

**Question on Notice
No. 1059
Asked on 2 September 2004**

QUESTION:

MR RICKUSS asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle)—

With reference to significant breaches of effluent discharge limits for each year over the past two years and the year to date—

- (1) What is the number of breaches of effluent discharge limits that have been recorded by the Environmental Protection Agency (reported separately)?
- (2) What was the location of each breach, who was identified as the negligent party and what action was taken in each instance (reported separately)?

ANSWER

- (1) & (2) For the purposes of this response effluent is defined as any process water. Significant discharges would generally include volumes greater than 100 kilolitres or where a significant contaminant is involved, and there is the potential to cause environmental harm.

Examples of reported alleged significant breaches, action taken and outcomes achieved are detailed below.

ATTACHMENT 1

Party	Incident	Location	Action taken	Outcome
Fitzroy River Water	Ongoing breach of release quality characteristics.	Fitzroy River	Receipt of Program Notice and Environmental Management Program pending.	Fitzroy River Water preparing management plan for discharges and re-use options.
Teys Bros (Innisfail)	04/07/02: Release of phosphorus to Johnstone River in excess of abattoir licence limits.	Dodds Road, Innisfail	Negotiating with company regarding environmental monitoring in Johnstone River.	Negotiations ongoing.
Caboolture Shire Council	30/07/02-05/08/02: a burst "class 9 PVC" rising main caused the overflow. The rising main was suggested to have burst due to a fatigue failure caused by cyclic loading. The rising main was connected to one of the Council's major sewage pumping stations. This caused approximately 18 million litres of raw sewage to be placed in position where it could reasonably be expected to cause serious environmental harm.	Burpengary Creek - Maitland Road, Burpengary	Actions have been identified to limit the likelihood of a recurrence of the accidental discharge.	Caboolture Water prosecuted \$30,000.
Mareeba Shire Council	06/08/02: Exceedances of ammonia standards in Sewage Treatment Plant licence.	Mareeba	Negotiations with the Mareeba Shire Council to commission and construct a new Sewage Treatment Plant.	Proposal being prepared for the upgrade of Sewage Treatment Plant with some irrigation.
Newmont Australia - Mt Leyshon gold mine	12/03/03: Leachate from dam on Mt Leyshon gold mine released into creek. Breach of licence release quality characteristics.	Mount Leyshon - Dalrymple Shire	Environmental Investigation and Environmental Management Program ordered.	Rehabilitation works @ \$250,000 and continuing to monitor. Licence amended.
Townsville City Council	01/05/03: Mather Street pump station overflow – estimated two mega litres released into Mt Louisa creek caused by shutdown for repairs to main. A small fish kill occurred.	Louisa Creek – Mather Street pump station, Townsville	Sampling conducted by Citiwater over three weeks following 2/5, 6/5, 12/5 and 20/05/03.	Water quality results from sampling indicate water returned to normal quality as at 20/05/03.
Caboolture Shire Council – South Caboolture Sewage Treatment Plant	31/05/03: short-circuited power main to the pumps at the pumping station resulting in a 3.1 million litre spill.	Caboolture River	It was recommended actions and additional "system" problems at Caboolture Water, identified by an expert report, be included in an environmental management program.	Caboolture Water undertaking Environmental Management Programs.

