

Rush on water filter systems

Recycling and fluoride fuel fear

Hannah Martin

SALES of household water filtering systems have rocketed in recent weeks as southeast Queensland residents prepare for recycled water from sewerage systems, desalinated water and fluoride in our supply.

Some filter suppliers report sales up 40 per cent. Shops expect a rush on bottled water.

Water from the desalination plant at Tugun on the Gold Coast will go into the southeast water grid this month. Recycled water from sewerage systems will go into Wivenhoe Dam, the southeast's main reservoir, from February.

The controversial plan to add fluoride begins next month.

Terry Neaves, owner of Crystal Clear Water Filters at Wynnum in Brisbane, said a fear of fluoride caused his sales increase.

"A lot of people are very upset about fluoride, but a normal water filter is not going to take that out," he said. "You need a reverse osmosis system to get rid of it all."

Pure Water Systems general manager Tara Brown said some domestic filter systems could remove up to 40 per cent of fluoride.



IN THE PIPELINE: Sunday Mail reports on the water changes

Ms Brown said her nationwide business had increased most in Queensland in the past six months: "We're getting a lot of questions about reverse osmosis and about bacteria and viruses."

Best Water Filters spokesman Colin Hoppood said the Gold Coast-based company received a growing number of inquiries about water taste and quality.

"People realise it's up to them to look after their water, because they feel that the Government's not."

Some water filter salespeople would "market the fear factor" to boost business, he said.

About 2.6 million residents in southeast Queensland will be the

first Australians to regularly drink recycled water. The State Government's \$2.5 billion project will pump 60 megalitres of recycled water from sewerage systems into the mains supply each day.

Premier Anna Bligh has long defended the safety of recycled water, which will go through a seven-step purification process before it is added to Wivenhoe Dam.

But the Government last week came under fire from some water experts, who said the purification process would not kill bugs that caused potentially fatal infections.

Australian National University emeritus professor Patrick Troy and microbiologist Peter Collignon were among those who expressed concerns that up to 20 per cent of the southeast's drinking water would come from recycled water from sewerage systems.

The pro-recycled water campaign was also rocked by the Queensland Water Commission's admission that industrial waste would account for at least 12 per cent of the waste water to be treated for drinking.

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"Rewarding kids

Brisbane Sunday Mail
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