

# » recycled water facts FAQs

Factsheet No.1

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[www.ballinawater.com.au](http://www.ballinawater.com.au)



**Recycled water is clean and safe, cheaper to use and available 24/7. Recycled water costs only 80 per cent of the usual water rate and is being rolled out at new properties in Lennox Head and Ballina.**

## » What can recycled water be used for?

- cold water washing machine taps
- irrigating gardens, food crops and sports fields
- filling ornamental ponds
- toilet flushing
- washing cars, bikes and boats.

## » What should recycled water not be used for?

- drinking
- cooking or other kitchen purposes
- baths, showers or other personal washing
- swimming pools or other leisure water use
- rainwater tanks.

## » How will I know if recycled water is available at my property?

Purple pipelines and taps have already been installed at households set to receive recycled water. This is to distinguish recycled water from drinking water.

## » What are the charges to use recycled water?

Recycled water for residential or commercial use is supplied at only 80 per cent of the usual water rate, making it an economical choice. Water rates charges are issued quarterly with your rates notices.

The current fees and charges schedule can be **viewed at Ballina Shire Council's website at [ballina.nsw.gov.au](http://ballina.nsw.gov.au)**

## » Can I drink recycled water?

Recycled water is not recommended for some uses such as drinking, bathing and cooking but should you accidentally use recycled water in this way, it is unlikely you will fall ill. It is recommended however that you seek medical advice and inform Ballina Shire Council.

## » Why can't I fill my swimming pool or spa with recycled water?

Bathing, swimming and cooking are not recommended by regulators as accepted uses of recycled water.

## » Is it safe for children to come into direct contact with recycled water?

Yes, it is safe for children to come into direct contact with the recycled water, however, water toys and playing under sprinklers is not considered acceptable as children can swallow water during these activities.

## »» Can I water my vegetable garden with recycled water?

Yes, it is safe to eat vegetables that have been grown with recycled water. As per usual hygiene practices, it is recommended that all vegetables be washed with drinking water before eating, due to microorganisms present in soils and fertilisers.

## »» Which plants are ideally suited to recycled water in the Ballina Shire?

For a list of plants which are best suited to local environmental conditions download Ballina Shire's Urban Garden Guide at [ballina.nsw.gov.au](http://ballina.nsw.gov.au) (under 'Environment' and 'flora and fauna').

## »» Does recycled water smell?

No, recycled water does not smell. Recycled water smells and appears identical to drinking water. Any type of water can smell if left in pipes for long enough. If you are away on holidays or a new tenant has moved in, it is good practice to flush all taps if they have not been used for some time.

## »» Is it safe to use parks and golf courses that have been irrigated with recycled water?

Yes, the high standard of treatment makes the recycled water safe for irrigation not only for parks and sporting grounds, but also for irrigating food crops, pasture and fodder for stock (excluding pigs) and crops such as flowers and turf.

## »» What is potable water?

Potable water is drinking water. Potable means 'safe to drink' or 'drinkable'. Most of Ballina Shire's drinking water comes from Rocky Creek Dam and we use it to shower, cook and drink.

## »» How do I know recycled water is safe?

The Ballina and Lennox Head water recycling plants both produce high quality recycled water that goes through a number of rigorous treatment processes in accordance with the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling and the NSW DPI Water Guidelines for Recycled Water Management Systems. Council must operate the treatment plants in accordance with approvals from the Environment Protection Authority and DPI Water, with concurrence from NSW Health. Both facilities have 24 hour online monitoring equipment and follow HACCP principles for guaranteeing water quality. The facilities will automatically shut down if water quality cannot be guaranteed.

## »» Are we on water restrictions?

Water restrictions do not apply to recycled water, so you can continue to use water throughout a drought. You can check to see if there are drinking water restrictions on Council's website or by contacting Council. Rous Water, the regional bulk water supply authority, notifies councils to implement water restrictions when the level of Rocky Creek Dam drops to 60 per cent. Due to the relatively high rainfall on the far north coast water restrictions are not implemented very often.

## »» What is dual reticulation?

Dual reticulation refers to properties which are supplied or have access to both standard drinking water and recycled water. 'Dual' means 'two parts' and 'reticulation' means a 'system of pipes'. Recycled water is delivered through purple coloured pipes and taps. Drinking water is delivered through blue pipes and standard tap fittings.

## »» How do I know where council pipes are located?

Council keeps records and maps of underground infrastructure. Anyone who intends to begin digging or excavation work (even in your own backyard) should lodge a Dial before You Dig enquiry before commencing work. **For more information visit the Dial Before You Dig website at [www.1100.com.au](http://www.1100.com.au) or call 1100.**

**The information in this factsheet only applies to the Lennox Head and Ballina recycled water schemes. For information about the Alstonville and Wardell recycled water schemes please refer to Factsheet No 8.**



**Need more info? Visit our water website [ballinawater.com.au](http://ballinawater.com.au)**

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