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			This is to ensure that Caboolture Water's systems are upgraded towards best practice and the risk of contaminant releases to the environment is reduced.	
Thomas Borthwick & Sons (Australia) Pty Ltd	01/08/03: Tallow spill – release of over four tonnes of tallow into Bakers Creek.	Bakers Creek, Mackay	Prosecution. Environmental Evaluation required resulting in Environmental Management Program.	\$40,000 fine. Environmental Management Program to mitigate risk of contaminant release to Bakers Creek via stormwater drainage system.
Tully Sugar Limited	22/10/03: Exceedances of BOD (biochemical oxygen demand) standards in sugar mill licence.	Tully	Warning letter issued to Tully Sugar Limited.	\$125,000 set aside for remedial works.
Mossman Central Mill Co Ltd	03/11/03: Discharge waters in exceedances of BOD (biochemical oxygen demand) limits.	Mossman	Penalty Infringement Notice issued.	Warning letter issued.
Highway Reward Copper Mine (Mount Windsor Joint Venture, owned by Thalanga Copper Mine and BML Holdings Pty Ltd)	10/01/04: Discharge of contaminated waters from the ROM (run of mine ore) pad, breach of licence release quality characteristics.	Highway Reward Mine, Dalrymple Shire	Penalty Infringement Notice issued for breach of licence conditions.	Licence review and amendment to require increased monitoring and reporting to the Administering Authority, and a warning that further non-compliance with licence limits may result in more forceful enforcement action.
Reef Management Pty Ltd	11/01/04: Failure of UV sterilisation equipment resulting in exceedances of faecal coliform limits in sewage treatment plant licence.	Green Island	Environmental Management Program submitted.	Works under Environmental Management Program proposed to upgrade UV sterilisation system.
Birla Mt Gordon Pty Ltd (wholly owned subsidiary of Aditya Birla Group)	14-18/01/04 – 8-9/03/04: Discharge of contaminated waters from mining lease.	Mt Gordon	Investigation into breach of licence conditions and general environmental duty. Notice issued to undertake an Environmental Investigation.	Ongoing. Environmental Investigation Commissioned for Water Management on Site - due 15/09/04.
Livingstone Shire Council	27/01/04: Pump Failure – 770,000 litres untreated sewage to Mangrove Area.	Fig Tree Creek – mangrove wetland area, Yeppoon	Investigation of spill circumstances. Warning Notice issued.	Livingstone Shire Council reviewing Sewage Management Plan. New Sewage Treatment Plant under construction.

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Caboolture South Water Reclamation Plant Weier Road, Morayfield	03/02/04: Plant offline due to heavy rainfall 8-32 ML. overflow. 25/02/04: Plant offline due to heavy rainfall 8-32 ML. overflow.	Caboolture River	Negotiation with Caboolture Shire Council in relation to preventative action required.	Council inflow/infiltration plan of approximately \$400,000/year spent over last four years in sewer rehabilitation works and \$600,000/year over next five years to continue work.
Binary Chemicals	05/02/04: Unauthorised release of wastewater (herbicides and pesticides) onto land and into creek.	Narangba	Crown Law is reviewing brief to determine if prima-facie case exists for prosecution. Advice is due by the end of October 2004.	Decision pending.
Queensland Nickel Inc.	09-15/02/04: Levee Bank overflow sampling point discharge averaged 61.4mg/L of total ammonia – licence condition states 2mg/L	Yabulu, Thuringowa City Council	Investigated and Penalty Infringement Notice issued for licence breach.	Queensland Nickel Inc. committed to undertake actions to prevent a recurrence.
Eacham Shire Council	23/03/04: Build-up of groundwater in landfill resulting in release of leachate downstream, in breach of licence condition.	Malanda	Environmental Management Program submitted.	Works under Environmental Management Program proposed to address groundwater seepage.
Daydream Island Pty Ltd	04/04 (Easter Weekend): Raw sewage - release of 30,000L sewage into marine waters from pump station.	Whitsundays	Warning Notice issued that statutory action would be taken if there is a recurrence or works not done to address issue. Negotiated outcome .	Improved contingency procedures and maintenance checklists, installation of back-up equipment.
Townsville City Council	30/06/04: 30 kilolitres of raw sewage by-passed to non-tidal sections of Bohle River.	Bohle River, Townsville	Letter sent to Townsville City Council on 06/07/04 requesting explanation of incident.	Blown fuse on the phase failure relay replaced and plant back on line after 2.5 hours. Water sampling of Bohle River conducted. Plant upgrades planned for near future.
Cairns City Council	14/07/04: Exceedances of faecal coliform standards in sewage treatment plant licence.	Northern Sewage Treatment Plant, North Cairns	Warning letter issued to the Cairns City Council.	Chlorine dosing pump is being repaired.
Brisbane City Council	03/08/04: Multiple systems failures.	Heros Ave, Indooroopilly	Incident under investigation.	Investigation continuing.