

Submission regarding the requirement to improve the water quality in Orroroo.

My first point is simple. There is a vast difference between the quality of water supplied to a capital city (in this case Adelaide) and that supplied to a small rural town (in this case Orroroo). Adelaide water is supplied filtered to remove any coloured materials such as colloids etc and constantly monitored to ensure potability. Orroroo water is neither filtered nor monitored to the same degree. There are times when the water in the pipes is both discoloured and smelly with no reason offered by SA Water. I would under these conditions question the bacterial status of the water because, as you are aware, Chlorination's effectiveness is determined by the levels of oxidisable material in the water (colloids etc can mop up the hypochlorous acid reasonably quickly) and the pH of the water itself (the proportion of hypochlorous acid produced from the chlorine injected into the water is determined by the pH). Plus there is the requirement to adjust the pH after initial injection to increase it so that the fittings in SA Waters systems are not corroded away. All of this increases the salts levels in the water above those found naturally in the bore water used as the base supply. Monitoring of these systems is done remotely, not by constant physical actions as in Adelaide. The standard for Adelaide water is laid down in the Capital waters scheme which is very specific. I have worked in the past for an organisation which took water from SA Water and the supply often failed the basic WHO potability standards. The statement from SA Water was that there was no requirement for it to meet those standards in rural areas. This means a double standard existed . It is evident that nothing has changed in over 50 years, the double standard still exists simply because Orroroo is in the bush and not covered by the capital city standards.

The second point for upgrading the water supply is simply that while Orroroo and surrounding areas are currently experiencing adequate rainfall and our rainwater tanks are reasonably filled, now is the time to plan for the next drought and implement the solution with the minimum inconvenience to both the suppliers and the consumers of the water. If we go down the normal government knee jerk reaction sequence, Orroroo's water supply will potentially fail before anything is done! The old railway right of way still exists and it represents a reasonably easily accessed place for the pipeline as well as being possibly the shortest route from Peterborough to Orroroo. The next "hurdle" would be an assessment and a projection of costs etc. None of these are very hard to do. After that it would be downhill and again I point out that the level of urgency is not great while the area is experiencing acceptable rainfall.

Lastly I have been monitoring the water quality for some time through the simple expedient of noticing soap lathering capacity of the water supply. The water supplied varies in this simple test quite dramatically, suggesting that the supplying bore is not in an aquifer but is simply seepage from the surface! There are several different aquifers under Orroroo but it seems that we are not permitted to access any of them that could supply adequate quality water. With this simple discrimination, we are condemned to having an unreliable, saline water supply which according to the MH&MRC standards for Sodium intake is probably causing blood pressure to be artificially raised in this community. If there is a drought and people are forced to rely on the current water supply will the government take responsibility for any adverse health effects from drinking the water? I know that if you drink the supply for a week that it does not slake your thirst in hot weather. The long term effects of drinking saline water are known and depending on the salts levels can be debilitating.

There are a number of economic and social issues other than the points I have raised that I am sure other submissions have covered. However I would point out that this town has been in place for over a century and is still waiting for an acceptable water supply. Government inaction and neglect has left Orroroo with the same water quality as a third world village. This is a very sorry indictment of our present system and reflects very badly on South Australia generally.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on an issue that is of great personal concern.

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