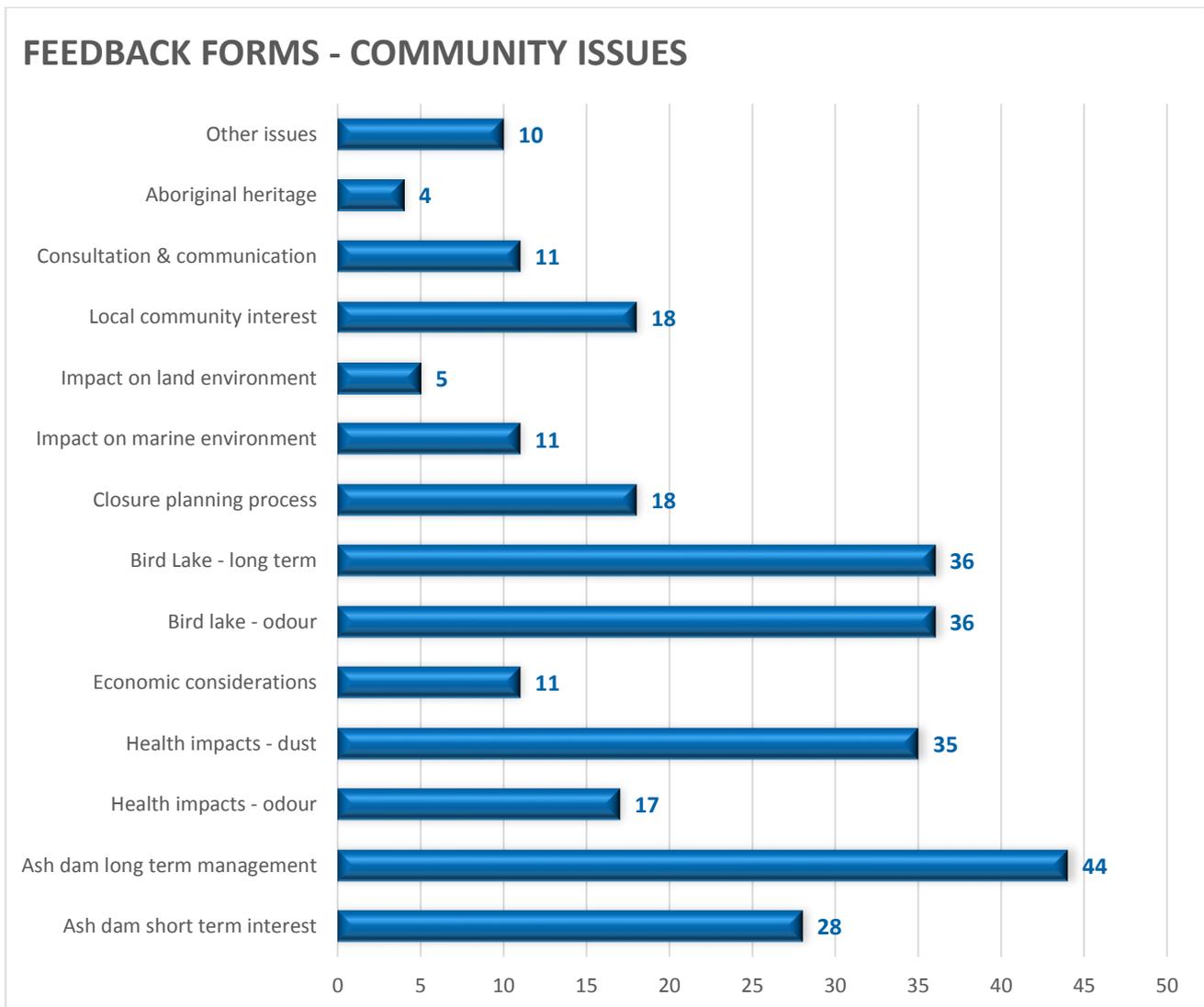
21:00: **165**



## Feedback Forms

People were given the opportunity to complete a feedback form in person, or have their comments recorded by display staff. A total of **82** Feedback Forms were completed on site, and the top five topics recorded in this way were:

- Long-term management of the Flinders Power Ash Dam (44)
- Long-term management of Bird Lake (36)
- Odour coming from Bird Lake (36)
- Health impacts of the dust coming from the Flinders Power Ash Dam (35)
- Short term management of the Flinders Power Ash Dam (28).

