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Investigation and Status of Groundwater

The operations of Metal Manufacturers (MM) at Port Kembla are regulated by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) under Environment Protection Licence 6158. Over and above the requirements of this licence, MM implemented a programme of groundwater testing at our site in 2018 to proactively evaluate potential impacts of our operation.

Recent monitoring indicated the presence of Light Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (LNAPL) in two groundwater monitoring wells located close to the eastern site boundary. Chlorinated hydrocarbon species were also detected in these wells. Consistent with the obligations of our Licence, MM made a formal report of groundwater results to the EPA resulting in the issuance of Clean-Up Notice 3502239.

An investigation into the contamination could not identify any obvious source, for example leaks or spills, and all drains are clear. On this basis, groundwater impacts are considered to be historical impacts not caused by present-day site operations.

Consistent with the requirements of the Notice, MM has engaged Edison Environmental & Engineering Pty Ltd to undertake an investigation at the site. The investigation will seek to identify the source(s) and assess the nature, level and extent of groundwater impacts. The investigation will assess both on- and off-site impacts.

Work is underway and Investigations will be carried out over the coming weeks.

To provide further rigour, MM is also in the process of appointing an EPA-Accredited Site Auditor to independently review the site investigation programme.

Results of ongoing inspections and monitoring by MM indicate that groundwater contamination is not impacting on MM Beach. Risks to users of MM Beach and the off-site environment are considered to be low based on available data.

MM checks stormwater drains and beach outlets daily. These are independently tested twice a month in accordance with our Environmental Protection Licence.

As a precautionary measure, MM has implemented an augmented programme to regularly monitor the quality of stormwater on site and at drains along MM Beach. Results of this monitoring will be made publicly available.