



PAXTON WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS UPGRADE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



HUNTER WATER IS UPGRADING THE PAXTON WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS TO IMPROVE WATERWAYS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THIS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SHEET PROVIDES IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT.

WHY IS PAXTON WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS (WWTW) BEING UPGRADED?

Hunter Water is investing more than \$1 billion in capital works infrastructure between 2008 and 2013 to ensure residents continue to receive high standards of water and wastewater services and enjoy cleaner waterways.

Paxton WWTW is being upgraded to provide additional treatment capacity to cater for new and existing homes at Millfield and Ellalong that will be connected to a new sewer system under the State Government's Priority Sewerage Program.

Upgrading the plant will also provide a more robust treatment process using up-to-date technology.

WHAT DOES THE UPGRADE INVOLVE?

The upgrade involves:

- New inlet works.
- A membrane bioreactor.
- A chemical dosing facility.
- A new discharge pipe to Congewai Creek to replace the existing open channel.
- Conversion of the existing man-made pond to wet weather storage.

HOW WILL THE UPGRADE IMPROVE OUR SEWER SYSTEM?

Hunter Water operates the existing Paxton WWTW to serve the township of Paxton.

The plant currently provides treatment of sewage for 1,000 people. Once upgraded, the plant will service 3,200 people. The design will allow for an upgrade to approximately 15,000 people if required in the future.

WHAT IS THE TIMEFRAME FOR THE UPGRADE?

Construction work started at the plant in late March 2010 and is progressing well. The project is scheduled for completion by March 2011.

The existing plant has some spare capacity available to enable connections to the sewerage scheme at Millfield and Ellalong prior to the completion of the upgrade. Residents are expected to start connecting in mid 2010.

WHO IS DOING THE UPGRADE WORK?

The upgrade is being undertaken by the Hunter Treatment Alliance, a team consisting of Abigroup, CH2M HILL Australia and Hunter Water.

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRUCTION HOURS?

Normal construction hours are 7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday and 8 am to 4 pm Saturdays. Hunter Water will let the community know if for any reason work is required outside of these hours.

FAQ PAXTON WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS UPGRADE



WHAT IS HUNTER WATER DOING TO MINIMISE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING CONGEWAI CREEK?

The potential impacts of the upgrade on the environment, including the water quality and ecology of Congewai Creek, have been assessed on behalf of Hunter Water and are detailed in the Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

The assessment accounted for the fact that Congewai Creek can experience long periods of little or no flow and concluded that the upgraded plant would not have a significant adverse impact.

Until recently, Hunter Water had planned to use a biological treatment and UV disinfection process to improve effluent quality by reducing nitrogen and phosphorous levels.

However, a review of the proposal following discussions with local community groups resulted in a decision to use more advanced membrane technology, which will further reduce the amount of phosphorous in the treated effluent.

In addition, the new technology will mean less land has to be cleared on site and there will be significant cost savings compared to more conventional treatment systems.

Hunter Water regularly monitors the quality of water in Congewai Creek both upstream and downstream of the discharge location.

Water quality monitoring will continue in order to verify that the predicted minimal impacts of the upgraded plant are achieved.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE UPGRADE?

The upgrade of the WWTW and the new sewerage system at Millfield and Ellalong will:

- Allow residents to replace port-a-loos, septic tanks and other on-site wastewater disposal systems. This will reduce the risks to human and environmental health associated with poorly performing on-site disposal systems.
- Provide a more modern and robust treatment process.
- Improve the quality of the treated effluent leaving the site over the medium to long term.
- Service new homes at Paxton, Millfield and Ellalong and provide for future residential and commercial development.

In addition, Hunter Water will be rehabilitating parts of the WWTW site to enhance biodiversity locally and regionally. This will include weed management and regenerating previously disturbed areas.

HOW MUCH IS THE UPGRADE COSTING?

The total cost of the Paxton WWTW upgrade is approximately \$18 million.

WHAT ABOUT RECYCLED WATER USE?

Hunter Water is reusing some treated effluent on site to irrigate an existing tree plantation, with the remainder discharged to Congewai Creek.

Hunter Water assessed potential additional recycled water opportunities from the WWTW as part of the REF for the project.

A number of studies were conducted covering a variety of perspectives including woodlots, irrigated pastures and crops and options studies.

A specialist in recycled water use for agriculture was engaged to assess the options and discussions were held with eight farmers and Austar Mine. The reuse investigations concluded that there was limited potential for a recycled wastewater scheme from Paxton WWTW. However, Hunter Water will continue to investigate potential options for additional reuse of effluent in the future.

HOW MIGHT THE WORK AFFECT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

Nearby residents may notice an increase in activity around the site. During construction, truck movements will increase slightly as materials, such as concrete, and equipment are delivered or removed.

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY BE KEPT INFORMED?

HUNTER WATER IS COMMITTED TO KEEPING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED ABOUT THE PROJECT.

THIS WILL BE DONE THROUGH REGULAR WEBSITE UPDATES, COMMUNITY NEWSLETTERS TO RESIDENTS AND PERSONAL CONTACT AS APPROPRIATE.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PAXTON UPGRADE WORKS BY VISITING WWW.HUNTERWATER.COM.AU

OR BY CALLING THE HUNTER TREATMENT ALLIANCE ON 4913 5644.