



# Fact Sheet

## Water and wastewater treatment infrastructure upgrades on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, West Island

February 2022

### The project

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (the Department) has contracted Water Corporation to undertake the following water and wastewater projects on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) West Island:

- construct a new 200 kilolitre per day (kL/day) Seawater Reverse Osmosis (SWRO) Plant, including water source drilling and testing activities for the SWRO production bores
- upgrade the capacity of the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) from 50kL/day to 80kL/day.

In February 2022, the Department referred the projects to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for Parliamentary approval to proceed. The projects can commence following Parliamentary Works Committee approval.

Water Corporation will deliver these infrastructure projects through their Indian Ocean Territories Service Delivery Arrangement with the Department. Water Corporation has been providing water and wastewater services to CKI communities since 2001.

The new SWRO will be located on Part Lot 100 Sydney Highway, CKI West Island, adjacent to the existing WWTP. This area is away from the main settlement on the island, and will not cause any visual or noise disturbances to the community through the construction period or during ongoing operations.

These projects will ensure a secure water source into the future, with increased capacity of the WWTP to support future economic development on West Island.

For the community's safety, access is likely to be restricted around these areas and surrounding locations while works are under way.

The Department and Water Corporation are working together to ensure the community is kept informed at every stage of the projects. It is critical that residents and visitors to the islands have access to safe drinking water, and effective management of wastewater treatment.

## Background

Water for the CKI West Island community is currently sourced from freshwater lenses located below the operational airfield. Should there be any contamination of the freshwater lenses from metals, hydrocarbons or other chemicals, this may render the water source unusable for safe drinking water.

To address this risk, the Department, through Water Corporation, proposes to construct a new 200kL/day SWRO on CKI West Island to provide a secure water source for the community. This SWRO will be a sister plant to the SWRO already operating on Home Island. Water Corporation has more than five years' experience and technical expertise in operating and maintaining the Home Island plant.

The existing WWTP needs to have its capacity increased by 30kL/day to support future economic development of CKI West Island.

In 2021-22, the Australian Government provided \$17.4 million over two years to complete the projects. The Department of Defence is also providing funding of \$2 million to the SWRO through their Integrated Investment Program.

The main elements of the projects include:

- water source drilling and testing activities for the SWRO production bores
- construction of a 200kL/day SWRO on the mainland which will be transported to CKI West Island for installation
- a modular upgrade to the WWTP to increase capacity by 30kL/day which will be transported to CKI West Island for installation.

Following Parliamentary approval, construction works on-island will commence in August 2023 and are expected to be completed early 2024.

## Community and stakeholder engagement

Residents and community members more affected by the works will receive further direct communications. Residents in the area will be notified before any work is undertaken.

If you require any further information regarding the works, please contact the project team at [IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au)



# Frequently asked questions

## Water and wastewater treatment infrastructure upgrades on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands West Island

February 2022

### What are the water and wastewater treatment projects?

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (the Department) has contracted Water Corporation to undertake the following water and wastewater projects on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) West Island:

- construct a new 200 kilolitre per day (kL/day) Seawater Reverse Osmosis (SWRO) Plant, including water source drilling and testing activities for the SWRO production bores
- upgrade the capacity of the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) from 50kL/day to 80kL/day.

### How much are the projects costing?

In 2021-22, the Australian Government provided \$17.4 million over two years to complete the projects. The Department of Defence is also making a funding contribution of \$2 million to the SWRO through their Integrated Investment Program.

### Why are the projects being undertaken?

The CKI West Island water supply is sourced from freshwater lenses located below the airfield runway. To ensure water security for the community into the future, the construction of a SWRO will replace reliance on the freshwater lenses which are susceptible to contamination from metals, hydrocarbons or other chemicals which may render the water source unusable for safe drinking water.

The WWTP is operating at maximum capacity at 50kL/day. The proposed project will increase capacity by an additional 30kL/day to a total of 80kL/day. This increase will allow for future economic development of the Island. Without this WWTP upgrade project, further economic development on West Island is not possible.

### What will the SWRO look like?

The SWRO will be a sister plant to the water plant already in place on Home Island. The Water Corporation has more than five years' experience in operating and maintaining the Home Island water plant. As the water plants will be the same, operational spares can be used for either plant.

## Where will the SWRO be located?

The new SWRO will be located on land adjacent to the existing WWTP on Lot 100 Sydney Highway, CKI West Island. This area is away from the main settlement on the island, and will not cause any visual or noise disturbances to the community through the construction period or during ongoing operations.

## Who will be doing the projects?

Water Corporation will deliver these infrastructure projects through their Indian Ocean Territories Service Delivery Arrangement with the Australian Government, through the Department. Water Corporation has been providing water and wastewater services to the CKI communities since 2001.

## When will the work start?

In February 2022, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) approval was received to undertake the water source and bore drilling program. This drilling program will provide information on water quality and help inform the design of the SWRO.

All other works will commence following PWC approval, with construction works on-island to commence in August 2023. The projects will be completed early 2024.

## How will the community be consulted?

The Department and Water Corporation are working together to ensure the community is kept informed at every stage of the projects. It is important that residents and visitors to the islands have access to safe drinking water, and effective management of wastewater treatment.

Information and updates on the projects will be made available to the community through media releases, community bulletins, fact sheets and the Department's website. At times, members of the project team will be on CKI to talk directly to key stakeholders and community members about the projects.

## How can I get further information?

If you require any further information regarding the works, please contact the project team at [IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au)



**Australian Government**



## **Water and wastewater treatment projects**

### **Cocos (Keeling) Islands West Island**

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications will be undertaking two water and wastewater projects on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) West Island.

The projects are:

- construct a new 200 kilolitre per day (kL/day) Seawater Reverse Osmosis (SWRO) Plant for water security
- upgrade the capacity of the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) from 50kL/day to 80kL/day to support future economic development of the island.

The new SWRO will be located on Part Lot 100 Sydney Highway, adjacent to the existing WWTP. To inform the SWRO design, water source drilling and testing activities will be undertaken.

The Department has referred the two projects to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) for Parliamentary approval. The projects can commence following PWC approval.

The PWC Report and Statement of Evidence is available on the Department's website at [https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/territories/Cocos\\_Keeling/projects](https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/territories/Cocos_Keeling/projects). Community members and organisations will have an opportunity to comment on the projects until 17 March 2022.

It is expected that the projects will commence construction during 2023 and be completed in early 2024.

The projects will be delivered by Water Corporation, who has been providing water and wastewater services to the CKI community since 2001.

The CKI community will be kept informed of these two important projects and the project delivery timeline.

Should you have any questions, please email [IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au).