FAQs – Water Security Program (Draft only)

seqwater
WATER FOR LIFE

Key messages

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- Our water security plan includes a number of key strategies to ensure we achieve this:

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  - Undertaking a detailed business case to explore opportunities for a new desalination plant for the region (likely to be required by 2035) including potential locations, capacity and timing of delivery.

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Where will a new desalination plant be located?

Modelling shows the next major augmentation of the SEQ Water Grid will likely be needed by 2035, that is some years away, but it's important we start planning now. Seqwater has undertaken only early investigations as part of this proposal. A detailed business case will be exploring potential locations, the capacity of a new plant, timing for its delivery, and a range of other important factors including environmental and social impact assessments.

There will be constraints to where a new plant can be located, due to the requirement to connect to the SEQ Water Grid, and suitable land availability.

Seqwater is committed to keeping the community informed as planning progresses, and as soon as we have further information around the potential location we will provide this detail (expected in late 2024, as the detailed business case nears completion).

Seqwater's previous Water Security Program in 2017 advised a new water source would be needed in the northern region – does that mean the desalination plant will be on the Sunshine Coast?

A detailed business case will explore potential locations for a new desalination plant, the capacity of a new plant, timing for its delivery, and a range of other important factors including environmental and social impact assessments. Seqwater is in early investigation stages and no decisions have been made regarding the location of a new plant.

Seqwater is committed to keeping the community informed as planning progresses, and as soon as we have further information around the potential location we will provide this detail (expected in late 2024, as the detailed business case nears completion).

Seqwater owns a site at Meridan Plains on the Sunshine Coast – is that location being considered for the new desalination plant?

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Seqwater is committed to keeping the community informed as planning progresses, and as soon as we have further information around the potential location we will provide this detail (expected in late 2024, as the detailed business case nears completion).

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What is the timing for the new infrastructure?

Detailed business cases are underway exploring the expansion of the Gold Coast Desalination Plant; a new Water Treatment Plant for Wyaralong Dam; and a new South East Queensland Desalination Plant. The detailed business case process will explore the proposals in more detail, including scope and timing of delivery.

Seqwater's modelling shows we will need to start to enhance the SEQ Water Grid within the next decade, with the next major enhancement (a new desalination plant) likely to be required by 2035. This modelling will continue to be updated and refined, base on the latest demand forecasts, but we're starting this planning now to ensure we're prepared for the future.

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Why do you need a new desalination plant, if the Gold Coast Desalination Plant isn't producing at full capacity?

In order to manage through severe droughts, we need to have spare water capacity in the SEQ Water Grid above and beyond what is needed day-to-day. The Gold Coast Desalination Plant forms an important part of that spare capacity. Desalination is more expensive to operate than our other water treatment plants, and to keep bulk water prices as low as possible we run the plant only when it is needed, such as in drought or for other operational reasons.

The addition of further desalination capacity in SEQ is needed to maintain that spare water capacity, so we can manage through severe droughts, as the population grows and climate change reduces the amount of water available from dams.

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