



FLINDERS POWER SITE Community Update #10

Issued Friday 5 January 2018

Managing dust through summer 2018

Weather conditions in summer can cause significant dust in the Upper Spencer Gulf region, from both natural and built areas. Industrial sites licensed by the EPA, including the site of the former power stations in Port Augusta, are required to take reasonable and practicable steps to minimise dust impacts from their site on the community.

Flinders Power, the owner of the power stations site, has a Dust Management Plan in place. Following a dust event on 27 December, this plan will continue to be implemented with additional water carts to be available and with increased pro-active watering of the coal stockpile area to minimise dust when adverse weather conditions are predicted. This plan is periodically amended and updated to take into account changing conditions or requirements.

Flinders Power is also trialling a wind barrier on the ash dam and the EPA has asked the company to make and record observations regarding its effectiveness during hot and windy conditions.

Response to the dust event 27 December 2017

The EPA has met with Flinders Power regarding dust experienced by the community during high winds on 27 December. The strong winds generated dust from open areas across the upper Spencer Gulf and in Port Augusta, caused dust to lift off the site of the former power stations managed by Flinders Power.

Flinders Power reported dust from both topsoil on the site of the ash dam and the site of the former coal stockpile.

The EPA has requested a report from Flinders Power to assess whether all reasonable and practicable steps were taken to minimise dust from the site.

Community engagement

Flinders Power meets regularly with a community reference group and provides information to the community via its website and regular updates. Flinders Power staff in Port Augusta can be contacted via – **0419 252 760**.

The EPA provides information via its website and community update newsletters and operates a 24/7 call centre which can be contacted on **8204 2004**. An automated response will offer you three options; choose 'connect to an operator' and you will be able to speak with an operator who will take your details and forward your information to the EPA's technical staff for follow up. You can also email portaugustadust@epa.sa.gov.au.

What's in the dust?

The EPA has taken samples of dust collected from the filters on air quality monitoring stations in Port Augusta. An initial assessment of the samples shows that they are primarily topsoil. Further laboratory assessment of the samples will be undertaken and the results will be published on the EPA website once available.

Air quality monitoring

Air quality monitoring stations across the upper Spencer Gulf and in Port Augusta recorded peaks in dust levels on the afternoon of 27 December 2017.

The data from Port Augusta monitoring stations (see next page) shows that the standard of 50 micrograms per cubic metre, measured over 24 hours, was exceeded on December 27. The standard was also exceeded on 17 December.

When assessing whether dust is from regional or natural sources, or from the former power stations site, the EPA looks at wind direction on the day. Southerly winds take dust from the power stations site across the Port Augusta township. Northerly, northwesterly and northeasterly winds mean that dust levels recorded in the township are from sources other than the power stations. The velocity of the winds on December 27 means that dust from both the power station and other sites would have contributed to dust levels.

Roles of the EPA and Flinders Power

Flinders Power owns the site of the former power stations and is responsible for the decommissioning and rehabilitation of the site. The EPA is the regulatory authority that ensures Flinders Power complies with its environmental obligations.

The Flinders Power site is regulated by the EPA under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* for several activities of environmental significance. A copy of the current licence can be viewed on [EPA13006](#).

How air quality in Port Augusta is monitored?

Air quality in Port Augusta is monitored via a network of monitoring stations (see map on following page).

The stations monitor:

- TSP – total suspended particles which is visible dust. The particles are too large to enter lungs and this measure shows visible and 'nuisance' dust.
- PM10 – particles of 10 micrograms in diameter. These are smaller particles which can cause health impacts.

Flinders Power statement

Flinders Power says that while it is confident that its strategy for remediation – including extensive revegetation - at the Augusta Power Stations site is the right one, controlling dust under extreme conditions remains a challenge.

With high winds forecast for the coming weekend, daily operation of water carts will be strengthened on site to control any dust lift off. In addition, sprinklers will be in operation on the former coal stockpile to control any residual coal dust.

These precautions will continue to operate throughout the summer period.

Dust continues to be actively monitored through visual observation and real-time dust monitors; and when severe weather conditions are forecast or emerge suddenly – as they did last month - additional actions are undertaken.

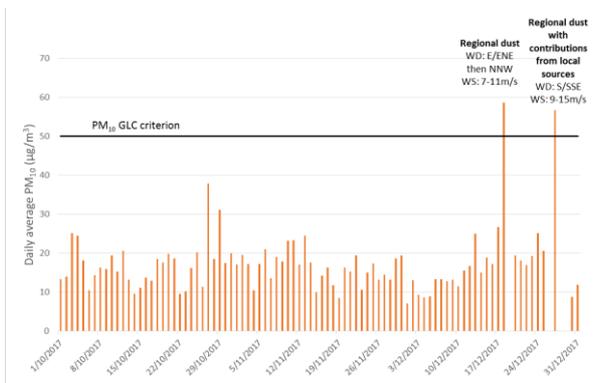
Flinders Power says it has made good progress with the topsoil sealing and vegetation across the vast ash storage area.