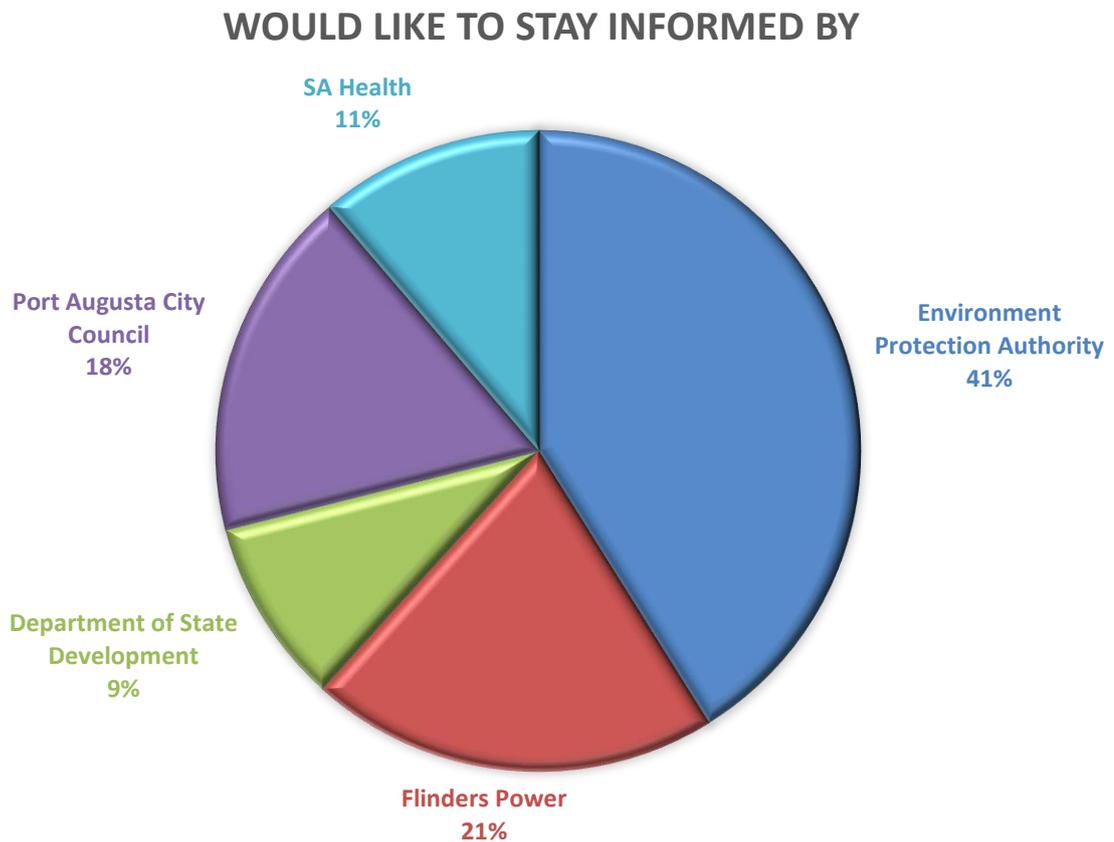


## Main areas of interest

The most commonly identified area of interest of respondents was the long term strategy for managing the odour coming from **Bird Lake**, followed by interest in the success of the revegetation planned for the long-term management of dust and aesthetics on the Flinders Power **ash dam**.

## Attendees want to be kept informed by

Attendees that completed feedback forms or indicated to staff where they would most like to receive further information from. The breakdown is shown in the graph below:



## Evaluation

The Port Augusta Community Information session at the Port Augusta Institute was comprised of two key tenets:

1. thorough and pertinent information; and
2. presented by the EPA, with key contacts from SA Health, Department of State Development, Flinders Power and the Port Augusta City Council.

