

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

# Broken Hill Drinking Water Quality Report

1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012



## FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

### **1 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012 – Annual Drinking Water Quality Report**

Essential Water produces this report to inform Essential Water customers about water quality. Essential Water tests and monitors water quality during various stages of the storage and distribution system to ensure that the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines are met.

Essential Water's assessment, based on our water quality test results for this period, indicates that drinking water quality has complied with all the health and aesthetic values in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) 2011.

The ADWG 2011 recognise that occasionally there may be health or aesthetic related test results that fall outside the guidelines and that these results are not necessarily an immediate threat to health. The guidelines do not require a 100% result in all cases. All test results above the guidelines are investigated and actions, if necessary, taken.

For more information please call in and see us at our Customer Service Centre, contact us on **13 23 91** or visit [www.essentialwater.com.au](http://www.essentialwater.com.au).

#### **What is our aim?**

Essential Water is committed to providing safe, secure, reliable and high quality water to our customers.

#### **How do we test water quality?**

Water samples are taken from 38 locations including the reservoirs, at the inlet and outlet of the water filtration plants, and from various other locations throughout our water network. Independent laboratories certified to the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) standards carry out all testing, and the results are reviewed by NSW Health.

In the attached table you will find a summary of the test results for samples collected from the Broken Hill Water Treatment Plant and locations throughout our network over the reporting period (1 January 2012 to 30 June 2012).

#### **What is tested?**

Your water is tested for up to 70 different characteristics including taste, colour, odour, micro-organisms and chemical content. This report is a summary of a selection of the health characteristics, chosen in consultation with NSW Health and aesthetic characteristics.

#### **What are the water guidelines we must meet?**

Australian Drinking Guidelines (ADWG) 2011 is set by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the National Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMCC). The ADWG is part of the National Water Quality Management Strategy.

The role of Essential Water is to ensure that safe drinking water is supplied to meet all guidelines.



## FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Table 1: Broken Hill annual drinking water quality report 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012

BROKEN HILL		Filtered Water *						
Characteristics		No. Samples	Min	Avg	Max	ADWG	% Passed	Comply
Health	E. coli	123	0	0	0	0 orgs / 100 mL (100%)	100%	✓
	Fluoride**	11	0.84	0.9345	0.99	0.9 to 1.5 mg/L	100%	✓
	Free Chlorine	108	0.5	1.66	7.4	<5 mg/L	99.07%	✓
	Lead	11	0.001	0.0016	0.008	<0.01 mg/L	100%	✓
	Arsenic	11	0.0005	0.001	0.002	<0.01 mg/L	100%	✓
	Manganese	11	0.0025	0.0025	0.0025	<0.5 mg/L	100%	✓
	Cadmium	11	0.0003	0.0003	0.0003	<0.002 mg/L	100%	✓
	Copper	11	0.0025	0.0025	0.0025	< 2 mg/L	100%	✓
	Mercury	11	0.00005	0.0001	0.00005	<0.001 mg/L	100%	✓
	Trihalomethanes	13	0.066	0.0897	0.127	<0.25 mg/L	100%	✓
Aesthetic	Turbidity	11	0.05	0.086	0.2	< 5 NTU	100%	✓
	True Colour	11	0.5	0.682	1	15 HU	100%	✓
	pH	11	7.5	7.782	8	pH 6.5-8.5	100%	✓
	EC	26	364	511.08	652	<1000 µS/cm	100%	✓
	Iron	11	0.005	0.0068	0.01	<0.3 mg/L	100%	✓
	Zinc	11	0.005	0.0064	0.02	< 3 mg/L	100%	✓

\* Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011, normally reported on an annual basis. Filtered Water is defined as the water leaving the Water Treatment Plant.

\*\* Low fluoride readings are not classed as health exceedances.

## FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

### 1 Glossary\*

**Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)** – Are intended to provide a framework for good management of drinking water supplies that, if implemented, will assure safety at point of use. The ADWG are designed to provide an authoritative reference on what defines safe, good quality water, how it can be achieved and how it can be assured. The ADWG are not mandatory standards, however they provide a basis for determining the quality of water supplied to customers in all parts of Australia. The ADWG are set by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC).

**Health-related guideline value** – which is the concentration or measure of a water quality characteristics that, based on present knowledge, does not result in any significant risk to the health of the consumer over a lifetime of consumption.

**Aesthetic guideline value** – which is the concentration or measure of a water quality characteristic that is associated with acceptability of water to the consumer; for example appearance, taste or odour

**Arsenic** – is from natural sources and mining, industrial and agricultural wastes. The health guideline value for arsenic is <0.01 mg/L.

