

Last Chance for Public Input Before GC Drinks Recycled Sewage

Excerpt from Queensland's Recycled Sewage Water Scheme Report by Dahl Cummins © 2008. (Full Report www.thehealthvine.net) A Research Document on the Queensland Government's "Waterfuture" Strategy: A Plan To Recycle all Sewage and Industrial Wastewater into the Gold Coast Drinking Water Supply

"Water Is Life... Our Life, Our Future: That Future Is In Your Hands

Clean water is not a fantasy: It is a biological, social, economical and spiritual necessity. It is our inheritance we pass on to future generations. Its purity and quality are our present responsibility. Water is our most finite resource, only 3% of the Earth's total water supply is fresh and much of it is trapped in ancient polar ice caps. Once water has been contaminated it cannot be absolutely purified - only disinfected with very strong chemicals, the effects of which are only now being realized."

John Archer - On the Waterfront

BACKGROUND The Gold Coast City will be included in the largest recycled wastewater treatment scheme in Australia which will transform 100% of all the raw sewage from EVERY SEWAGE SYSTEM and ALL WASTEWATER from every industry into our DRINKING WATER. We will become part of the South East Queensland Water Grid, owned by our State Government. The project will be on line in 2009, with completion before 2015. The Water Grid will collect all sewage and wastewaters from the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and Gold Coast and will be the largest treatment scheme in the Southern Hemisphere. All of the waste will be piped around the entire south eastern area of our State and eventually out west as far as Toowoomba.

It WILL NOT be flushed into the sea: It will become our drinking water supply. This is our last chance to stop this dangerous practice. If we cannot discourage the Government we will all be adversely affected by it - not only in our generation but for every generation that follows. Our sewage and industrial wastewater sources CANNOT BE SEPARATED.

I began my quest to be informed on the dangers of drinking recycled sewage some time in 1994. Information on this scheme was sporadic to begin with and also, I thought, extremely guarded. Press releases only regaled the debate for using recycled wastewater. Even today not much is printed in our local newspapers regarding the other side of the argument. Some years ago I posted a full copy of my research into this practice to The GC Bulletin newspaper and asked for it to be considered as a worthwhile community report. A month later when I spoke to the reporter that received this information I was informed that they would never release my information as it was, "too political." In other words, someone did not want the general public to be exposed to any opposing information about their Northern Wastewater Strategy (NWS).

My research commenced by contacting the Chief Engineer in charge of the NWS at the time. I told him I was interested in the project and asked him for a copy of any information he could provide for the strategy, which he duly supplied. After reading it I became even more concerned and in a following conversa-

tion with him he made it clear he had no intentions of listening to my concerns.

He became quite agitated about my research and actually laughed at me. He told me that I would never have any hope of preventing their plan because I was not a publicly recognised academic and that no-one would ever listen to me. This inspired me to further my research and to expose the facts I have uncovered.

Some of the information contained in this report actually originates in the GC Council's own NWS report. Most public libraries contain a copy, but the majority of people do not have the time to peruse this lengthy report. All material in this paper has been researched from reputable sources. A list of these conclude this report...

The original Committee formed to oversee the NWS was a mixture of Councillors and those with vested interests in obtaining a new water source. Once the NWS report was released the committee was disbanded and the Sewage and Wastewater Committee formed with Cr. Daphne McDonald as CEO. Cr. McDonald was also an original member of the NWS. Previous talks with Cr. McDonald have done little to persuade me that she is capable of preventing the sewage from becoming our drinking water due to being overridden by other Councillors and the Qld State Government.

An article in the Gold Coast Bulletin on 31 October 2007 states that Cr McDonald is the ONLY member of the Water Strategy Advisory Committee who voted against sewage re-use as a potable source. In a press release in The Sun community newspaper on Wednesday 17 October 2007 she requested that the community come forward with any objections, but due to public apathy or lack of knowledge on this subject not much opposition was recorded.

THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE TO BE HEARD - SO BE WARNED - OTHERWISE WE WILL ALL BE DRINKING RECYCLED SEWAGE.

If you have any concerns after reading this report I urge you to contact your local representative immediately. The strategy is being whitewashed by introducing a form of 'newspeak' to cover up and polish the instigation, terminology and practice of this scheme to gain public acceptance. Sewage will become known as 're-claimed water' and our children will be programmed from Year 1 into believing it to be safe. They will be coached that sewage is a resource rather than a waste product due to the 'Waterwise Program' taught in every school.

The Council is finalising their Strategy for implementation in 2008. They have called for public input. They have already built a treatment plant at Pimpama to produce re-cycled water to A+ level, experimenting on reaching tertiary treatment level.

This is the first time a DIRECT potable (drinking) recycled treatment scheme will be tested in Australia. A direct treatment plan was still in experimental stages at Windhoek in Namibia,

Central Africa (situated in the Namib Desert and boarded by the Kalahari Desert). To date, this was the longest serving DIRECT POTABLE RE-CYCLING WASTEWATER PLANT IN THE WORLD but has now been closed down. This plant only recycled 36% of all their sewage and INDUSTRIAL WASTE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER THE SYSTEM - which will be unlike the proposed Gold Coast system...

Why is our Council and State government so intent on implementing a water recycling treatment plant using the Windhoek model as a basis, thereby endangering our health exponentially by trapping this reclaimed water into an enclosed eco-system? There are an infinite amount of internet sites that warn about the dangers of drinking recycled sewage.

Caboolture Shire Council tried to implement this idea in 1996 and failed due to public resistance. Toowoomba also tried to establish a sewage recycle plan and a referendum proved the public's abhorrence to it. We will not be offered a Referendum on the Gold Coast. The decision has already been made for us by the State. The only action we can hope to prevent is the treated recycled water being fed directly into our potable source. Without public resistance the final plans will be tabled and implemented by the end of 2008.

'NEW WATER' FINANCE INCENTIVE: The main motive to implement this strategy is that we are running out of water due to our increasing population. Most of the remaining justifications are due to a financial aspect. Some years ago the Federal Government devised a proposition to grant \$200 million to each state that could provide a 'new' water source - hence the plan to recycle sewage into drinking water. So far, (to my knowledge) no state has been paid the grant as none has been able to 'find' a new source.

The Oyster Growers and Prawn Farmers located in Moreton Bay want the sewage out-fall (even at tertiary level) ceased as it affects their multi-million dollar per day market to the Asians. They cannot use their own marine products due to chemical contamination of their waters, so they import ours. Some members were on the original committee (Information in NWS report). Certain organisations convinced the Council that it was detrimental for the tourist dollar to flush treated wastewater into our beaches (such as the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau and the Surf rider Foundation of Aust). They are on the Gold Coast Waterfutures Strategy Committee 2007 (Information in NWS report and G.C.W.S. 2007)

One must question that if it is detrimental to marine life and other living organisms at the lower end of the food chain to disperse this treated wastewater into our ocean, then what harmful effects must it render upon us when it purposely and directly becomes our drinking water? ...Water that will contain even MORE CHEMICALS due to tertiary disinfection.

PROPOSED TREATMENT PLAN The public have not been told in plain English exactly

HOW the re-cycled sewage will be treated nor given a transparent plan of the treatment plant. From data sent to me by the original Engineer, it is plain to understand this 'water' will be continually recycled in an enclosed eco system. This is similar to the Windhoek system but with more treatment options included to take it to a tertiary treatment level.

If it is decided that the treated sewage will be in a DIRECT POTABLE TREATMENT PLANT, it will be piped directly into our drinking supply after treatment. If the treated waste is diverted into the Hinze Dam or Wivenhoe dam after it is treated with a barrage of chemicals, it will be known as an INDIRECT POTABLE SUPPLY. It will continually become more concentrated with chemicals during treatment each time it is recycled, which will cause bio-accumulation of those chemicals and their by-products.

