



Public statement

SEQ water sector working together through pandemic

16 April 2020

The South East Queensland water sector have come together to ensure water and sewerage services continue across the region despite the impacts of COVID-19.

Chief executives and general managers of the region's water suppliers met this week as the SEQ Water Partnership to reaffirm this joint response.

The partnership will focus on continuity of water and sewerage services while ensuring employee safety and wellbeing and supporting customers in difficult circumstances.

The SEQ Water Service Providers Partnership includes Seqwater, as the region's bulk drinking water provider, along with water retailers Urban Utilities and Unitywater, and council-operated water businesses including Logan, Redland and the Gold Coast.

Seqwater Chief Executive Officer Neil Brennan said the Partnership allowed the water industry to collaborate on critical resourcing, materials and supplies to maintain water and sewerage services to South East Queensland communities through any escalation of COVID-19 restrictions or impacts.

"Our community can be confident that our water supply network is robust and that the water sector has taken the appropriate steps to best protect all of our respective workforces while enabling the ongoing provision of a safe and reliable drinking water supply," Mr Brennan said.

Mr Brennan emphasised there was no evidence COVID-19 was transmitted by drinking water.

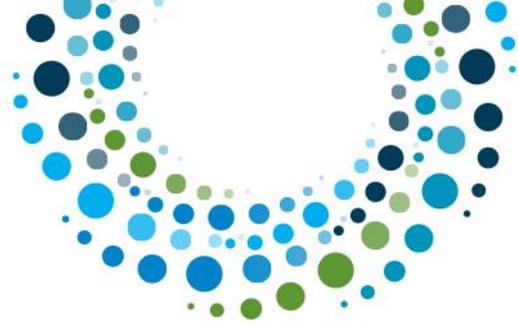
"Existing water treatment and disinfection processes, including the use of chlorine, are effective in protecting water supplies," he said.

"Our drinking water across the region remains safe."

All of the region's water suppliers are now implementing response plans with a range of measures to make sure their respective workforces, assets and water and sewerage services are protected.

"As an essential service, it is critical that we continue to deliver to our customers and communities every day while keeping safety as our number one priority," Mr Brennan said.





Essential works will continue during COVID-19 to ensure the reliability of the water network.

With more people at home relying on water for handwashing and hygiene, the sector is working to minimise the impacts of this work on customers.

The water sector is also asking community members to help by keeping their distance from the crews who may be working in the street or on a property so that they can remain healthy and continue their essential work.

Mr Brennan said through the joint response from the SEQ water sector, issues can be raised directly and decisions made quickly.

“The Partnership also allows the sector to provide timely information and advice to the State and Local governments across South East Queensland as the COVID-19 response progresses,” he said.

Water sector response measures underway include:

- ensuring essential supplies are available
- restricting access to work sites and limiting access to areas required by critical staff
- ensuring any critical external visitors to site understand and abide by increased measures
- splitting critical teams and the establishment of supplement teams including additional training
- rostering changes
- increase in hygiene practices and cleaning at workplaces
- social distancing whenever possible
- implementing new working arrangements, including where possible staff working from home.

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