

## Question on Notice

No. 1633

Asked on Thursday, 30 October 2008

**MR MOORHEAD** asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (MR LUCAS) –

QUESTION:

Will he inform the House what protections are in place to ensure purified recycled water is safe for drinking by South East Queensland residents?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Waterford for his question.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that purified recycled water is safe before being added to Wivenhoe Dam drinking water. Further, it has been announced that purified recycled water will not be used to supplement Wivenhoe dam unless the regions combined dam levels fall below 40%.

The protections which are in place to ensure the safety of purified recycled water when it is required to secure the regions water supplies include:

- Legislation – the *Public Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2008* and the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* introduces water quality standards and assessment powers to ensure the risks are managed and the public protected.
- Validation - legislation requires the demonstration that the treatment process is operating effectively and is meeting the water quality standards.
- Online monitoring – provides constant data as to the effective operation of the treatment barriers and the automatic shutting down of production if a critical limit for that process is exceeded
- Water quality monitoring – water produced is tested for some 200 parameters to ensure the meeting of water quality standards. This involves regular testing of parameters determined by a risk assessment overseen by Queensland Health
- Acceptance of water to the scheme – on-line monitoring determines if the sensitive waste water treatment process is operating effectively and prevents supply to recycled water scheme if water quality outside of acceptable limits is detected.
- Queensland Water Commissions Expert Panel – made up of national and international experts are reviewing scheme management plans and water quality data to provide independent comment on the scheme safety.
- Seven barriers – purified recycled water is produced at barrier 5 before entering the dam and being retreated at water treatment plants. There is significant treatment redundancy in the recycled water process.