



Media Release

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\$15 MILLION FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS FOR BURWOOD BEACH TREATMENT PLANT

State-of-the-art UV technology is being introduced to Burwood Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant under a \$15 million plan to improve water quality for beachgoers.

Research released today by Hunter Water and the University of NSW Water Research Centre confirmed there are negligible health impacts from biosolids released from the Treatment Plant and recommended the minimal potential health impact of effluent disposal could be improved through state-of-the-art UV technology.

Hunter Water's General Manager System Operations Dean Taylor said the study shows biosolids pose a negligible health risk because it is released in small amounts and diluted quickly.

"Results are consistent with reliable Beachwatch data, which for more than a decade has shown that Burwood, Bar, Merewether and Dudley Beaches are among the cleanest in NSW," Mr Taylor said.

"Complex hydrodynamic modelling and statistical analyses confirmed there is negligible potential health impact of biosolids disposal from the Treatment Plant.

"What the study shows us is while our beaches have Category A water quality overall, rare periods of poorer water quality could occur when impacted by a combination of unpredictable environmental factors such as water temperature, winds, currents and sunlight levels.

"This risk can be significantly reduced through UV technology which mimics the natural process of disinfection by sunlight, at a more concentrated level.

"The \$43 million upgrade to the Treatment Plant along with \$15 million UV disinfection technology is expected to significantly reduce the occurrences of elevated risk. The upgrade will considerably improve the quality of the waste effluent and the UV disinfection will provide an additional treatment barrier which will allow for further reductions in the risk.

"This research was conducted in consultation with the Community Reference Group which was formed by Hunter Water in 2007 to provide community input into the upgrade planning process for the Treatment Plant.

"While the overall health risk is extremely small, these works will continue to ensure the Hunter's beaches remain among the cleanest in the state.

"The \$43 million upgrade to the Treatment Plant that is currently underway will improve both its reliability and the quality of waste discharged.

“Works to install UV disinfection technology will take place after completion of the \$43 million upgrade, which is expected to be up and running by 2011.

“On top of this, we’re doubling the frequency of Beachwatch monitoring at local beaches during bathing season, with online access to these results on both the Hunter Water and Beachwatch websites.

“Hunter Water is also investing approximately \$100 million over the next 10 years on sewer system upgrades to reduce sewer overflows near beaches in wet weather.

“While these works are underway, people can be confident that these beaches have very good quality water and are clean and safe.”

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