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ACTION TO IMPROVE ADELAIDE COASTAL WATERS

An action plan being developed to improve the quality of Adelaide's coastal waters will enhance extensive efforts already underway to address problems identified by the Adelaide Coastal Waters Study released today.

Minister for Environment and Conservation Gail Gago says development of the Adelaide Coastal Water Quality Improvement Plan, funded in conjunction with the Federal Government, has been underway so that we can identify and assess potential measures - beyond those already being delivered - to improve the marine environment on Adelaide's doorstep.

It follows the \$3 million scientific investigation, which progressively published 19 technical reports during the six year Adelaide Coastal Waters Study.

"This State Government instigated Study provides a scientific basis on which to sustainably manage Adelaide's coastal waters," says Minister Gago.

"The progressive technical reports have identified a loss of more than 5,000 hectares of seagrass mainly caused by poor water quality, especially high nutrient levels, in the near shore waters. These losses are due to discharge of treated wastewater from industry and metropolitan wastewater treatment plants. High levels of suspended solids in stormwater flows are also implicated.

"Progress reports have allowed South Australians to keep informed about the issues and importantly allowed Government to instigate change.

"Upgrades to waste-water treatment plants, reduced industrial discharges, a single point of management for Adelaide's catchments and a review of the Waterproofing Adelaide Strategy are just some activities already underway that address study findings.

"The Water Quality Improvement Plan announced today is developing a clear set of achievable actions to protect remaining seagrass, reef communities and other coastal assets while restoring Adelaide's coastal waters to a quality we all expect in the longer term," says the Minister.

The Government supports the recommendations in principle and welcomes the culmination of all the technical reports that will continue to inform the work program of government and agencies for years to come.

In the meantime, actions already underway include:

- SA Water committed \$150 million toward upgrade of Christies Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- Environmental Improvement Programmes in place to reduce nutrient concentrations from metropolitan wastewater treatment plants.

- Penrice Soda Holdings invested multi-million dollars toward its commitment to progressively reduce nitrogen outputs from 820 tonnes per year to 250 tonnes by 2015 or as technology allows.
- Waterproofing Adelaide strategy, which includes reuse of stormwater and treated wastewater to reduce discharges to the marine environment, is being reviewed taking into account the study findings.
- The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board - responsible for improved catchment management – has developed a Draft NRM Plan including initiatives to improve water quality, reuse and recycling, support Water Quality Improvement Plans and reduce impacts to coast and marine environments. It's specifically proposed a \$7.23 million investment over three years for a program to address sediment migration to the coast.

The study's recommendations provide short and long term challenges. Recommendations include:

- Reducing volumes of wastewater, stormwater and industrial inputs into Adelaide's coastal environment.
- Reducing nitrogen discharge by 75% (from 2003 levels).
- Progressively halving particulate matter discharged to the marine environment (on 2003 levels).
- Implementing a range of monitoring programs to assess the environment, sea grasses and water quality - particularly near land based discharges.