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Title:

Press release: Underground water in South East and Eyre Peninsula

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN. THURSDAY 14/6/73.

UNDERGROUND WATER IN SOUTH EAST AND EYRE PENINSULA.

Widespread areas of the South East and Eyre Peninsula were today proclaimed as defined areas under the Underground Waters Preservation Act.

The Premier and Minister of Development and Mines, Mr. Dunstan, said this would ensure better management and protection of the resources which were vital to the development of the State.

The Underground Waters Preservation Act was designed to permit action to be taken to prevent contamination and undue depletion of underground waters.

Mr. Dunstan said the decision to extend the operation of the Act in the South East followed recommendations from the Department of Mines and the committee investigating water pollution control in the South East.

The Committee's report, which was now being studied by the Minister of Works, Mr. Corcoran, would form the basis of the Government's Water Pollution Control Policy in the South East.

Mr. Dunstan said it had been shown that underground water in the Mount Gambier area was already polluted.

It was imperative to overcome this problem and ensure that it did not happen in other areas.

Mr. Dunstan said the Eyre Peninsula areas had been proclaimed because of the importance of underground water in providing reticulated supplies.

At present about 50% of these supplies were obtained from underground resources with the balance provided from the Todd River Reservoir.

The Engineering and Water Supply Department planned to use underground water to cope with the increasing demand for water supplies on Eyre Peninsula.

It was anticipated that eventually about 70% of the water requirements of the area would be met from underground.

"The known basins appear to be able to meet these demands but these plans could be jeopardized if areas adjacent to the basins were to be developed as irrigation schemes."

"More importantly, deterioration of the good quality water could easily occur through the use of incorrect drilling techniques."

"If this should happen the reserves of low salinity underground water would be reduced, and if it occurred on a large scale, some basins could become completely unusable."

Mr. Dunstan said the areas in the South East brought under the Act were the counties of Grey, Robe, MacDonnell, and Buckingham.

In the Eyre Peninsula they were the counties of Flinders, Musgrove and Robinson.

Mr. Dunstan said that under the Underground Waters Preservation Act, a well could not be drilled beyond a prescribed depth for the area, or an existing well extended beyond that depth, without a permit.

Such work could only be done by a licensed well-driller.

The depth prescribed for Eyre Peninsula was 6 metres (approximately 19 ft.) and for the South East it varied between 2.5 metres (approximately 8 ft.) and 25 metres (approximately 80 ft.).

Mr. Dunstan said it would be necessary for landholders in both the South East and Eyre Peninsula to notify the Department of Mines within three months of details of all wells on their property.

Mr. Dunstan said that plans showing the boundaries of areas involved, and a brochure explaining the Underground Waters Preservation Act would be available from the Department of Mines Regional Offices.

It was hoped that arrangements could be made for them to be displayed at Local Government offices throughout the South East and Eyre Peninsula.

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