



CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Media Release

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To: All news editors

Major construction begins on Cleaner Seas Project

Significant progress is underway on regional Queensland's largest wastewater treatment project, which when complete will provide the third largest treatment capacity of its kind in the world.

Today at the Marlin Coast Wastewater Treatment Plant the Cleaner Seas Alliance will report to Mayor Cr Val Schier on major progress to date and the next important phase of construction.

The \$188 million project incorporates state-of-the-art submerged membrane filtration (SMF) technology designed to deliver both increased capacity and improve waste water quality across the four major treatment plants located within the boundaries of the Cairns Regional Council.

The Environmental Protection Agency has supported the proposed upgrades which will ensure compliance with new EPA licensing conditions that come into effect in November 2009.

General manager of Cairns Water, Bruce Gardiner said the Project's treated effluent will be 1000 times cleaner, contain five times less nitrogen and 10 times less phosphorus than current discharge, significantly easing impacts on waterways and helping to ensure the resilience and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The high quality recycled water will provide non-drinking re-use options such as industrial cooling applications, concrete production and dust suppression, irrigation on golf courses, parks and sporting grounds, and agriculture.

New facilities include Bioreactors, SMF Structures, Clarifiers, Pre-Treatment Areas, UV Disinfection and other minor structures and buildings. Upgrades to the Marlin Coast, Northern, Southern and Edmonton wastewater treatment plants will increase the design flow capacity to 2020 and beyond.

Upgrade works at the Marlin Coast plant will connect Class A+ recycled water to the Smithfield Village development for re-use in households for toilet flushing and outdoor use.

Separate future CRC projects will deliver recycled water from the Northern plant to the Cairns Airport Domestic Terminal for toilet and irrigation use and to the Botanic Gardens for greening.

"While this is a significant investment by local government, the Great Barrier Reef is an asset worth protecting as its health generally underpins the strong regional economy of North Queensland. This is really an investment in our future," said Sheriden Morris, the Managing Director of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre.

"The input of excess nitrogen and phosphorus into the inshore waters of the Great Barrier Reef is a real threat to its long term health. So this action by the Cairns Regional Council to upgrade its facilities to protect the reef by upgrading its waste treatment facilities is a great outcome for the reef and the people who rely on a healthy reef for their livelihood," added Dr Russell Reichelt the Chair of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Project construction and design is being delivered by an Alliance that includes Cairns Regional Council, United Group, CEC Constructions, SKM and GHD.

The project is on schedule to be substantially complete within the next 18 months.

Interview and photo opportunity 10:30am Thursday 17 July:

Mayor Val Schier, Sheriden Morris (RRRC), Ingrid Minnesma (EPA) representative, Cairns Water and other Alliance project members will be in attendance at the Marlin Coast Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Please contact Gary Schofield to confirm your presence 40443021