

Clash over CSG wastewater findings

Hamish Broome | 26th July 2012 5:00 AM

A WASTEWATER sample collected anonymously from a Metgasco holding pond has been found to contain levels of heavy metals toxic to humans and wildlife, says Lock the Gate Northern Rivers.

The sample was analysed at the nationally accredited SCU laboratory in Lismore and evaluated alongside Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council environmental guidelines and drinking water standards.

In contrast, Metgasco water sampling data released last week found the water was merely salty. But the new results show at least 10 heavy metals in concentrations well beyond safe levels defined by ANZECC.

Aluminium, a neurotoxic linked to dementia and Alzheimers, was detected at 440 times drinking-water standards and 800 times the allowable environmental limits.

Lead, a cumulative poison renowned for its negative effect on children's mental development was measured at seven times drinking-water standards and 20 times the safe environmental limit.

Lock the Gate spokesperson Boudicca Cerese said the results proved the community could not rely on the water- quality results provided by Metgasco.

"There is an urgent need for State Government authorities to undertake rigorous independent testing of all Metgasco's ponds before any further actions regarding treatment and disposal of this wastewater," she said.



Metgasco's Peter Henderson at the Shannon Brook Metgasco site, drinking produced water.

"Plans to use this water in agriculture or to reinject produced water back into the ground are a dangerous notion, one which will backfire on future generations."

Metgasco chief executive Peter Henderson said in a statement, "Metgasco stands by the results we published, which summarise results of multiple sampling in different ponds, with analysis by certified testing authorities.

"The analyses we perform are accepted as being appropriate for the produced water and drilling fluid and confirm the water is salty, not toxic."