

# Media Release

## Environment Protection Authority



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### **Clovelly Park site contamination – precautionary mitigation measures**

Residents from 23 Housing SA properties and two private residences in the Clovelly Park area are today being advised that a public health risk had been identified from trichloroethene (TCE) in soil vapour. As a precautionary measure Housing SA residents will be offered to be relocated to other Housing SA properties to allow further investigation work to commence. The private residences will be involved in further discussions with appropriate authorities to look at available options.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Housing SA and SA Health are this evening doorknocking 45 residential properties in Clovelly Park providing verbal advice on the relocation plan and an information pack containing detailed information from SA Health, EPA and Housing SA.

The EPA and SA Health agree that the public health risk requires management to prevent residents from long-term exposure to vapour, while further investigations occur and remediation options are determined. SA Health's advice is that this should happen over the next six months.

As a precautionary measure, residents from the 23 tenanted properties in the Clovelly Park area are being advised that relocation by Housing SA over a period from now until Christmas is advised. There are 29 Housing SA properties in the investigation area, six (6) are currently vacant, and in addition there are two (2) private properties. Discussions will commence with residents of two (2) private properties to seek their input on a range of options for relocation or vapour intrusion mitigation at their properties.

Residents of a further 14 properties, not subject to relocation but located immediately south of the mitigation area, are being advised today of the further investigation work that will be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of the contamination in the area.

SA Health has advised that the public health risk identified is related to long-term exposure and does not present an immediate risk.

Director of Public Health, Dr Kevin Buckett said "Based on the soil vapour data we have seen it is possible for the chemical to find its way into houses and expose residents to levels higher than is acceptable for residential indoor air.

"The relocation of residents over the next few months while further testing and analysis is done is the safest way to prevent ongoing exposure.

"SA Health will work with Housing SA as required to assist in prioritising the relocation of residents."

Housing SA Executive Director, Mr Phillip Fagan-Schmidt said that relocation planning has commenced for the 39 residents from 23 tenanted properties in the area which will take place from July until the end of the year.

"Following advice from the EPA and SA Health, Housing SA has commenced the process for the orderly relocation of Housing SA tenants as a precautionary measure to ensure their health and safety." said Mr Fagan-Schmidt.

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EPA Operations Director, Science, Assessment and Planning, Peter Dolan said that extensive testing is required to delineate the nature and extent of site contamination in soil and groundwater.

“Sampling undertaken in February and March 2013 identified three residential properties of an 11 properties tested with TCE in indoor air slightly above the World Health Organisation guideline of 2ug/m<sup>3</sup>, so while no immediate action was required, it was recommended that further assessment work be undertaken which occurred in October/November 2013. Results of which were received in May of this year.

“The variability of results during the sampling events, due to seasonal conditions and the complexity of the chemical in a gas phase, has required several rounds of sampling to understand the risk exposure to human health.

“Further investigations need to be undertaken to delineate the nature and extent of site contamination south in Clovelly Park and west in Mitchell Park, and further data needs to be collected from the homes in the relocation area. This is a precautionary measure to allow that work to be undertaken and remediation options investigated.

“The EPA has already employed a consultant to scope the further work and we anticipate that work will commence in the near future at which time communication with residents in the wider area will occur. Residents will be invited to attend community open house sessions in the coming weeks where they will have the opportunity to ask questions with EPA and SA Health specialists on the matter.” said Mr Dolan.

The key contaminant of concern is the solvent trichloroethene (TCE), a chemical used widely in industry, particularly for metal cleaning and degreasing.

Extensive testing has occurred both on and offsite the Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd (Mitsubishi) property since the EPA was notified of TCE in groundwater by Mitsubishi in 2008.

Monroe Australia Pty Ltd has been committed to extensive testing in an agreed offsite investigation area in Clovelly Park since 2012.

## **Background**

In 2009, based on the identification of concentrations of TCE above the interim guideline criteria developed by SA Health at the time, the orderly relocation of residents from 16 apartments and three (3) single storey units was undertaken by SA Housing Trust. The block of flats and one unit have since been demolished and the remaining two dwellings have remained vacant since 2011.

There has been ongoing work at the site since that time.

Results of testing undertaken from 2012 to late 2013 have been used by Monroe/Tenneco’s site contamination consultant (URS Australia) to prepare a draft Vapour Intrusion Risk Assessment (VIRA) Report.

Residents have been communicated and directly engaged by Monroe/Tenneco over this timeframe.

In May 2014, the VIRA Report was provided to the site contamination auditor, EPA, SA Health and Housing SA for review. The VIRA Report has identified that vapour intrusion is occurring at some residential properties in Clovelly Park.

Since receiving the VIRA Report, the EPA and SA Health have assessed the implications and determined that a public health risk exists that requires management in a timely manner. As a precautionary measure, the EPA and

SA Health recommend that residents in 31 properties within the Clovelly Park investigation area be relocated over a period - from now until Christmas, while further investigations are undertaken.

Additional information including frequently asked questions (FAQs) and a Community Information Sheet have been made available on the EPA website ([www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au)).

For further information on this matter, please contact the EPA on 1800 770 174 (8 am to 8 pm weekdays) or via email [epasitecontam@epa.sa.gov.au](mailto:epasitecontam@epa.sa.gov.au).