

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Maley to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics:

**PowerWater Operating Coolalinga On Site Wastewater Treatment Plant**

1. **Is the On Site Wastewater Treatment Plant (OSWTP) still operating as an independent treatment plant?**
  - a. **If not what steps have been taken to keep the plant in service?**
  - b. **If not what are the cost of these steps to keep the plant in service?**
  - c. **If yes what steps have been taken to keep the plant operating?**
  - d. **If yes what are the costs associated with keeping the plant operating?**

Yes, the OSWTP is still operating as an independent treatment plant, although it is now being operated by Power and Water.

Steps taken to keep the plant operating include a number of capital and operational improvements to address plant defects and many years of neglect.

Power and Water costs associated with keeping the plant operational between late-2021 and mid-2022 have been in the order of \$1.5 million. Approximately \$1 million has been required for capital and maintenance works and approximately \$0.5 million is related to operational costs.

2. **Is the OSWTP currently operating correctly?**
  - a. **If not what part or section is not operating correctly?**
  - b. **If not what are the future plans to correct whatever is not operating correctly?**
  - c. **What are the estimated costs of repairing whatever is not operating correctly?**

The OSWTP is functionally operating but requires further work to address remaining defects, which include:

- Absorption trenches - clean out and remediate
- Disinfection treatment – replace filters and remediate entire system, possibly install UV treatment
- Chlorine system upgrade
- Irrigation system – replace damaged components
- Automated control and SCADA system.

The estimated cost of addressing the remaining defects is in the order of \$0.5 million, noting that some defects will require further scoping.

- 3. What is the weekly cost of operating the OSWTP?**
- a. How much money has been spent on operating costs of the OSWTP in the last 6 months or since PWC has operated the plant?**

The weekly cost of operating the plant varies between \$3,000 to \$5,000 depending on weather conditions and fluctuating loads on the plant.

Direct ongoing operating costs since Power and Water assumed control of the plant are in the order of \$0.26 million.

- 4. How much money has been spent on the OSWTP in the last 6 months or since PWC have operated the plant?**
- a. Can you provide a break down where the money has been spent?**

See above.

- 5. What is the planned cost of repairs and maintenance of the OSWTP over the next 12 months?**
- a. Can you provide a breakdown of the planned future spending on repairs and maintenance for the next 12 months?**

The cost of repairs and maintenance over the next 12 months has not yet been determined. Once defects have been fully corrected, Power and Water will assess what ongoing annual operating and maintenance costs are required.

- 6. Is any water or other by-product currently being transported off site?**
- a. If so what has been or is currently being transported off site?**
- b. What is the cost of the transportation?**
- c. How long will the offsite transportation be used into the future?**

Around 500kl of partially treated effluent is being transported offsite weekly at an approximate cost of \$19/kl.

Transportation offsite into the future will depend on the eventual efficacy achieved for the plant.

- i. What are the costs of any off site transportation incurred over the last 6 months or since PWC has operated the plant?**

Approximately \$200,000 since late-2021.

- ii. What is the expected cost of any future transportation?**

This will depend on time of year, rain events, and effectiveness of treatment.

- 7. If water or other by-product is being transported off site where is it being taken?**
- a. How often is water or by-product transported off site?**
  - b. How much water or by-product has been transported off site in the last 6 months, or since PWC has operated the plant?**
  - c. Is there a cost incurred relating to the water or by-product being taken?**

Partially treated effluent is transported offsite to the Palmerston Waste Stabilisation Ponds on average three times per week.

Since late-2021 approximately 9,500kL of partially treated effluent has been transported offsite at an approximate cost of \$19/kl.

- 8. Has PWC undertaken a review of the operation of the OSWTP?**
- a. Is PWC aware of any upcoming problems with the OSWTP?**
  - b. What is the associated costs with any identified problems at the OSWTP?**

Power and Water's focus has been on addressing the many years of neglect. As described above there are a number of defects that also require rectification.

Ultimately a pumped/gravity connection to the existing Palmerston system will be required as identified by DIPL and in the original proposal for Coolalinga.

DIPL will soon commence Master Planning work, including concept designs.

- 9. How much of the \$1.8 million bond has been spent in the last 12 months or since PWC has been operating the site?**
- a. If any of the \$1.8 million bond been spent, please provide a breakdown on what the bond was spent on?**

From the \$1.8 million bond, it is anticipated that \$1 million for the period up to mid-2022 will be allocated and recovered from the capital and maintenance works required due to the many years of neglect.

- 10. Is the total cost of ongoing maintenance and operational activities coming from the \$1.8 million bond? If not where is this being funded from?**

Operational costs in the order of \$0.5 million for the period up to mid-2022 are being funded from monies collected from Coolalinga customer sewerage charges.

- 11. Are there any problems at the plant or with the plant that are or could be considered a risk to the community? If yes what are they?**

Power and Water has taken prudent and necessary action to address the community risk from the many years of neglect. These include:

- No site security – Power and Water installed a temporary fence as a matter of priority and a permanent fence is now being constructed.

- Prior to Power and Water assuming control, treated effluent (to an unknown standard) was being discharged to the environment. Flows beyond the capacity of the plant are now being transported offsite to the Palmerston ponds.
- Electrical safety issues – these have been rectified to AS3000 standard as a minimum.
- The effluent storage tank roof was in a particularly poor condition and in danger of being removed if strong winds were experienced. The tank roof was replaced as a matter of priority.