



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

TERRITORIES DIVISION / IOT BRANCH / IOT GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Fact Sheet

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

September 2025

The project

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications Sport and the Arts (the department) has engaged 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
- process improvements to the existing Wastewater Treatment plant (WWTP).

The SWRO plant will replace the freshwater lens below the operational airfield, and ensure CKI West Island has a secure water source into the future. It is critical that residents and visitors to the islands have access to safe drinking water.

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

The co-located WWTP project is in the delivery stage and is being progressed as a separate project, this will see the ageing infrastructure replaced, including aerators, switch rooms, laboratory and sludge handling. Operability improvements will also enhance the operation of the plant and meet increased demand.

The Department of Defence will be installing a temporary WWTP at their construction camp. The improved WWTP will manage the discharge of Defence's treated waste through the department's existing ocean outfall.

Project timeline

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 received were above the available budget for the project.

The department has been working with Defence and the project will now be delivered in phases, with Stage One (the pipeline and tank infrastructure) to commence late 2025.

The new SWRO plant 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.

The department and Water Corporation are working together to ensure the community is kept informed at every stage of the project.

Design

3D image of the SWRO plant.



Further information

Further information on the SWRO plant and WWTP projects are available from the Department's website at

[Seawater Reverse Osmosis Plant | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts](#)

Enquiries may also be sent to the project team at email IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au