



TERRITORIES DIVISION / IOT BRANCH / IOT GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

# Frequently asked questions

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

March 2023

### What is the water project?

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

- construct a new 200 kilolitre 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.

### 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.

### Why is the project 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 wastewater treatment plant 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.

## Who will be doing the project?

Water Corporation will deliver this project through their Indian Ocean Territories Service Delivery Arrangement with the Australian Government, through the Department. Water Corporation has been providing water and wastewater services to the CKI communities since 2001.

## When will the work start?

In September 2022, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) approval was received to undertake the water source and beach bore drilling program. This drilling program provides information on water quality and will help inform the final design of the SWRO plant.

All other works will commence following PWC approval, with construction works on-island to commence in July 2024. The project will be completed late 2024.

## 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, 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, please contact the project team at [IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:IOTSDA@infrastructure.gov.au)