

5 May 2025

**Select Committee on PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water Supplies
throughout New South Wales**

Question on Notice

The CHAIR:

How much is it costing Riverina Water at this stage to deal with PFAS as an issue? Do you have that information available or can you provide it on notice?

TROY van BERKEL:

Yes, I can probably have a fair estimate of cost. There is probably two parts to it. We have the current plume with what's been spoken about with the RAAF base. That's a very known issue we've got a lot of support in our project governance group, working with multiple agencies, which has a number of streams to it in terms of the strategy committee in terms of looking at short- and long-term options, and then also the comms stream to it. That issue, at the moment, we're being supported well in. We're carrying out PFAS testing of our East Wagga bore field sites. We've got a risk-based approach where it's looking at what are some of the factors that would rely on us testing more frequently in those areas? So our East Wagga bore sites, knowing about this plume, we've been testing monthly for some time now. Then we've got another issue, obviously, with the National Health and Medical Research Council revising the proposed health limits for PFAS.

We've actually conducted further testing with NSW Health, which then identified that we have some levels above the proposed guideline limits for PFAS but below the current Australian Drinking Water Guidelines limit. Primarily it's for PFOS. That was at Tarcutta, which was mentioned, and also at West Wagga bore fields, so at two sites there. One is, with East Wagga, a 25 meg a day bore field site, so that would be quite a considerable cost when that does potentially start to get impacted with what we do in terms of treatment options. We've got a short-term option with a special-purpose access licence where we can get more river water. For Tarcutta and West Wagga, I think the costs have been around \$40,000 mark; I can get more specific costs on that. But that's been with additional testing getting access to further salinity sites in Tarcutta. We've actually engaged a hydrogeologist. They've carried out a report looking at potential pathways for PFAS so we can try and actually understand where it's coming from and what options we do have going forward.

The CHAIR:

If you could take that on notice in terms of what it's costing and if there's anything further.

Riverina Water

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Response to Question on Notice:

Riverina Water County Council are pleased to provide the following response to the question taken on notice during the Inquiry held on Tuesday 8 April.

Costs incurred so far include:

Sampling Costs of Tarcutta Bore Field (Bore 4 and Bore 5); East Wagga Bore Field (Bore 1, Bore 2, Bore 3, Murrumbidgee River); West Wagga Bore Field (Bore 1, Bore 2, Bore 4, Bore 5); North Wagga Bore Field (Bore 1, Bore 2, Bore 3) (96 total samples per year))

\$35,235

PFAS specific investigations

Tarcutta Preliminary Hydrogeological Investigation

\$16,000

Tarcutta Preliminary Groundwater Sampling and Testing

\$22,758

Tarcutta Alternative bore Investigation (proposed)

\$33,000

(these have been for Tarcutta investigations)

Total cost

\$106,993