

Tuesday, 30 June 2020

New EPA licence for Nyrstar sets lower lead-in-air limits

The new conditions for operations of the Nyrstar smelter in Port Pirie will include 20 per cent lower annual average lead-in-air limits.

EPA Chief Executive Tony Circelli said Nyrstar meeting the new conditions would provide substantial benefits for the city, with the new licence representing an important step towards further reducing emissions from the site.

“The new conditions of the Nyrstar licence will require continual, ongoing attention and investment in the smelter operations to reduce emissions,” Mr Circelli said.

The new licensing conditions will include a 20% reduction from 0.5 µg/m³ to 0.4 µg/m³ lead-in-air limits of, measured four times per year.

In addition to the lead-in-air limits in the licence, the EPA has established new three-month-rolling lead-in-air average targets at four locations in Port Pirie, to be measured monthly.

“While it is important to achieve long-term overall reductions, these new three-month-rolling targets for lead-in-air are focussed at reducing short term emission events,” Mr Circelli said.

Nyrstar will be required to advise the EPA and the general public of any exceedance of targets, as well as produce a report detailing causes and proposed action to avoid future exceedances.

“The emission reductions combined with educational and community programs, such as the Targeted Lead Abatement Program (TLAP), will help to reduce the health effects of lead in the air for the community,” Mr Circelli said.

“We will require an updated Environment Improvement Plan from the operators to address lead and wastewater emissions, with measurable actions for improvements in these areas, and Nyrstar is required to consult publicly in the course of developing this plan.”

“The operators will also be required to develop, submit and implement a dust management plan by 30 September 2020,” Mr Circelli said.

Mr Circelli said the smelter was a prominent employer in the city and lead emissions had been a by-product of its operations for more than 100 years, with recent investments in the upgrade of the plant moving towards further reductions in emission levels.

It was paramount the EPA considered social, economic and environmental aspects of the regulation of the site in the new licence.

“The new licence will be for 12 months, to allow Nyrstar to continue with its plant commissioning upgrades and its emissions improvement program,” Mr Circelli said.

“This also provides the EPA an opportunity to review, and consider further lead-in-air reductions in the near future.”

Nyrstar’s new licensing conditions will commence 1 July 2020 and a copy of the licence is available at epa.sa.gov.au