



TERRITORIES DIVISION / IOT BRANCH / IOT GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

# Frequently asked questions

## Seawater Reverse Osmosis Plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, West Island

January 2025

### What are the water and wastewater projects?

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

- construct a new 200 kilolitres per day (kL/day) Seawater Reverse Osmosis (SWRO) Plant. This project also includes the water source drilling and testing activities for the SWRO plant production bores, which were completed in November 2022.
- process improvements to the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) through the replacement of aging infrastructure and operability changes.

### How much will the project cost?

The SWRO plant is estimated to cost \$19.6 million to construct. An additional \$1.2 million has been committed to design works. The Department of Defence has also committed funding to the project.

Funding of \$4.1 million has been allocated to the WWTP process improvements.

### Why are the projects being undertaken?

The CKI West Island water supply is sourced from a freshwater lens located below the operational airfield. The construction of a SWRO plant will replace reliance on the freshwater lens and ensure water security for the community into the future.

## What will the SWRO plant look like?

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

## Where will the SWRO plant be located?

The new SWRO plant 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.

Traffic management plans will be put in place when the SWRO plant is transported from the port to site. Also, when trenching works are undertaken to install a new water main from the SWRO plant location to the settlement.

## Who will be doing the project?

Water Corporation will work with the successful contractor for the delivery of this project. Water Corporation has been providing water and wastewater services to the CKI communities since 2001.

## Approvals

Parliamentary approval for the SWRO plant was received on 11 April 2023 allowing for the project to proceed to the construction phase.

Approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) for the SWRO plant was received on 13 January 2023 with a 'not a controlled action' decision.

## Approach to market

Water Corporation undertook an approach to market for a contractor accredited with the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner and Water Corporation's Tier 1 Health Safety and Environment Accreditation. The tender closed on 19 January 2024. Bids were above the available budget.

The department is working through other delivery solutions and options in conjunction with the Defence Airfield Upgrade project.

## 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 project. 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 project will be made available to the community through media releases, community bulletins, IOT News Facebook page, 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.

## How can I get further information?

If you require any further information regarding the SWRO plant and WWTP improvements, please contact the project team at email [IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au)