

Together we will create our...



BOLD FUTURE – Trends and issues



Our water future

Water has become one of Australia's most topical issues, with its scarcity emerging as one of our biggest challenges.

Climate change has led to nearly a decade of reduced rainfall and runoff, which has left many dams across Australia severely depleted.

Adding to declining rainfall, cities such as the Gold Coast are managing a growing population. Good water planning takes an integrated approach to the urban water cycle. It includes managing drinking (potable) water, wastewater, recycled water, storm water and water catchments.

With the State Government due to take over the ownership and management of water assets in South East Queensland from July 2008, this is an opportunity to make sure our Gold Coast voice is heard on future water planning.

Trends and issues

Challenges facing water providers throughout Australia include:

- growing population placing pressure on water resources
- changing rainfall patterns because of climate change reducing reliability of dams.
- need for the an integrated urban water cycle to ensure all activities contribute to long-term water quality and management.
- technology allowing further development and management of water recycling schemes

In May 2007, the Queensland Government announced the most significant changes to water services in the State's history – the South East Queensland Water Reform.

The SEQ Water Reform is the institutional reform of the water industry and water supply arrangements in south east Queensland. Traditionally, water and wastewater was owned and managed by Local Government.

Under the reform, the Queensland Government will own all bulk water supply and manage the SEQ Water Grid. SEQ Councils (as shareholders in new entities) will be responsible for the distribution and sale of water.

"There was a time when it was considered that our cities could 'live within their means' and accommodate population growth by implementing water conservation measures."

The Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy (2006-2056)

In planning for our changing climate, varying rainfall patterns and population growth, the Gold Coast was one of the first Australian cities to develop a long-term water supply strategy underpinned by diversity, adaptability and sustainability.



“However, even with these water conservation measures, the decade-long drought coupled with rapidly increasing populations has put pressure on the water supply systems that supply our cities.”



The Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy ensures the Gold Coast will have adequate and sustainable water supply for the next 50 years, when the city’s demand is likely to grow from 185 million litres (ML) per day (2005) to about 466 million litres (ML) per day in 2056.

Importantly, prior to the Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy being adopted in late 2005, it was presented to Gold Coast community for feedback through public information sessions, displays, advertising and direct mail survey to every household in the city. More than 13,000 people offered feedback on the long-term plan.

The innovative, integrated water supply strategy presents first-rate outcomes for the city’s long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability. The 50-year strategy has:

- removed the city’s reliance on the climate-dependant Hinze Dam
- taken an integrated approach to managing water across the entire water cycle
- provided ‘fit for purpose’ water solutions, rather than using drinking water for all uses within the home

Initiatives identified in the strategy are being rolled out across our city. They include a pressure and leakage management program, water conservation programs and desalination. Other initiatives, such as increasing the use of recycled water around the city, continue to create international interest through award-winning projects such as the fully integrated urban water managed community of Pimpama Coomera.

These initiatives have secured our Gold Coast Waterfuture for the next 50 years.

The SEQ water reform

State Government will take ownership of dams, desalination and purified recycled water plants from July 2008.

Local Government will remain shareholders in the distribution (one entity across 10 Councils) and the retail entities (three to 10 retailers). Retail entities need to be established by July 2010.

Stormwater and catchment management and Water Sensitive Urban Design will remain the responsibility of Council after the water reforms take effect.

The Queensland Water Commission is leading a coordinated regional approach by developing long-term water supply strategies, establishing the regional water grid, implementing water restrictions and managing water demand.

“In the context of increasingly unreliable rainfall and changed social, political and environmental circumstances, it is unlikely that the traditional supply solution of building dams will be the sole means to provide the security of supply our cities demand. New solutions that consider the total water cycle are required.”

Water Services Association of Australia, November 2006.

