

BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



MEDIA RELEASE

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Clinic water bore fixed within hour

The chief executive of the Barkly Regional Council Edwina Marks has refuted claims that a clinic in the Utopia homelands was left without a regular water supply.

Dr Marks said the council was informed by the health clinic in Urapuntja that they had run out of water last Sunday (August 24). The council was notified at 4.05pm on Sunday and the tank was filled with water supplied to the clinic just after 5pm.

The clinic bore at Urapuntja Health Service Aboriginal Corporation on the Utopia Homelands failed some ten weeks ago during pump replacement. An adjacent bore was then inspected to see if it could bear supply and it was reinstated.

Both the clinic and the council carried out water testings immediately and advised the Department of Community Services about the issues. Both bores are very old (1980s) and the immediate issue was potable supply. The council carted water every second day, and pumping to an overhead tank was carried out throughout that time.

“We have been carting water every second day to ensure adequate supply of potable water. The current bore supply is sufficient for washing, just not drinking,” said Dr Marks.

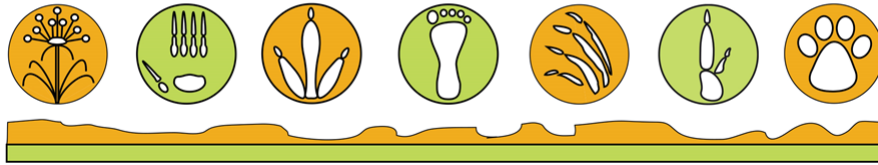
“Council has worked over and above to ensure that this supply is met and any issues are resolved almost immediately regardless of whether this is out of hours or not.”

Dr Marks said the council had been working with the Department of Community Services around potential options and also advising the Department of Health about the results of any testing. The council is also working closely with the clinic about the most effective long-term option.

The CEO said the council is still carting water and both the council and the Urapuntja Clinic have obtained quotes in relation to capital options. These options will be implemented by the Northern Territory Government.

“I met with the Department of Community Services again on Wednesday (August 27) and was advised that the NT Government would consider emergency funding and the potential option of installing a new bore,” said Dr Marks.

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“As all parties involved would be aware, the underlying issue is that there is no guarantee of long-term supply in relation to any water in these remote conditions and as a result the NT Government will look closely at any options to ensure that it is a long-term robust solution.

The Department of Health will meet with Urapuntja clinic next week and the council will liaise to meet with the clinic in person in the coming days. All personnel at the service centre continue to work with the clinic and assist supply, and will cart water for as long as necessary.

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