

# Frequently Asked Questions

The Gold Coast Desalination Plant will be operational in February 2009 and produce desalinated water for Gold Coast households and businesses.

## Who produces desalinated water ?

The Gold Coast Desalination Plant is owned by Water Secure (whose sole shareholder is the Queensland Government). Gold Coast Water takes ownership of the water once it enters the Gold Coast distribution network.



## What is desalination?

Desalination is a technology that separates dissolved salts and other minerals from seawater or other salty water to provide clean drinking water. The Gold Coast Desalination Plant uses a process called reverse osmosis, which involves the removal of salts and other minerals out of the water as it moves through a membrane process (moving through many thin sheets of material) under high pressure.

## Which parts of the Gold Coast will receive desalinated water ?

The majority of the Gold Coast will receive a blend of dam and desalinated water (at different blends), with some southern suburbs likely to receive 100% desalinated water, however daily supply (production) and demand will result in blend variations throughout different areas of the water supply network.

## Will desalinated water taste different?

Every water source has its own distinct taste as a result of catchment area characteristics and local water treatment processes. Often, one of the first things people notice when they visit a new area is that the water tastes slightly different to their tap water at home. Residents in the southern Gold Coast may notice some subtle differences with the taste and odour of the desalinated water during the initial weeks following the commissioning of this new water supply.

## Will my water be safe to use and drink?

Your water currently meets the requirements of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and will continue to do so once desalinated water is added to the water grid. Any changes you may notice will be minor and will not compromise the standard of your drinking water.



## What are the benefits of a desalinated water supply?

The major benefit of desalination is that it can continue to deliver high quality drinking water for consumption, even during periods of drought. It also provides an alternative source of water that will make our overall supply more diverse and less vulnerable to interruption.

The Gold Coast is well positioned to have a desalination plant due to its close proximity to the ocean.

## Is desalinated water used for drinking water supply in other states in Australia?

Yes, the impact of climate change has encouraged water authorities in Australia and overseas to diversify their water sources and reduce their dependency on rain for water supply. Some examples include:

- Kiwanna Desalination Plant near Perth is operating.
- Desalination plants are being built in New South Wales and Victoria.
- Small desalination plants have been operating across Australia for many years, providing drinking water for towns like Penneshaw, Coober Pedy and Marion Bay in South Australia.
- There are at least 20 desalination plants in Queensland. Ten of these are seawater desalination plants, including five on the Torres Strait Islands and one on Hamilton Island. There is also a groundwater desalination plant at Dalby.