



East Gippsland Water

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Our Ref: A/010/030 48796

21 October 2004

Mr Brian Labza
Public Health Group
Department of Human Services
GPO Box 1670N
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Brian,

RE: Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2004 – Submission

In addition to supporting the Victorian Water Industry Association's submission, East Gippsland Water would like to submit the following comments on the Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2004 and Exposure Draft for Safe Drinking Water Regulations.

- **Exposure Draft Section 10 (c)**
This section refers to the quality standards specified for drinking water supplied within a water quality zone for the purposes of section 17 of the Act. Reference to substances not specified as standards in the Table in Schedule 2 is irrelevant. The presence of any substance in drinking water in such amounts that may pose a risk to human health is covered in the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plans.
Recommendation: that paragraph 10 (c) be deleted and / or relocated to Section 3 as a definition of 'safe' drinking water under section 56 of the Act.
- **Schedule 2 Drinking Water Quality Standards**
The proposed statistical standards for assessment of water quality compliance are confusing, complicated and not readily understood. Using the examples in Chapter 6 of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and real life data it is possible to be non-compliant with the proposed standard and yet have all of the raw data values fall below the maximum allowable limit. This will create an environment of uncertainty as to whether there is a water quality issue to be addressed or not and may result in unnecessary public concern and expenditure. Presentation of data using a rolling twelve month methodology can shift a parameter from compliant to non-compliant from month to month. This method of calculating compliance is not a useful tool for assessing water quality or for developing water quality improvement plans.
Recommendation: discussions be held regarding the application of maximum allowable limits (MAL) for the proposed standards with a percentage of samples to be compliant over a 12 month period (eg. MAL for turbidity ≤ 5 NTU for 90% of samples taken). The use of Control Charts (ADWG Section 6.3.1) could be explored for long term evaluation of results as this method has the advantage of calculating upper control limits from all available data using simple statistical methods (1.96 x standard deviation for 95% of data to fall within the control limit boundaries). Annual water quality data could be presented in control chart format which can be easily explained and interpreted.

The lengthy nature of the formulation of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Regulations and the Regulatory Office in conjunction with other major changes in the industry (Essential Services Commission – Water Plan, Department of Sustainability and Environment – Statement of Obligations, changes to financial budget development and timelines etc) has delayed the development and implementation of a number of policies, procedures and systems due to the uncertainty over expectations, obligations, content, format and requirements of water quality monitoring programs, risk assessments, risk management plans, audits and water quality management systems.

In light of this, the Authority would also appreciate a timetable for any of the proposed changes, consultations, declarations of water quality zones, register of water sampling points, accreditation of analysts, data analysis / compliance reporting, implementation of Regulations etc to be distributed to the water industry so that sufficient resources can be allocated to meet legislative requirements.

Yours faithfully,



LES MATHIESON,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

Cc : Victorian Water Industry Association
Mr David Sheehan, Program Manager, Drinking Water Regulation