Water & Sewerage Leaks on Government-Owned Property - Premier’s Memo 2007-21

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Functional Sub group Corporate Administration - Asset Management
Corporate Administration - Finance
Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health & Safety

Summary Premier's Memorandum (attached) highlights the need for Ministers and Chief Executives to review their current maintenance procedures to ensure that the procedures are in place to quickly attend to and repair leaking water and sewerage on Government-owned property. Sewerage overflows and leaks can pose a public health and environmental risk if not attended to promptly.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Affiliated Health Organisations - Declared, Public Health System Support Division, NSW Dept of Health, Public Health Units

Audience All Ministers and Chief Executives

Distributed to Public Health System, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Department of Health, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals

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WATER AND SEWERAGE LEAKS ON GOVERNMENT – OWNED PROPERTY

Premier’s Memorandum 2007-21 dated 28 December 2007 (attached) highlights the need for Ministers and Chief Executives to review their current maintenance procedures to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements to attend to leaks and overflows as a matter of priority and to ensure that the procedures are in place to quickly attend to and repair leaking water and sewerage on Government - owned property.

Under the current customer contracts for Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation it is the customer that is the property owner who is responsible for water and sewer leaks located within the property boundary.

Sewerage overflows and leaks can pose a public health and environmental risk if not attended to promptly. NSW Government agencies that are serviced by Local Government – owned water utilities are advised to contact their local water utility to determine what arrangements are in place with regard to water and sewerage leaks under their customer contract, and review their maintenance arrangements accordingly.

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M2007-21 Water and Sewerage Leaks on Government-owned Property

All Ministers and Chief Executives are reminded of the importance of having procedures in place to quickly attend to and repair leaking water and sewerage infrastructure located on Government-owned property.

Given the severe drought situation across much of the State, it is important that the NSW Government should act as a model water utility customer and quickly attend to and repair any water leaks to avoid wastage of this precious resource.

Likewise, sewerage overflows and leaks can pose a public health and environmental risk if not attended to promptly.

Under the current customer contracts for Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation, it is the customer (property owner) who is responsible for water and sewer leaks located within the property boundary. There is no distinction between public and private landholders.

I am advised that in some cases water utilities have been called to attend to leaks that are within the customer's property boundary and therefore not the responsibility of the utility, which has led to delays in the leaks being addressed. This has, in turn, led to complaints from members of the public.

Ministers and Chief Executives are therefore requested to review their current maintenance procedures to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements to attend to leaks and overflows as a matter of priority. This should include agencies taking immediate action to attend to leaks when it is clear that the leak is occurring from pipes within their property boundary. Agencies should notify the relevant water utility of any leaks within their property boundaries that are of a significant nature.

NSW Government agencies that are serviced by Local Government-owned water utilities are advised to contact their local water utility to determine what arrangements are in place with regard to water and/or sewerage leaks under their customer contract, and review their maintenance arrangements accordingly.

If agencies require advice or assistance on improving the timeliness of repair services, they are encouraged to contact NSW Water Solutions within the Department of Commerce.

Morris Iemma
Premier

Issued: Natural Resource and Economic Development Branch, Policy Development, The Department of Premier and Cabinet
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Date: 28 December 2007

This memorandum has no superseded any other memoranda.