**Cadmium** – Indicates industrial or agricultural contamination; from impurities in galvanised (zinc) fittings, solders and brasses. The health guideline for cadmium is <0.002 mg/L.

**Chlorine** – Widely used to disinfect water, and this can produce (free) chlorinated organic by-products. Odour thresholds generally 0.6 mg/L, but 0.2 mg/L for a few people. In some supplies it may be necessary to exceed the aesthetic guideline in order to maintain an effective disinfectant residual throughout the system. The health guideline value to chlorine is 5 mg/L and the aesthetic guideline value is 0.6 mg/L.

**Copper** – From corrosion of pipes/fittings by salt, low pH water. Taste threshold 3 mg/L. High concentrations colour water blue/green. >1 mg/L may stain fittings. > 2 mg/L may cause ill effects in some people. The health guideline value for copper is <2 mg/L and the aesthetic guideline value is <1 mg/L.

**Escherichia coli (E. coli)**– is a type of thermotolerant coliform bacteria, and is nearly always present in the gut of humans and other warm-blooded animals. E coli is now generally regarded as the most specific indicator of faecal contamination, and therefore the more important indicator for public health. E. Coli should not be detected in a minimum of 100 mL sample of water. If detected, immediate corrective action must be taken including investigation of potential sources of faecal contamination.

**Electrical Conductivity (EC)** - is a measure of salinity. Electricity is conducted with increased ease as the concentration of dissolved salt in the water increases. Therefore, a high electrical conductivity indicated a high salt concentration of salt. It is measured in microSiemens per centimetre ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ).

**Fluoride** – Occurs naturally in some water from fluoride-containing rocks. Often added at up to 1 mg/L to protect against dental cavities. >1.5 mg/L can cause dental fluorosis. > 4 mg/L can cause skeletal fluorosis. The health guideline value is <1.5 mg/L.

**Iron** – Occurs naturally in water, usually at <1 mg/L, but up to 100 mg/L in oxygen-depleted groundwater. Taste threshold is 0.3 mg/L. High concentrations stain laundry and fittings. Iron bacteria cause blockages, taste/odour and corrosion. The aesthetic guideline for iron is <0.3 mg/L.

**Lead** – Occurs in water via dissolution from natural sources or household plumbing containing lead (e.g pipes or solder). The health guideline value for lead is <0.01 mg/L.

**Manganese** – Occurs naturally in water; low in surface water, higher in oxygen depleted water (e.g groundwater at the bottom of deep storages). >0.1 mg/L causes taste and staining, <0.05 mg/L is desirable. The health guideline value is <0.5 mg/L and the aesthetic guideline value for manganese is <0.1 mg/L.

## FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

**Maximum** – The highest recorded reading.

**Minimum** – The lowest recorded reading.

**Mercury** - From industrial emissions/spills. Very low concentrations occur naturally. Organic forms most toxic, but these are associated with biota, not water. The health guideline value for mercury is <0.001 mg/L.

**pH** – While pH values (< 4 and > 11) may adversely affect health, there is insufficient data to set a health guideline value. < 6.5 may be corrosive. > 8 progressively decreases efficiency of chlorination. > 8.5 may cause taste and odour problems. New concrete tanks and cement-mortar lined pipes can significantly increase pH and a value up to 9.2 may be tolerated provided monitoring indicates no deterioration in microbial quality. The aesthetic guideline range for pH is 6.5 – 8.5.

**Reservoir** – An artificial body of water.

**Trihalomethanes (THMs)** – A by-product of chlorination and chloramination. Action to reduce trihalomethanes is encouraged, but must not compromise disinfection, as non-disinfected water poses significantly greater risk than trihalomethanes. The health guideline value for trihalomethanes is 0.25 mg/L.

**True Colour** – An important aesthetic characteristic for customer acceptance. Treatment processes can be optimised to remove colour. The aesthetic guideline for true colour is <15 HU.

**Turbidity** – 5 NTU is just noticeable in a glass. <0.2 NTU is the target for effective filtration of *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*. <1 NTU is the target for effective disinfection. The aesthetic guideline for turbidity is <5 NTU.

**Zinc** – Usually from corrosion of galvanised pipes/fittings and brasses. Natural concentrations generally < 0.01 mg/L. Taste problems can occur at > 3 mg/L. The aesthetic guideline value for zinc is <3 mg/L.

*\*Glossary definitions adapted from the ADWG (2011).*