

## S149 CERTIFICATE ATTACHMENT

### Managing Groundwater in the Botany Sands Aquifer



#### Who manages groundwater?

In New South Wales, groundwater is managed by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Water under the *NSW Water Management Act 2000*. Under this Act water sharing plans are created to manage both surface water and groundwater that is used by industry, the environment, towns and communities. All interactions with groundwater including water supply, groundwater monitoring and dewatering require a license from DPI water.

#### What is the Botany Sands Aquifer

The Botany Sands Aquifer is a large volume of underground water present in the sandy ground surrounding Botany Bay. The aquifer is highly vulnerable to contamination due to the permeability of the sands, and the generally shallow water table. Any contamination from land use activity that escapes or is spilled onto the ground is likely to accumulate in the earth and leach into the groundwater.

#### How is the NSW Government managing the aquifer?

Whilst only a small proportion of the aquifer area is known to be contaminated, the legacy of past activities could have affected the groundwater in other locations. Because of this, the NSW Government has taken a precautionary approach to ensure public health is not put at risk from exposure to potentially contaminated groundwater.

Under the precautionary approach the NSW Government has:

- Divided the area into four management zones. See the attached groundwater zone map:
  - Zone 1 – Existing Groundwater Extraction Exclusion Area (around the Orica site).
  - Zone 2, 3, & 4 - Ban on domestic bore water use.
  - Zone 2, 3, & 4 - Industrial users must test their bore water annually and provide the results to the NSW Government.
- Since August 2003 has operated an embargo on the acceptance of new licence applications to extract groundwater.

Extended the Botany embargo in June 2007 to encompass the entire Botany Sands aquifer.

#### Additional information

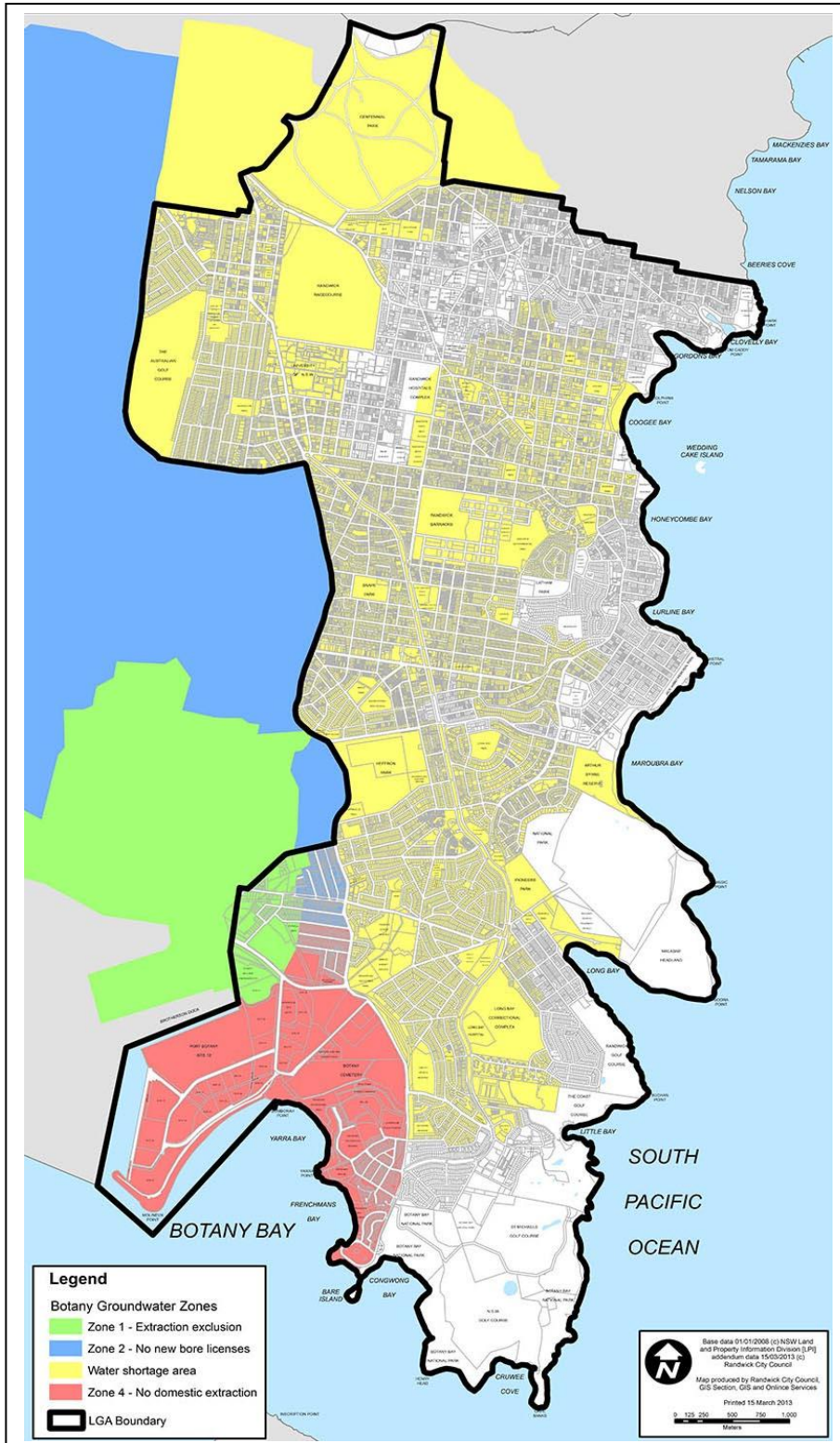
Department of Primary Industries - Office of Water  
website [www.water.nsw.gov.au](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au)

#### Health Risks

Residents concerned about possible health risks from previous exposure to groundwater in zones 1, 2, 3, 4 are encouraged to contact South Eastern Sydney/ Illawarra Public Health Unit on 02 9382 8333, or write to the Director, Public Health Unit, Locked Bag 88, Randwick NSW 2031.

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