

7 March 2017

EPA approves topsoil for power station ash dam

The EPA has given approval to Flinders Power to begin applying topsoil across the Port Augusta power stations ash dam as part of a plan to rehabilitate the site. Work on applying topsoil will begin immediately so that it is in place in time for native vegetation to be established in the coming months.

The EPA had previously granted approval to Flinders Power for building access roads on the ash dam and for applying topsoil in trial areas, which proved successful.

Flinders Power has prepared a rehabilitation plan and engaged a range of technical specialists to ensure a sustainable design that achieves long-term dust and water management.

The proposal to spread topsoil and vegetate the area has been assessed by EPA scientists and regulatory staff as well as Native Vegetation Council and an independent site contamination auditor.

Submission of the plan to the satisfaction of the EPA was a regulatory requirement within an Environment Protection Order issued to Flinders Power on 9 January 2017. Full approval for the plan is expected to be provided later this week.

EPA Chief Executive Tony Circelli said the rehabilitation is an important step in site closure for the protection of the environment and community.

“Ensuring that the rehabilitation of this site is managed in the best possible way for the community is a priority, and long-term management and monitoring of the rehabilitation work is a requirement of all approval parties – EPA, Native Vegetation Council, the independent site contamination auditor,” Mr Circelli said.

“The proposal will provide a stable separation layer between the ash and the final surface, by spreading topsoil across the 220ha ash dam area and planting over six tonnes of native vegetation seeds,” he said. Seeds have been sourced from existing local vegetation and similar sites within SA and soil is being sourced from within the Flinders Power site.

The rehabilitation plan involves spreading topsoil across the 220ha ash dam, and planting over six tonnes of native vegetation seeds.

“Ensuring that dust is minimised during rehabilitation and while vegetation is being established is a priority. While any rehabilitation work is undertaken, the EPA will continue to closely monitor Flinders Power to ensure that the work adheres to the EPA-approved site closure and dust management plans,” Mr Circelli said.

“Residents who attended a community information session very clearly told us that they want to be kept informed about works on site, so I’m pleased that Flinders Power has committed to engage with the Port Augusta community and other stakeholders as these additional works begin.”