

# Health fears over dirty home water

by Katrina Jones

RESIDENTS in more than 630 homes at Coomera have been told not to drink tap water after recycled water was mistakenly piped to them.

The Gold Coast City Council has issued notices to the homeowners after a resident reported a 'funny taste' in the drinking water.

A council spokeswoman last night confirmed 'diluted recycled water' had found its way into drinking water supplies.

The homes are supposed to be receiving recycled water and drinking water in separate pipes following the opening of the \$80 million Pimpama Wastewater Treatment Plant on Tuesday.

The plant supplies 'Class A-plus recycled water' which can be used for car washing, gardening, flushing toilets and external household cleaning.

However, the council says it is not suitable for drinking, cooking or cleaning, personal washing, clothes washing, swimming pools or spas, or pets and livestock.

It was not known how long

## Boiling mad

RESIDENTS have been told to boil any drinking water over the weekend.

"We suggest you boil water for drinking and cooking only," said a city council letter.

"Again as a precaution, if you have made ice or stored water in a container for drinking, we would ask you to discard it.

"As for 'dirty water' in mains, we recommend you run your indoor and outdoor taps for five minutes to flush them."

the contamination had gone undetected.

An Orlando Drive resident, who did not want to be named, said he had received a letter in the mail from the council.

He said that although the tap water was 'visibly dirty', the home had its own filter so the drinking water was fine.

"(But) if I have a bath at night or if the kids have a bath and you leave the water in, by morning you

can see a fine layer of silt in the bottom of the bath which means the water is quite dirty," he said.

"I know the water is dirty but the bulk of our water is used in the washing machine and toilets."

Queensland Health told the council there was a 'very low health risk' for people who drank the recycled water.

Gold Coast Water yesterday tested water at Coomera and flushed pipes after the complaint about the drinking water quality.

A council spokeswoman said the drinking water was back to normal by 6pm last night.

"When officers went to investigate the complaint, they did a conductivity test, which indicates the difference between drinking water and recycled water," she said.

The spokeswoman said there was early speculation that the source was a 'connection problem between pipes'.

Local councillor Donna Gates and Gold Coast Water Committee chairwoman Daphne McDonald could not be contacted last night.

## Quality surety not in pipeline

by Bridie Jabour

GOLD Coast Water can not unequivocally guarantee that all water on the Gold Coast is uncontaminated.

As the admission came from the director Dick Went this week, paranoia grew with residents across the Coast complaining of illness and strange smelling and tasting water.

The paranoia has spread since it was made public that Class A+ recycled water was wrongly pumped into drinking water pipes last week in Coomera.

Mr Went said all drinking water on the Coast must meet standards laid down in the Australian drinking water guidelines.

"I can guarantee that it is monitored and tested strictly in accordance with these guidelines..." he said.

A spokeswoman for Gold Coast Water, who refused to be named, would not accept responsibility for the concerns after recycled water was pumped into drinking pipes instead blaming the media.

"That's the media's fault," she said when told of the paranoia of Gold Coast residents about the quality of their drinking water.

*The Gold Coast Bulletin* has fielded dozens of calls, emails and SMSs from worried residents complaining of 'funny' smelling water and illness after drinking water since the Coomera story was broken on the weekend.

One couple from Helensvale called and emailed *The Bulletin* saying the Gold Coast City Council had a truck in Riverdowns Crescent flushing their pipes on Tuesday.

"We noticed the water was tasting a bit funny and we thought it was just the filter," said a man who wished to only be known as Paul.

"We got a new filter but we also noticed the same taste when we were brushing our teeth.

"There was a council truck here yesterday and when I asked they said they were flushing the pipes because of complaints about the water."