

## MEDIA RELEASE

20th August 2018

### **AUGUSTA POWER STATIONS – PROJECT UPDATE**

The rehabilitation of the former Ash Storage Area at the Port Augusta Power stations site continues to progress well. Some 260 hectares of the 273 hectare site are now capped with soil, eliminating the risk of ash dust events. The remaining 13ha represents the polishing pond at the northernmost end of the site, which remains very soft and saturated (therefore no dust risk) and is being progressively covered.

Revegetation is occurring, albeit slowly, due to significantly lower than average rainfall. Independent ecological reviews of the site suggest that gradual progress can be expected (given limited rainfall), and there is confidence that - with time - full vegetation coverage will be achieved. (Flinders Power also notes that controlling topsoil dust during extreme winds in an arid environment is a challenge for all industry and landholders. Regional dust events occur regularly and affect all sites. Our objective is to minimise fugitive dust to the extent possible while revegetation progresses).

Flinders Power has always said that the rehabilitation work, much of which is world-first in nature, would not be without challenges. A Monitoring and Maintenance Plan was prepared in the planning stage. This is structured on a risk assessment and adaptive management philosophy – meaning that our rehabilitation approaches are under constant scrutiny and subject to change as required. There remains close examination from the EPA and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) Native Vegetation Unit.

With this approach, an extensive options assessment process has been completed over the past 5 months. The aim was to identify measures that would improve short-term red topsoil dust control, while not adversely impacting the long-term revegetation goals at the site. The options assessment was led by independent experts Tonkin Consulting, with the input of Succession Ecology, Red Planet Innovations, Soil Management Systems and McMahon Services Australia.

The options assessment found that the use of a sterile barley/rye corn cover crop with the selective use of commercially available dust suppressants could achieve this aim.

A number of trials have been conducted in the period April – August 2018 to inform the strategy. This included a surface roughening trial, sterile barley and rye corn cover crop trial, the assessment of eight different suppressants to determine impacts on germination and growth and a sprinkler trial. Further soil analysis and soil seedbank testing has also been undertaken.

The implementation of a cover crop commenced this week following agronomist advice. Initially the crop is being sown in a checker-board pattern adjacent to access tracks, to enable watercarts to access the sown areas. The cover crop is intended to act as a windbreak, bind the soil and provide organic mulch.

The dust suppressant trials have identified the top four products, with a final selection process currently underway. The trials were vital to ensure that the chosen suppressant did not impair existing growth. The selected suppressant will initially be applied to high-risk areas for dust generation and application is expected to commence in September 2018. Application of suppressants will be extended across the site pending an assessment of conditions.

The coal stockpile has also been capped with soil, with seeding to occur in coming weeks. This area already has a sprinkler irrigation system, which will be used to promote germination.

Flinders Power continues to assess options for irrigation for the Ash Storage Area. Being such a large site in an arid climate, irrigation is a significant challenge that may - or may not - be in the best interests of native vegetation establishment. Flinders is awaiting further technical advice in this regard. However, planning is well advanced for the potential use of water from the SA Water Port Augusta East Wastewater Treatment Plant, located adjacent to the Ash Storage Area. A trial will be conducted over coming months to assess the impact of utilising this water on soil and plants.

Demolition is progressing well and significant changes to the local landscape are very noticeable with the demolition of Playford B Power Station. Scrap and concrete processing are currently the key focus at the demolition site. The fifth shipment of 10,000T of scrap steel recently left the Port Pirie wharf bound for an overseas steel recycling facility.

The Northern Power Station stack is on track for felling in November 2018. Extensive high voltage transmission network bypass works are underway - led by Electra Net - in order to ensure supplies to the Eyre Peninsula are not jeopardised while the felling occurs. Further community and media engagement will occur in the lead-up to what will be a high-profile event.

Flinders Power remains committed to sharing information openly with our community. We appreciate the support of the Community Reference Group and continue to offer guided tours of the site. Over 200 people have enjoyed these tours. If you are interested, please contact us on the contact numbers below:

In summary

- Some 260 hectares of the huge site is now capped with soil - eliminating ash dust risk
- Revegetation growth is gradually progressing, despite poor rainfall across the region
- Regional dust events occur during extreme conditions. Flinders' objective is to minimise fugitive dust events to the extent possible while revegetation progresses
- A detailed options assessment and trials over the past 5 months led by a number of independent experts has concluded that a cover crop and the use of dust suppressants is the best method to control red topsoil dust over summer 2018 while not impairing long-term revegetation outcomes
- A cover crop is being sown now (adjacent to watercart access tracks) and suppressant application to high-risk areas of dust generation is expected to commence in September
- Trials will soon commence to assess the use of waste water from SA Water.
- Good progress is being made with demolition works, with the iconic Northern Power Station stack expected to come down in November 2018.

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## **INVITATION TO TOUR AUGUSTA POWER STATIONS SITE**



Flinders Power is inviting residents from Port Augusta and nearby communities to tour the Augusta Power Stations site.

Several tours of the demolition site and ash storage revegetation zone will take place in the coming weeks and each will be preceded by a briefing from a company official.

Demolition work is nearing completion and site restoration is progressing according to plan.

**Residents interested in touring the site can register by contacting Flinders Power on  
Email: [enquiries@flinderspower.com.au](mailto:enquiries@flinderspower.com.au) or  
Phone: 0419 252 760**

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