

Raise a glass of water

Cardwell Shire Council moved quickly to restore the town water supply after Cyclone Larry.

The system within the Shire was fully operational last week and the water declared safe to drink after tests carried out by Cairns Water.

However, the heavy rain earlier this week highlighted one disadvantage of the water supply - dirty water during periods of heavy rainfall.

Council's Director of Engineering, Alf Raiti, said the town water supply came from streams within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area rainforest and was distributed under gravity with only minimal treatment.

"A disadvantage of this system is that we experience problems of dirty water during periods of heavy rainfall when there exist high levels of turbidity together with suspended silt and vegetable matter in the creeks," Mr Raiti said.

"This material finds its way into the distribution systems and results in consumer dissatisfaction

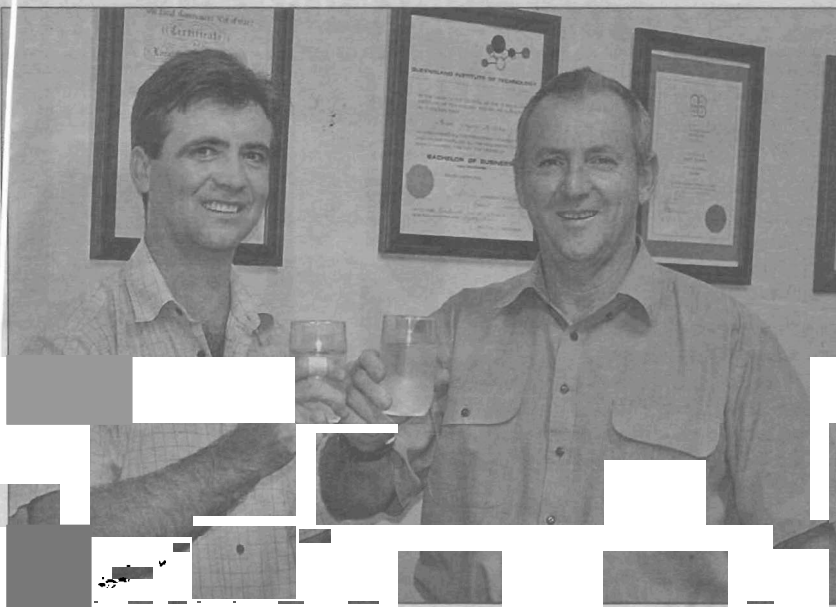
"The installation of a filtration plant in each system has been considered but determined to be undesirable because we would not be permitted to construct the treatment plants at the intakes.

While the water could be filtered once it leaves the World Heritage Area, the supply would lose the advantage of gravity and would have to be pumped throughout the distribution systems.

"Not only would that increase the cost of delivery, but the rural areas without reservoirs would lose supply whenever there was a power outage."

Mr Raiti said Council had in the past determined the existing system should remain and that the inconvenience of short periods of dirty water did not justify the introduction of a two-part tariff, where every kilolitre of water used is charged to the consumer.

Council feels that residents who want an improved water quality dur-



CHEERS: Cardwell Shire Council's manager of environmental health services, **Geoff Wilson**, and chief executive officer, **Mark Kelleher**, raise a glass of water after the shire's town water supply was safe to drink.

ing these periods of high rainfall should install a filter on their individual supply, and on request, Council will make water staff available to provide advice on suitable units, Mr Raiti stated.

Some of the steps taken by Council in order to minimise the impact of dirty water were:

- * Council personnel flush all mains soon after the heavy rains have ceased and the water clarity in the creeks return to normal.

- * Council has developed an automatic scour that have been installed at locations where there is evidence of frequent dirty water build up.

- * During the wet season all water supplied to the South Mission Reach Wongaling Beach area passes through Wheatley's Reservoir: which provides a detention time in excess of four hours, allowing much of the suspended material to settle.

Mr Raiti added that despite the all clear to drink the water in the Cardwell Shire, if any resident still had concerns, especially following the recent heavy rain, they should bring the water to a rolling boil for one minute before drinking.