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MEDIA STATEMENT 11 May 2007

Desalination plant frees up one million litres of fresh water for domestic use

Fertiliser company Incitec Pivot Limited will reduce its fresh water intake by one million litres a day through a \$1 million desalination unit it commissioned today at its Brisbane plant.

"This is an interim measure to reduce our dependence on town water until treated waste water becomes available," said Julian Segal, Incitec Pivot's Managing Director & CEO.

"In the longer term, our target is to virtually eliminate the use of fresh water when the Queensland Government's Western Corridor recycled water project comes on line late next year."

Recycled water from the Western Corridor scheme, when combined with the company's own water reuse initiatives, has the potential to reduce the Gibson Island site's daily fresh water demand by six million litres.

"This is the additional amount of fresh water that would become available to residential and other users," Mr Segal said.

Mr Segal said that the lease and operation of the desalination plant, which was officially commissioned by Acting Queensland Premier Anna Bligh today, would cost the company \$1 million a year.

The plant converts salt water from the adjacent Brisbane River into water suitable for use in cooling towers and boilers during fertiliser production, reducing fresh water consumption by 15 per cent.

The company is working on two additional projects to further reduce fresh water consumption. In the second project, a reverse osmosis plant will be used to treat and reuse process and stormwater.

The third project - to collect and store stormwater for use in the plant - involves the construction of a plastic-lined 15-megalitre dam on site.

"These initiatives all move us in the right direction, but the long-term solution is for industry to access treated waste water from the Western Corridor recycled water pipeline," Mr Segal said.

The Gibson Island plant manufactures 750,000 tonnes of fertiliser a year for farmers in Queensland and northern New South Wales and for export. It employs about 280 people.

Last year Incitec Pivot expanded its manufacturing capacity with the purchase of Southern Cross Fertilisers, which produces ammonium phosphate fertilisers in northern Queensland.

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