While germination has progressed following recent rain, more rain is required for plant growth to advance.

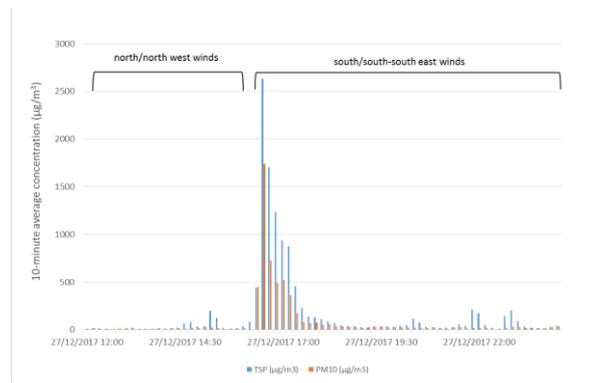
Independent ecological experts are confident that - with time - a good coverage of vegetation will be achieved across the site.



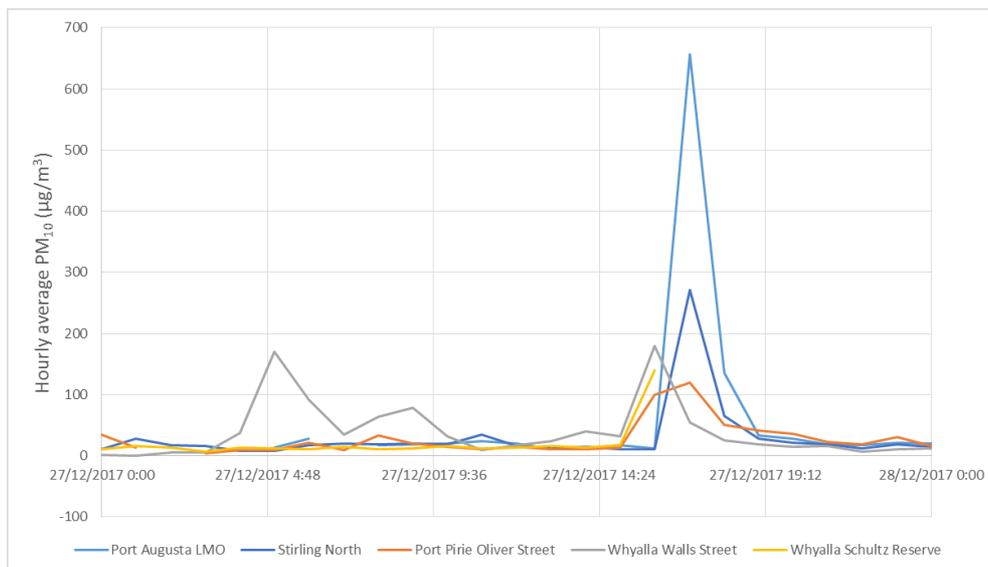
Real-time air quality data is available on the Flinders Power and EPA websites



Daily average compared to the health based ground level concentrations (GLC) criterion showing two exceedances in the last 3 months



Data showing 10-minute intervals. This shows a brief but high peak in dust. Please note that the standard of 50 micrograms which applies to 24-hour average data should not be applied to this graph.



Graph showing levels to Port Pirie and Whyalla as supplied previously

Asbestos

The EPA is aware of reports that asbestos may have been buried on the site in the past. These reports are being investigated by an accredited, independent site contamination auditor who is conducting a comprehensive audit of the site. To date, no asbestos has been identified.

Laboratory analysis of dust samples did not detect any asbestos. There is no likelihood that any historically buried asbestos in the ash dam could become airborne, given the site is capped and any historically dumped material would now be deeply buried.

Remediation progress

The majority of the ash dam has been covered in topsoil and Flinders Power has reported that seeds are beginning to germinate; however, more rain is needed to encourage further germination. The photo on the right was taken at the ash dam this week.



Photos courtesy of Flinders Power

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:

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Email: portaugustadust@epa.sa.gov.au

Website: www.epa.sa.gov.au

(Click hyperlink if viewing this publication online) or follow the link at the bottom left hand corner to Port Augusta Power Station Site.

To request any of this information in the post, please call us on the above number.

For health related information please contact:

Telephone: (08) 8226 7100

Website: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

(Click hyperlink if viewing this publication online, or type into the search window 'dust Port Augusta'.)

