



FLINDERS PORTS

Outer Harbor dredging – EPA licence

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Following approval of its development application by the Minister for Planning in May 2018, Flinders Ports Pty Ltd (Flinders Ports) applied for a licence under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (the Act) to undertake dredging of the Outer Harbor shipping channel.

The EPA has determined that it will proceed to authorise this activity with an EPA licence after:

- extensive consideration and having regard to [community submissions](#)
- giving consideration to the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- having regard for the objects of the Act, and all aspects it must consider in assessing the application for a licence to undertake an activity of environmental significance; and
- undertaking a thorough risk assessment of the dredging proposal.

Legally enforceable conditions to be included in an EPA licence are now being prepared. An overview of some of the key elements the EPA intends to regulate via the licence is provided in this update.





EPA licence objectives

Total prevention of seagrass loss is not achievable in a proposal of this nature. The EPA will focus on requiring Flinders Ports to undertake all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure the predicted loss is minimised as far as possible.

Flinders Ports submitted seagrass modelling during the licence application process. With the exception of the 4 hectares of permanent seagrass loss directly in the section of channel being widened, the majority of the environmental impact is expected to be relatively short term. The EPA will require Flinders Ports to monitor seagrass before and after dredging, and to undertake a further assessment up to three years after the dredging has been completed.

The EPA will require Flinders Ports to satisfy Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) on matters of biosecurity risk management including Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS). A POMS Management Plan must be approved by PIRSA prior to dredging commencing and will be implemented to PIRSA's expectations. Mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of *Caulerpa taxifolia* will be outlined in the EPA licence and in accordance with the development approval conditions.

The EPA licence will include conditions that specify when works will require further management actions to reduce turbidity or when work must stop altogether, with real-time alarms if the water becomes too cloudy. The licence will also require water-quality monitoring, and this data will be made available to the public. The draft Dredge Management Plan is currently available via the EPA website and the final version will be published online once approved.

Once issued, the EPA licence will be available via the EPA website (www.epa.sa.gov.au).

Category	Objectives of licence conditions
Compliance with EPA legislation and codes of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All conditions of the development approval must be met by Flinders Ports. • Licence requirements and the Dredge Management Plan must be adhered to at all times by Flinders Ports. • The licence will require monitoring to be undertaken before, during and after the dredging and information made available to the public. • Vessel biofouling management will be addressed through EPA Licence conditions linked to the EPA's Code of practice for vessel and facility management (marine and inland waters). These requirements will be consistent with the <i>National Biofouling Management Guidelines</i> and the <i>International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments 2004</i> (the Ballast Water Management Convention).
Dredge methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No side casting will be permitted. Use of green valves to minimise turbidity from the hopper dredge. • No dredging until March 2019. • Dredging methodology must minimise turbidity and be mitigated throughout the dredging operation. • Dredging to be undertaken in the shortest timeframe possible to minimise the impact on seagrass due to reduced light. • Water quality will be monitored in real-time using underwater probes and satellite imagery will be used throughout dredging to monitor any plumes. • Real-time alarm and stop work triggers will be enforced if water quality parameters (turbidity) are exceeded for an unacceptable duration. Triggers will be set as a licence condition or within the Dredge Management Plan. • Flinders Ports will document the proposed management of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) to the satisfaction of Primary Industries and Regions SA and implement proposed measures prior to dredging commencing. Confirmation that the work has been undertaken to PIRSA's satisfaction will be required prior to dredging commencing.
Seagrass monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seagrass monitoring to be undertaken before, during and up to three years after dredging ceases. • Flinders Ports is required to obtain a permit from the Native Vegetation Council for the clearance of any seagrass and provide a payment into the Native Vegetation Fund. • Flinders Ports will be required to validate the turbidity impacts and the inferred zones of seagrass impact predicted in the hydrodynamic modelling which supported its application. • Flinders Ports will also be required to monitor turbidity in real time during dredging, as well as assess satellite imagery on a frequent basis. These requirements will be closely monitored by the EPA. • The EPA licence will incorporate, as a minimum, the monitoring of seagrass conditions using a 'before and after control impact' design, measuring seagrass health metrics at an appropriate spatial and temporal frequency.

Environmental monitoring and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous monitoring and recording of turbidity data at predicted impact locations as well as other water quality parameters. • The EPA will require the monitoring data to inform dredge management measures, including stopping work where triggers the EPA sets (via other conditions of licence) are met. • In addition, the licence will include requirements for spill prevention and management as well as reporting to the EPA of all data collected in accordance with licence conditions. • The EPA will require qualified marine mammal observers be employed to prevent physical harm to dolphins (Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Objective 1) and appropriate management of works implemented.
Spoil disposal management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No disposal of spoil in the gulf, other than the approved spoil grounds that were used in the previous 2005-06 dredging campaign, and as approved in the development application. • Continued monitoring of the spoil placement area to ensure even distribution of material to minimise mounding. Licence conditions will require that spots generated do not create spot heights and an average height is achieved across the spoil placement area. • GPS tracking on vessels to publicly document vessel locations. Public will be able to view locations of vessels at all times through public websites such as www.marinetraffic.com.
Community engagement and access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue engagement with the community for the life of the project and, where possible, provide real-time access to information and reports. • Complaints receipt and resolution procedures in place and reported to the EPA.
Post-dredge monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPA will require Flinders Ports to monitor seagrass before and after dredging, and to undertake a further assessment up to three years after the dredging has been completed. • In addition, Flinders Ports will be required to provide a completion report to the EPA that demonstrates how conditions of the licence have been met.

FURTHER INFORMATION

*For **further EPA information** please contact:*

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