This prompted polite and honest discourse with the vast majority of the people we spoke to. Most people were reported to have left the stand feeling that:

1. they were listened to; and
2. they were provided with relevant information on the topics they came to discuss.

### Positive comments

Taken from the Feedback Forms, the following positive comments are indicative of the general atmosphere experienced by staff and residents at the information session. This was despite the high level of concern about the topics residents came to discuss:

*A good evening, well spent. I got more precise information in 90 minutes than I have been able to gather in 90 days in the community.*

*The information session was well supported and relevant authorities were represented. The info was relevant and gave a level of connect to the local issues. We look forward to further progress.*

## Conclusions

The Community Information Session was a good opportunity for the EPA, DSD, SA Health, Council and Flinders Power to gain individual comments and feelings of community perception surrounding the Flinders Power and Bird Lake sites, the results of which can be seen in the data. The participation of the public themselves was a significant reason this event was such a success.

Overall the EPA and other staff involved were pleased with the involvement of the community participants in the Community Information Session. All participants were able to have their questions answered and appeared relatively satisfied with their visit to the session and information gained. The objectives of the community information session were to provide information, to clarify information, to listen to and gather feedback from the public, and record how many people attended. These objectives were achieved.

## Follow up recommendations

Below is a summary of recommendations and requests, compiled from feedback provided in person and recorded on Feedback Forms.

These recommendations have been provided to the relevant organisations for consideration.

Organisation	Recommendation
<b>EPA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to regularly publish air quality monitoring data on website.</li> <li>• Provide monthly photos of progress.</li> <li>• Continue to regulate Flinders Power and ensure it meets community engagement obligations.</li> <li>• Review and strengthen Flinders Power's commitments under the Station Closure Plan.</li> <li>• Publish and distribute Flinders Power's community updates.</li> <li>• Recommend Flinders Power involve the community in the revegetation proposal for the long term management of the ash dam.</li> <li>• Recommend Flinders Power establish a community liaison group and empower the group to determine how it wishes to be kept informed by Flinders Power.</li> </ul>
<b>Flinders Power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community information hotline publicised more widely.</li> <li>• Establishment of a Community Liaison Group chaired by an experienced independent facilitator. Meetings to be held regularly as determined by demand and the group to advise on preferred methods of information provision. Communication methods to be considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Establishment of an SMS distribution list to advise the community via their mobile phones of certain conditions, communication and milestone events, dust events</li> <li>o Fact sheets / Frequently Asked Questions</li> <li>o Media channels to communicate amongst other things progress and milestone events</li> <li>o Regular community updates to a distribution list of interested residents</li> <li>o Periodic community information sessions</li> <li>o Provision of site tours for interested residents of the Flinders Power site</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SA Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide SA Health analysis of the results from the dust samples in community friendly format such as a fact sheet. To include advice about skin irritation, dust inhalation, and infogram or diagram to assist the community to interpret the EPA's air quality monitoring data from a health perspective.</li> </ul>
<b>Port Augusta City Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to the community on timeframes for the delivery of the consultant report on the preferred solution for Bird Lake.</li> <li>• Advise when the next level of implementation of the Augusta Lakes Stakeholder Engagement Plan can be expected.</li> <li>• Advise on works already undertaken on Bird Lake.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of State Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote employment and other development opportunities likely to happen in Port Augusta to raise the City's sense of pride and positive outlook for the future.</li> <li>• Promote tourism opportunities.</li> <li>• Promote redeployment opportunities.</li> <li>• Communicate strongly the support government will provide for Bird Lake and other key Task Force decisions.</li> </ul>

# Tally sheet



Number of attendees	Keep me informed ✓
<del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> <del>     </del> 64.	4. 900am.
/    1230 PM TOTAL 75	
1300 HRS 86	
1400 HRS 97	
1430 HRS 106	
1500 HRS 114	1510 PLAIN CLOTHES
1600 HRS 119	POLICE OFFICER MADE HIMSELF
/       /       /       1700 HRS 136	KNOWN.
/       1800 HRS 150	
/       1900 HRS 161	
2000 HRS 164	
2100 HRS 165	
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