

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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Further contamination at Santos' Port Bonython facility

The EPA is investigating new information from Santos regarding the extent of hydrocarbon contamination in groundwater at its processing plant near Whyalla.

Consultant reports commissioned by Santos (and as required by the EPA) contain results of sampling at, and adjacent to the site, which show the extent of the contaminated area is greater than previously known.

As part of EPA requirements, more than 150 sampling wells have been progressively installed on site to establish the extent of the contamination.

Contamination of groundwater under the foreshore area adjoining the plant has been identified in various locations spanning approximately 700m, significantly more than the 200m previously identified.

Additional contaminated areas have also been identified on the plant site. EPA continues to investigate the matter.

The EPA is seeking urgent reviews of existing site assessment and of the remediation strategies being undertaken by Santos at the site as required under the *Environment Protection Act (1993)*. All work will require oversight and endorsement by the site contamination auditor.

Since contamination at the site was first advised to the EPA in May 2008, the EPA has required that Santos undertake a series of actions including:

- Installation of a barrier wall to stop the further spread of contamination off-site
- Installation of extraction wells in affected areas
- Engagement of an independent site contamination auditor, accredited by the EPA
- Works to identify the source of the contamination including testing of underground pipe work and oil tanks
- Development of an on-site treatment system to treat extracted groundwater

As part of ongoing investigations, EPA staff have independently undertaken site assessments, including groundwater assessments, surface water sampling in the foreshore area and biological surveys of the adjacent marine environment, with further assessments planned prior to the end of 2010.

The latest reports on the contamination are available from the EPA (8204 2004) on payment of a prescribed fee.

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