

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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Rivers and creeks assessed in the SA Murray-Darling Basin region

A total of 43 sites in SA Murray-Darling Basin region were assessed by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as part of the new Aquatic Ecosystem Condition Reports.

The reports released recently on the condition 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.

EPA scientists investigating the 43 sites found 1 site was very good, 5 that were good, 23 Fair and 14 poor. The sites were assessed on the condition of waterways as ecosystems, including the water quality and the plants and animals that depend on it and a summary of information was provided 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 using a new 6 level grading system assessed the Tookayerta Creek, near Mount Compass as Very Good, Finniss River, near Yundi as Good, Currency Creek, near Currency Creek as Fair, Nairne Creek as Fair and Mt Barker Creek as Poor.

According to Mr Circelli, the reports confirm what was expected in terms of overall trends and the ongoing impacts from the replacement of native vegetation with more intensive agricultural land uses.

"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.

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

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 NRM Plan.

This is the first stage in the release of the new style reports. Future reports are planned for release every year for different regions around the state 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.

The reports 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. Further information is also available by phoning the EPA on (08) 8204 2004 or freecall (country) 1800 623 445.