100% of the sewage will be treated for this purpose - unlike most other international systems where only a portion of the sewage is recycled. It will still be classed as an enclosed eco-system as the treated 'water' will be stored in a dam, not sent out to sea.

DISEASE FEEDBACK LOOP One particular issue relevant to potable re-use of sewage is the possibility of 'feedback loop' if an outbreak of disease should occur in the population. In this scenario a disease outbreak would result in higher concentrations of the pathogen in sewage which may flow through to potable water if treatment is not able to cope with increased pathogen load. This would again increase disease rates in the population and the pathogen load in sewage leading to amplification of the outbreak, creating a dangerous continuing cycle.

The diagram titled "Potable Reuse Plant Conceptual Process Train" (see full report) is data I received from the original engineer and shows the intended treatment process. In an enclosed eco-system a 'feedback loop' is easily attained. This is how the sewage will be 'disinfected' to tertiary level. However, it is also proposed that the 'water' will sit in seven artificial man-made wetlands for up to 21 days to allow for further 'disinfection' (NWWS Report).

IRRADIATED WATER These wetlands will become home to a variety of flora and fauna as well as insects. It will then be retrieved and processed by Gamma Irradiation (known as Cobalt 60, used in some cancer treatments) just prior to being distributed into our water grid. Cobalt 60 is known to mutate the genetic code of humans (well known to cancer patients who are advised against reproduction after treatment). It could only take as little as 1 or 2 generations for our DNA to be severely mutated and there will be NO CHANCE OF REVERSING THE PROBLEM. To date I have not seen this information exposed to the public.

In 1974 a report to Council by Camp Scott & Furphy advised that, "More efficient use of our water supply would ensure that our drinking water could be kept safe." It states that, "There were strong arguments against the direct re-use of treated wastewater, even considering the significant developments in treatment." It also advised that, "There is increasing concern about the probability of adverse long-term effects on the health of people of this and future generations from the cumulative effects of trace compounds available in

the form of drugs, medicines, pesticides etc."

Many of these compounds are stable and resistant to removal or treatment even by the advanced systems used today. They knew then these compounds would accumulate and that in the future new more sinister compounds would appear. They cautioned that, "Prolonged ingestion of refractory organic residues originating in wastewaters and reaching domestic water supplies may have long-term chronic carcinogenic or multiple-generation effects and could be considered harmful."

Obviously our Council has either forgotten about their advice or chose not to take notice.

The proposed wetland areas were also classified in the Camp Scott Furphy Report as, "Unavailable areas, not suitable for effluent disposal." This area was classified as 'Rural' and is well known to contain animals that will cause faecal pollution as well as chemical pollution due to agriculture to the proposed wetland areas during flood. How can the reclaimed water be deemed 'clean' enough for immediate transfer into our drinking water supply after this pollution? The run off from these wetlands is proposed to be the second last stage of the treatment (just before Gamma Irradiation).

An article in The Weekend Bulletin October 27-28 2007 informed the public of massive acid lakes being created near Jacobs Well from sand mining. These lakes cannot be rehabilitated to the required levels of 8.5 pH, as they are full of acid sulphate, which poses a serious threat to public health. The area is also earmarked for a petroleum storage facility to be built on the site within 10 years. The article reported that a consulting firm on behalf of the Council states that, "Concern was raised that the area is being degraded by creation of lakes that cannot be rehabilitated. Issues were also raised regarding potential adverse environmental impacts from the water bodies and the extractive operations."

At the moment people are worried about the fishing industry adjacent to Jacobs Well. No one has to date worried about the massive wetland lakes planned for the Pimpama-Jacobs Well-Cabbage Tree Point area. If we have a flood in this area the recycled 'water' could be overcome by rainwater and mix with the material in these lakes, which could then directly enter our potable supply. The Pimpama Water Reclamation Facility is across the inlet from Jacobs Well. Three wetland areas surround the acid sulphate lakes.

