

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1089

asked on Friday, 17 June 2011

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MR MALONE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (MS JONES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to sewerage plants sited along the Queensland Coast—

Will the Minister advise the name and location of each plant that (a) is non-compliant and operating under an interim permit and (b) does not meet the current criteria of DEEDI in regard to discharge into the Great Barrier Reef waters?

ANSWER:

While this question was asked of Minister Jones, due to recent changes in Ministerial responsibility, I am now the Minister responsible for this matter and therefore provide this response.

There are a number of sewage treatment plants operated by local governments along the Queensland coastline that discharge either directly into Great Barrier Reef waters or indirectly via coastal waterways.

Of these, the Mackay South (Bakers Creek), Sarina, and Mirani sewage treatment plants each operate under a transitional environmental program (TEP), approved by the Department of Environment and Resource Management. TEPs were approved for these sewage treatment plants because they could not achieve compliance with the wastewater release standards in their development approval. The TEPs provide a program of works for the upgrade of the sewage treatment plants to achieve compliance over an agreed timeframe.

A privately operated sewerage treatment plant associated with the Port Hinchinbrook development at Cardwell is currently negotiating the terms of a TEP following damage from Cyclone Yasi. However as this is a disposal-to-land plant it does not discharge into Great Barrier Reef waters.

Thanks to major infrastructure improvements by local governments over the past decade or so the contribution to Great Barrier Reef nutrient pollution from sewerage treatment plants has been estimated at as low as 5% and not more than 10% of the total as measured through water quality programs in recent years. The department will continue to work with local governments to improve water quality across the Great Barrier Reef catchments.