

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1032

asked on Tuesday, 4 September 2018

MS J STUCKEY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (HON DR A LYNHAM)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Gold Coast desalination plant—

Will the Minister advise for 2016-17 and 2017-18 (reported separately) (a) the operating schedules for the plant, (b) the amounts produced by the plant and (c) the locations water was transported to?

ANSWER:

- (a) The Gold Coast Desalination Plant at Tugun is a key element of the South East Queensland Water Grid.

The plant is currently operating in 'hot standby' mode to minimise costs, but allows Seqwater the flexibility to ramp-up production to 100 per cent capacity within 72 hours if required.

In hot standby, the plant produces about 500 million litres a year, or one to two megalitres a day. This water is used as part of South East Queensland's drinking water supply.

Having the desalination plant available provides significant security of supply during times when conventional water treatment plants need to be taken offline for upgrades and maintenance or when, during severe floods, the source raw water is too turbid and unable to be treated by traditional water treatment plants.

The plant is also essential for maintaining supply during extreme droughts and is operated when the major storages reach 60 per cent capacity.

The plant was operated during the following periods:

Operating Period	Reason for Operation
August 2016	Operated over five days during Molendinar Water Treatment Plant Upgrade
March–April 2017	Operated over 15 days when other treatment plants were impacted by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie
September–October 2017	Operated over 26 days when Mudgeeraba Water Treatment Plant underwent maintenance
May–August 2018	Operated during period while the Mount Crosby Water Treatment Plant was upgraded.

- (b) During periods of operation, the following volumes of potable water were produced:

- August 2016: 365 megalitres
- March–April 2017: 822 megalitres
- September–October 2017: 594 megalitres
- May–August 2018: 2904 megalitres

(c) While unable to identify specific locations to which the water was transported, from 2016 through to the current date, the plant has been used to supply the southern end of the Gold Coast, Logan City, as well as Ipswich and the greater Brisbane region, via the South East Queensland Water Grid.