

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Indigenous Essential Services:

Laramba Drinking Water Quality

- 1. Does the drinking water at the community of Laramba in Central Australia currently meet the standards under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines?**

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines outline non-mandatory standards that can be used to define safe, good quality water, how it can be achieved and how it can be validated. Not meeting a particular guideline value should not be interpreted that the water is unsafe.

Power and Water Corporation's 2021 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report notes that the drinking water at Laramba meets 40 of the 43 guideline values.

- 2. Is the water quality at Laramba effecting the health and wellbeing of residents?**

The Department of Health is better qualified to respond to this question.

- 3. What work is being done to improve the drinking water quality at Laramba?**

In April 2021, the Minister for Indigenous Essential Services announced a \$28 million rolling capital program to address water security and water quality. Power and Water has determined that an ion-exchange treatment process is the most appropriate solution to improve drinking water quality for the Laramba community. The ion-exchange process has proven successful in reducing uranium levels in other remote communities and via laboratory tests on Laramba water.

Power and Water is progressing its procurement and design process on this project.

- 4. What infrastructure has been installed by Power and Water Corporation to filter or purify the drinking water at Laramba over the past 2 years?**

The drinking water at Laramba is being chlorinated to address microbial risks to the community.

5. Does the drinking water at Laramba contain dangerously high levels of radioactive substances?

There is no evidence that the drinking water at Laramba contains dangerously high levels of radioactive substances.

6. Please provide details of the levels of radiation in the drinking water at Laramba over the past five (5) calendar years.

The past five years of radiological results are shown in the table below. All readings are lower than the guideline value.

| Radiological reading | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Year | Guideline Value 1 mSv/yr |
| 2017 | 0.05 |
| 2018 | 0.04 |
| 2019 | 0.1 |
| 2020 | 0.1 |
| 2021 | 0.2 |

7. How often is the drinking water at Laramba tested by the Northern Territory Government?

The drinking water quality from Laramba is monitored monthly for microbial, physical, and chemical properties, and on an annual basis for radiological properties.

8. Please provide the dates of water testing undertaken at Laramba over the past 2 years.

From March 2020 to March 2022 water testing was undertaken at Laramba at least monthly on a total of 28 occasions.

9. Does the Northern Territory Government provide bottled or boxed to the Laramba community for drinking?

The Northern Territory Government is not providing bottled or boxed water to the Laramba community for drinking at this stage

10. Laramba has a population of approximately 230 people. How many residents of the Laramba have moved out of the community due to poor water quality in the past 2 years?

Power and Water is unable to answer this question because it is not privy to the number of residents who have moved from the community over the past two years.

11. What assistance is being provided to people who cannot live at the community due to the issues effecting the quality of the drinking water?

Power and Water is unable to answer this question because it is not privy to information regarding assistance provided or arrangements made for people who have moved from the community.