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Latest drinking water reports help build community confidence

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health has today released drinking water reports for townships in the Central Highlands and Rockhampton Region, with both Council regions scoring A grades for drinking water quality.

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health Executive Officer, Dr Leigh Stitz, said the drinking water reports added another layer of evidence to support confidence in drinking water quality in the Central Highlands and Rockhampton regions.

“Never before have we been more conscious of the fuel we provide for our bodies, and our annual drinking water reports that assess both raw and treated water against Australian Drinking Water Guidelines go a long way to assure local residents that their tap water is of the highest standard.”

“While the quality of our drinking water and the health of our local rivers may not be top of mind, when water quality does become a concern, Fitzroy Partnership for River Health maintains a wealth of data to draw on.

“Each year, we release Report Cards on the ecosystem health of waterways in our local catchments, and as complementary and supporting information we also report on drinking water quality, to help build the link between the importance of maintaining good river water quality and the production of safe drinking water.

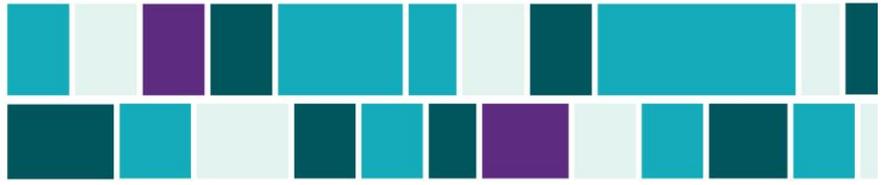
The reports establish that water provided for human use across all townships assessed was excellent, resulting in A grades being awarded.

“Our Science Panel has endorsed these reports which have been prepared by applying the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines to data provided by our partner Councils, Central Highlands and Rockhampton Regional Councils,” Dr Stitz said.

Mr Geoffrey Atherfold, Coordinator Environment and Waste at Central Highlands Regional Council said that while their Council provided drinking water reports easily accessible to the community, the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health reports provided an independent source of confidence in the quality of tap water in the townships across the Central Highlands.

“The excellent grading results received and endorsed by the independent panel reflect the quality processes in place by Central Highlands for water treatment in the region for the benefit of our local residents,” Mr Atherfold said.

“Our treatment processes are agile and adapt with changes in river flows and the resulting increases in turbidity and nutrients,” he said.



Dr Stitz said reporting compared results for two different types of guidelines: Health and Aesthetic, and treated water met health guidelines 100 per cent of the time for all town supplies assessed.

“Treated water met aesthetic guidelines almost all of the time. Minor exceedances were noted for a limited number of indicators in some townships, which is typical of most water supplies across Australia,” Dr Stitz said.

“Unlike health, exceedances of aesthetic guidelines do not signify unsafe drinking water, rather it relates to the acceptability of water to the consumer; for example, appearance, taste and odour.”

“We stress that this reporting is designed to complement regional council reporting, not replace it. Councils are the initial contact point for drinking water and will provide notices if there are ever any health concerns associated with their tap water.

“The drinking water reports offer the community access to a greater range of user-friendly information, which provides transparency and builds community understanding” Dr Stitz said.

The reporting is available online at https://riverhealth.org.au/report_card/drinking-water/.

In late August, Fitzroy Partnership for River Health released its tenth report card on the ecosystem health of 11 catchments in the Fitzroy Basin, showing that over the past decade the ecosystem health of the Basin has remained relatively consistent.

“Despite it being a busy, working basin, the Fitzroy Basin is resilient - providing quality water, suitable for many uses.

“In addition to the latest Drinking Water reports, we also maintain Agricultural Use Reports, Land Use and Groundcover information for the Fitzroy Basin on our website.”

The Fitzroy Basin is one of Queensland’s most significant natural resources; the largest seaward draining Basin on the east coast of Australia draining to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon, with around 80 per cent of the land managed by farmers and graziers.

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health is a collective of government, agriculture, industry and community groups which formed in 2012 to focus on water quality in the Fitzroy Basin. It includes 25 partner organisations from government, agriculture, resources, industry, research and community.

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