

Tuesday, 12 May 2009

ALERT FOR FINNISS RIVER AND CURRENCY CREEK

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald says parts of the Finnis River and Currency Creek catchments have become acidic, as predicted by modelling last year.

Recent rainfall has mobilised acid in sections of the Finnis River catchment and it is considered that the water in that area is currently unsuitable for livestock consumption and human contact.

“Last year the Government predicted that Finnis River and Currency Creek would acidify at a water level of approximately minus 0.75m AHD,” she said.

“Water levels in Goolwa Channel are now well below this point and the tributaries have disconnected, and, as predicted, a large amount of acidic material has built up.

“Recent rainfall has mobilised this acid in a creek bed that feeds into the Finnis River catchment near Wally’s Landing. There are also pools of acidic water in parts of Currency Creek wetlands, but it is not flowing.

“Health SA has advised that the water could cause irritation particularly to sensitive tissue such as the eyes, and contact with water in the downstream sections of the Finnis River and Currency Creek should be avoided.”

Landholders are advised to provide alternate water supplies for stock and to restrict livestock access to the acidic water as a precaution.

“The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation will today be directly contacting all landholders whose stock and domestic water supply could be affected by this mobilised acid.

“The situation is being monitored extremely closely. There are no impacts on the Goolwa Channel at this stage.

“In anticipation of the acidic material being mobilised, more than 300 tonnes of micro-fine limestone has already been placed in Currency Creek and 80 tonnes in the Finnis River to neutralise acid.

“We are currently investigating further options to address the situation, including the option to implement additional limestone dosing as a matter of urgency.”

The State Government has proposed a series of environmental flow regulators across Goolwa Channel, at Clayton, and in Finnis and Currency Creek tributaries to manage acidification issues in these tributaries. Final approvals for this project are currently being sought.

People who draw water from the affected area and require further information should contact DWLBC on 8463 6813.