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9 December 2024

**Office of the Chief Executive Officer**

Reference File: F10234  
24/252008

The Hon. Mark Butler, MP  
Minister for Health and Aged Care  
PO Box 2038  
PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015

Email:

Dear Minister Butler,

**SUBJECT                    PFAS Detected in Medlow Bath Dam**

Blue Mountains City Council notes the recent finding of elevated levels of PFAS in Medlow Bath Dam and the potential risk to Blue Mountains drinking water. We request the completion of the review PFAS levels in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines is completed in a timely manner.

At the ordinary meeting of 29 October 2024, the Council resolved:

1. *That the Council write to the Hon. Rose Jackson, NSW Minister for Water and copy to Trish Doyle MP, about the reported PFAS contamination of Medlow Bath dam requesting:*
  - *That there is independent and rigorous testing for PFAS and other contaminants, and for those results to be published;*
  - *That an explanation be provided on the merits and proposal to reduce or eliminate PFAS from our drinking water;*
  - *That there be further investigations into the source/s of contamination;*
  - *That an explanation be provided about how the current contamination happened, despite the significant history of use of firefighting foams in the Blue Mountains and the dangers of PFAS having been known for many years;*
  - *That a response be provided on remediation strategies and responsibilities;*
2. *That the Council write to the Hon. Mark Butler, Commonwealth Minister for Health and Aged Care and copy to Susan Templeman MP identifying the potential risk to Blue Mountains drinking water from PFAS, and to request*

the city within a  
World Heritage Area

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*the completion of the review PFAS levels in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines is completed in a timely manner; and*

- 3. That the Council receive a briefing for Councillors from representatives of Sydney Water and/or Water NSW in relation to the management of PFAS contamination of Medlow Bath Dam*

[Minute No. 225]

Council seeks a timely completion of the review of PFAS levels in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines following the recent discovery of elevated levels of PFAS in drinking water being supplied to 41,000 residents in the Blue Mountains.

The water is supplied by the Cascade filtration plant, in Katoomba, around 100km from Sydney's CBD.

The elevated levels of PFAS on the outlet of the Cascade Water Filtration Plant were first discovered by Sydney Water in June 2024. Subsequent investigation by WaterNSW led to the disconnection of two of the five dams supplying raw water to the plant in August 2024.

Investigation into the source of PFAS contamination in the two affected dams is ongoing at the time of writing. It is not known how long PFAS levels have been elevated in these drinking water supplies, or what historical levels of PFAS have been.

Residents have been assured by Sydney Water that local tap water is within the current Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and is safe to drink. However, Council notes recent proposed changes to Australian Drinking Water Guidelines include a significant lowering of the acceptable PFAS levels in drinking water.

Notably all the recent test results of drinking water from the Cascade filtration plant, as published by Sydney Water, are above the new draft Australian Drinking Water guidelines for PFAS. Levels have varied between two and four times the new proposed guideline of 0.004 µg/L.

Council is deeply concerned about the elevated levels of PFAS in the upper Blue Mountains drinking water catchment and potential impacts on human health.

The dangers of PFAS chemicals have been known for many years. Until the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines review is completed, the uncertainty over what are considered 'safe' levels of PFAS in drinking water is a cause of ongoing concern and distress for our community.

Given that the PFAS contamination in our drinking water supplies was not detected sooner, and that the contamination has occurred for an unknown period, possibly decades, it is understandable that many community members see this as a breach of trust by Government agencies.

Rigorous monitoring, and transparency with investigation results will be a critical step towards restoring trust. It is vital for the community to feel confident that action is being taken to protect public health, based on the best available evidence.

Council urges the timely completion of the review of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines to give certainty our community and confidence in the safety of our drinking water supplies.

Yours faithfully

(7 lines)

ROSEMARY DILLON  
Chief Executive Officer

Copy: Susan Templeman MP, Member for Blue Mountains  
Email: