

21 February 2020

Media Release

Statement from the Acting General Manager on Uralla Water Supply

I am pleased to announce that the estimates for the final project plan for the improvements to the Uralla water supply has been forwarded to Melinda Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing as well as Adam Marshall MP. The application for funding amounts to \$1,035,000 which will include the treatment plant upgrades, alternative water supply investigations, and research into the origin of the arsenic.

This should provide the necessary funding to upgrade the Uralla Water Treatment plant to remove the arsenic to acceptable levels as per the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, as well as to provide information for future operation plans should another incident occur.

I would like to congratulate Council staff and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Water staff on being able to come up with a practical and reliable solution to the problems presented by the various forms of arsenic in the raw water. Any modification to the plant must be successful both now and for the future removal of arsenic when the water levels drop in a future drought.

While the recent rain in the catchment is very welcome, arsenic remains in our source water but has been diluted significantly from the levels when the dam was at 29%. I look forward to lifting the bottled water alert and restrictions when the modifications have been completed and our water is back within the guidelines. In the interim, car washing will be permitted using a hose with a trigger nozzle and/or bucket.

The upgrade plan involves replacing the sand in the water treatment plant's filtration system with Granular Activated Carbon to remove the inorganic arsenic compounds and pre-dosing the raw water entering the plant with ferric chloride to remove the organic arsenic compounds. This plan uses the existing sand filters at the water treatment plant at much more economical cost and the Council will not be installing the bank of GAC filters originally considered.

The flow rate through the plant will need to be reduced with the plant operating over a longer period each day. The modifications should provide a much improved water quality to what our residents have been experiencing prior to the alert. The project will be implemented over the next six to eight weeks.

[ENDS]

David Aber – Acting General Manager

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