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MEDIA RELEASE

WEST LAKES SOIL TESTING

The Environment Protection Authority is conducting a further series of soil tests in the West Lakes region.

Authority Chair Stephen Walsh QC says a limited sampling and testing program conducted earlier this year of 18 sites indicated that in some locations slightly raised concentrations of some heavy metals were detected in the soil.

Mr Walsh says that following information received from the City of Charles Sturt as part of routine investigations carried out by Council on their depot (corner of Frederick Road and Lochside Drive, West Lakes), the Environment Protection Authority became aware that sewage sludge originating from the Port Adelaide Wastewater Treatment Plant was distributed across some areas of the West Lakes development nearly 30 years ago.

Chemical analysis of the sludge revealed that it contained cadmium.

“As a precautionary measure, the Authority decided to conduct a sampling and testing program on a representative sample of public reserves to investigate the distribution of the sludge and to determine whether further investigation was warranted,” Mr Walsh says.

“The results from the preliminary investigation were forwarded to the Department for Human Services (DHS) for advice.

“The DHS has advised the Authority that there is no immediate or acute risk to health. There may be concerns from the possible long-term uptake of cadmium through fruit and vegetables or poultry produce grown on site but, given the nature of the residential development at West Lakes, the concern is likely to be small.”

Mr Walsh says that as a precautionary measure the Authority will undertake further investigations to assist in more accurately defining the nature and extent of the issues.

“The Authority has decided, as a measure of its environmental responsibility to advise residents about this matter and of the imminent conduct of the further investigations. I would like to reassure people that the results of this further work and subsequent advice from DHS will be provided to residents in due course.

“In the meantime, an information line has been established and people wishing to discuss the matter further can talk to EPA or DHS staff. The number is 1800 730 128 and will be operating from 1.00pm to 9.00pm today, between 9.00am and 4.00pm tomorrow (Saturday 26 August) and then from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday from next week.

“In addition to the information line, a series of community meetings will be held over the coming weeks and bookings can be made by telephoning (08) 8239 8132. Regular updates and newsletters will be published by the Authority to keep everyone briefed on the progress and results of further testing,” Mr Walsh says.

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