GM Holden Ltd

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Dear Property Owner

Environmental Site Assessment - GM Holden Elizabeth Plant

Thank you for taking the time to speak with the GM Holden representative who visited your property today.

As we discussed, as part of our internal Environment & Sustainability Program, GM Holden has been focusing on identifying potential historical contamination of our sites, from days when accepted environmental practice differed from today, and environmental controls and management of chemicals was regulated to different standards.

At the Elizabeth plant we have recently identified TCE (trichloroethene) and PCE (perchloroethene) in groundwater 18 to 20 metres under the Plant 1 area and Plant 5 car park of the site, at notifiable levels. The chemicals which have been found are industrial solvents, which were historically used for cleaning metal parts and plastics. Our investigations to date indicate that the contamination is a result of historical activities on the site.

The contamination is largely contained on the GM Holden site. However, we have found TCE and PCE in low levels at the north eastern boundary, and TCE at the northern boundary of our property.

The risk posed by these chemicals is low given the concentrations that have been detected. Nevertheless, we have notified EPA and are working with EPA on this historical issue, and are undertaking further testing and sampling of the contamination.

We are in the process of determining where we need to sink test bores. In order to provide additional samples for testing, you may see a bore rig truck outside your premises as part of this process. As a precaution, until further notice, you should not use any bore water for any purpose. Mains water and rainwater tanks are not affected. For further information, we have attached a copy of the Department of Health Fact Sheet on the use of groundwater.

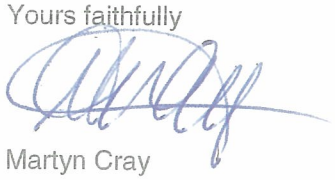
GM Holden is actively investigating, monitoring and taking action when required in relation to historical contamination. GM Holden believes that we share our environment with our community and wishes to actively engage with you regarding this situation and let you know what we are doing about the issue.

GM Holden is very proud of our environmental and sustainability achievements, and wishes to take this opportunity to assure all its neighbours that it remains committed to fulfilling its environmental responsibilities towards managing historical site contamination and will take the necessary steps to achieve an appropriate outcome. Please be assured that your health and safety are our top priority.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation and if you have any questions at all please call me on 08 8282 8705 at any time or send me an email. I am personally involved in managing this issue.

I look forward to speaking with you soon. If you would like to discuss the matter directly with the EPA please feel free to do so, their number is 08 8204 2004.

Yours faithfully



Martyn Cray

Executive Director of Manufacturing

Bore water quality testing

Bore water should be tested and deemed safe before being used for drinking, cooking, use in swimming pools or watering edible plants such as home grown vegetables.

Bore water may contain chemical and microbiological hazards that are potentially harmful to health due to natural processes or contamination from human activity.

Private bores

Private bores should be tested for microbiological (*E. coli*) and chemical quality prior to use, particularly where the previous history of the bore is unknown. If at any stage there are changes in appearance or odour, further water quality testing is advised.

Bore water intended for human consumption (for drinking, cooking, use in swimming pools or watering edible plants) should be tested for the following parameters of concern:

- **Phase one testing:**
  - *E. coli* (as an indicator of faecal contamination)
  - Fluoride
  - Nitrate
  - Arsenic
- **Phase two testing** (to be conducted if Phase one testing results are satisfactory):
  - Volatile organic compounds (*at low detection limits*) - Only required for urban bores.
  - Metals (*antimony, barium, boron, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, sulphate, uranium*).

It is also advisable to test for total dissolved solids (salinity) if the water is intended for drinking. Based on taste, dissolved solids in drinking water should not exceed 500 mg/L (although levels up to 1000 mg/L may be tolerated by some).

Commercial or community-based bores

Drinking water is defined as a food under the *Food Act 2001* and must therefore be provided to consumers in a 'safe' manner that is unlikely to cause physical harm through consumption.

Bore water used for any commercial purpose (such as food premises) or for community-based supplies (such as hospitals, schools, caravan parks) requires routine testing to ensure that the water is suitable for drinking. Regular testing should form part of a documented risk management plan for the water supply.

As a general rule, commercial or community-based bores should be tested for microbiological quality (*E. coli*) every three months and chemical quality every two years. Testing frequency may vary depending on the community type and size served by the bore.

It is recommended that advice is sought from your local Council Environmental Health Officer or the Department of Health in determining adequate testing regimes.

If at any stage there are changes in appearance or odour, immediate water quality testing is advised. Additional testing should also be undertaken after any change to the water supply (such as the addition of a water storage tank) that may impact on water quality.

Government of South Australia
SA Health

Undertaking testing

The testing of the water samples should be done by a NATA accredited analytical laboratory. Contact details for the laboratories can be found under "Analysts" in Yellow Pages®. Advice should always be sought from the laboratory regarding the appropriate way to collect a sample.

It is advisable to purge the bore (let the water run for some time, for example, 15-20 minutes) before the sample is taken.

Interpretation of chemical results

The results of the analysis of water intended for human consumption are compared to the Australian Drinking Water Guideline values. Some chemical parameters however, may not be regulated by the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Please contact Scientific Services of the Department of Health for assistance with interpretation of your test results.

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines can be accessed at www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/eh19syn.htm

Interpretation of microbial results

***E. coli* should not be detected in a minimum 100 mL sample of drinking water.**

The detection of *E. coli* indicates that maintenance and/or treatment is inadequate and requires immediate investigation.

An alternative source of water should be used for drinking and food preparation or the bore water should be boiled prior to use.

Resources

- SA Health Drought webpage to access a range of bore water related resources: www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/topics/drought-package.htm
- Scientific Services, SA Health (contact details below)
- For assistance in the development of a drinking water management plan, access the Community Water Planner at: www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/eh39.htm

Contact

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Public Health
SA Health

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Web: www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/environ-health-index.htm

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