

Monday, 27 October 2008

CHRISTIES BEACH WASTEWATER UPGRADE APPROVED

Minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald said today final planning approval has been granted for the State Government's \$272 million upgrade of the Christies Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant to increase its capacity by 50 per cent.

Minister Maywald says the upgrade approved by the Development Assessment Commission will allow the plant to cope with the predicted increase in population within the area serviced by the plant during the next 20 years.

Improvements provided by the upgrade will also benefit the environment and local community through the decommissioning of the Noarlunga sludge lagoons, Minister Maywald says.

After construction, landscaping around the Christies Beach site, especially along the coastal strip, is to be upgraded to include a new dual-use path for pedestrians and cyclists, she says.

"The upgraded plant will include modern treatment technology to better treat wastewater and reduce nutrient discharge to the Gulf St. Vincent," Minister Maywald says.

"Once commissioned, it will almost halve the amount of nitrogen discharged into the Gulf St. Vincent.

"In addition to the improved treatment process, by December 2009, sludge will no longer be pumped from the Christies Beach plant to the Noarlunga sludge lagoons.

"The lagoons will then be decommissioned and converted into a stormwater wetland."

Minister for the Southern Suburbs John Hill welcomed the upgrade of the plant and the conversion of the lagoons into a stormwater wetland.

"I know the Southern community have been concerned about the sludge ponds for some time, and I have been lobbying for their removal," Minister Hill says.

"This announcement is really good news for the community."

Minister Maywald says the upgrade will allow eight per cent of the plant's power to be sourced from renewable energy utilising gas produced from the breakdown of waste.

"About 25 per cent of the plant's effluent is currently re-used and planning is well underway to further maximise re-use," Minister Maywald says.

“Our aim is to deliver treated water to new developments in the southern suburbs for domestic use in gardens and toilets.

Minister Maywald says each year about 3000 megalitres of treated wastewater is used for horticultural purposes.

“As this figure increases, the amount of nutrients discharged into the Gulf will decrease,” she says.

“We are also looking at ways to enable greater storage of the treated wastewater during cooler periods so it has the potential to be used for irrigation in the warmer months.”

Work on the upgrade of the plant is expected to begin in early 2009 ready for completion by mid-2011.