

## Bendemeer Water Quality.

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### BENDEMEER WATER QUALITY

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**Mr PETER DRAPER:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Will the Minister advise when the residents of Bendemeer near Tamworth can expect to have a safe healthy drinkable water supply?

**Mr FRANK SARTOR:** The honourable member for Tamworth has raised a very important matter for the people of Bendemeer and Parry shire. He has quite properly raised this matter with me on several occasions. Bendemeer has been particularly badly affected by the drought cycle in terms of its water supply because it relies on water from the Macdonald River. When the river ceases to flow, town water is pumped from pools gathered along the river. This leads to very poor quality water in terms of sedimentation and turbidity. Even with the breaking of the drought and the recent flooding, residents still have poor quality water. Recently Parry Shire Council had to issue residents with bore water notices.

A number of critical issues have been involved. In 2003 the Government provided \$7,300 to the council to assist in excavation of pumping pools in the river bed for emergency drought works. The shire has asked for funding for a new filtration plant, and for improved water quality by the installation of a roof over the existing reservoir to reduce the risk of contamination and algal outbreaks. Even though the program is currently the subject of a moratorium there are exceptions made for drought emergency works and in exceptional circumstances. Because of the very poor quality of the water and the public health problems faced by residents of Bendemeer an exception can be made in this case.

I am pleased to advise that yesterday I approved funding of up to \$185,000 towards the works—that is, 50 per cent of the total cost of \$370,000. I expect that the council will be in a position to commence work on the augmentation shortly. If it is expeditious in progressing the necessary works, the new treatment plant could be operational as early as nine months time. It may take longer, but it is now a matter for the council. I commend the honourable member for Tamworth for raising this matter and look forward to the issue being resolved for the people of Bendemeer.

Speakers: [Draper, Mr Peter](#); [Sartor, Mr Frank](#).

Version: Proof NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard Article No.18 of 10/03/2004.

Speech Type: QWN; Questions Without Notice.

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