PREVIOUS TREATMENT PLANTS To date there have only been two previous DIRECT POTABLE treatment plants in the world. One was the previously mentioned plant at Windhoek, which is no longer in use. This plant has now been discredited due to being plagued with problems and is not a credible precedent. An article published in the Namibian on Thursday 9 March 2006 stated, "The City of Windhoek's deeply troubled Goreangab Water Reclamation Plant was closed this week." The closure followed a Namibian High Court ruling that ordered the Standard Bank of South Africa must pay a financial guarantee of N\$3015 million to the city because of a financial agreement between the bank and the city assuring the plant's success. In a counter-claim the Windhoek city is suing Goreangab's contractors, a South African company DB Thermal Pty Ltd, claiming the water



reclamation plant is a 'dud'. Citizens were consuming quantities of chemicals well in excess of the levels that had been stipulated in the original contract. Information on:- <http://water-futures.blogspot.com/search/label/Windhoek>

Make no mistake - this is the same treatment plant that both Toowoomba and our Gold Coast Councils used as a base model for their proposed sewage recycling treatment plants. The only difference between the Windhoek model and our proposed one is the addition of a few more treatment modes, artificial wetlands and Gamma Irradiation. Another was in Denver USA. It was abandoned after 10 years due to adverse public acceptance. The Denver Water Treatment Plant began in 1985 with a demonstration plant. It was built to evaluate the effectiveness of a multiple barrier treatment process for removal of various contaminants. Denver Water chose not to pursue direct potable reuse because of high costs, customer perceptions and regulatory constraints. At least these are the formal reasons for ceasing direct potable supply. From my research it appears they could not guarantee the removal of certain chemicals, viruses etc. Effluent is now treated to an acceptable level to safely discharge into rivers. It is only used for industry, crop, golf course, park and school ground irrigation. The plant only treats the source water for its intended use, thus saving the potable supply for drinking. Denver's re-cycled water is delivered to irrigators and industries through a separate system of purple pipes. THERE IS NO DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN RECYCLED WATER AND DRINKING WATER systems and recycled water isn't available for residential irrigation. Denver Water is adamant that re-cycled water should not be consumed. <http://www.denverwater.org/waterquality/keepingwater.html>

Industrial Waste Fluorosilicic Acid H₂SiF₆

**to be added to GC Drinking
Water by December 2008**

FSA - Fluorosilicic Acid H₂SiF₆ - S7 Poison

Raw Content Analysis*:	
Free HF acid	0.31%
Phosphorous	0.04%
Cadmium	0.31 ppm
Lead	0.27 ppm
Mercury	4.60 ppm
Arsenic	1.18 ppm
Chromium	1.27 ppm

* ppm = parts per million

RECOMMENDED USES:

(From Pelchem Material Safety Data Sheet)

Sterilization of equipment
Electroplating
Tanning of animal hides
Ceramics & Glass: Glass etching
Commercial Laundry: As a neutralizer for alkalis
Hardening of cement
Oil well acidising
Rust and stain removal for textiles
Wood preservative
Water fluoridation

Fluoride is the most corrosive of all elements. It binds easily with heavy metals. It can strip away lead and aluminium from metal piping, joints or vessels that come in contact with fluoridated water. It is added in the manufacture of many common supermarket food items, as well as drugs. Fluoride is now the most pervasive chemical in the food chain. It accumulates over time and is stored in the bones. Over-exposure to fluoride leads to fluorosis, osteoporosis, thyroid and digestive problems, infertility, diabetes, cancer, lower intelligence and more.

DI DID YOU CHOOSE TO

SWALLOW IT? If you believe

people should have a choice of whether to be medicated with fluoride then sign the **QLD Water**

Petition, downloadable from

www.thehealthvine.net