

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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GMH Elizabeth South

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has been advised by General Motors Holden Ltd (GMH) that it will be undertaking further assessment of groundwater contamination found beneath land to the north of the GMH Operations Plant, at Elizabeth South.

In December 2011, the EPA advised that groundwater contamination identified at the GMH Operations Plant in early 2011, was also found in groundwater at off-site locations. The solvents that are the cause of the contamination have formerly been used in many industries over a long period of time. Investigations are continuing to identify the sources that may have contributed to this contamination.

GMH has engaged a site contamination consultant to undertake the environmental assessment work at areas on and off the GMH Operations Plant. All environmental assessment work is being reviewed by an independent, EPA accredited site contamination auditor.

GMH's consultant has undertaken these recent assessments to better understand the groundwater contamination in the area.

The EPA has been advised by GMH and the independent auditor, that the results of recent testing found levels of trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE) in soil vapour, on council land and road verges within the existing groundwater contamination area.

Today, GMH letterbox dropped approximately 95 residential homes in the area north of the Operations Plant, at Elizabeth South.

EPA Manager Site Contamination, Andrew Pruszinski, said the EPA has been advised that the letterbox drop is to inform residents of the findings of recent assessments and to offer them testing of air within the crawl space of homes. The crawl space is the space between the ground and floor of the house.

Of the 95 residential properties, approximately 20 homes have been selected by GMH, in conjunction with Housing SA, to commence testing of the air in the crawl space early next week.

"Whilst continued on and off-site assessment is being undertaken by a consultant and overseen by an independent auditor, the EPA's role is to ensure all work is undertaken in accordance with the *Environment Protection Act, 1993*," Mr Pruszinski said.

"GMH is cooperating with the EPA and undertaking all necessary steps to ensure residents are kept fully informed."

The doorknock undertaken by GMH late last year, did not identify any users of groundwater within the identified contamination area.

"As informed late last year, the EPA and the Department of Health and Ageing are continuing to advise people in the area who have a bore to stop using groundwater immediately," Mr Pruszinski said.

The EPA has published information as 'Frequently Asked Questions' and answers on TCE and PCE available on the EPA website: www.epa.sa.gov.au via the What's New list on the home page.

For further information on the use of groundwater and any contamination-related enquires in relation to this matter, please contact the EPA on 1800 729 175 during weekdays between the hours of 8am to 8pm.

For further information please contact: Kate Hannon on 0434 609 394