

DISCOLOURED Water

Harmless deposits of iron or manganese can become settled in pipes

Sudden changes to water flow can unsettle these deposits



WHAT IS DISCOLOURED WATER?

Discoloured water is a change in the appearance or the colour of your water – usually to a brown or yellow colour.

It is usually caused by a build up of trace elements such as iron and manganese which can become unsettled when there are changes in flow conditions.

Operational incidents, such as burst water mains, or use of fire hydrants are examples of events that cause this discolourisation.

MANGANESE



Manganese exists naturally in some soils and enters into ground water or is washed down to surface water reservoirs. If not oxidised,

manganese ions will escape through water treatment processes into the supply system. Once in the system, the ion is gradually oxidised to insoluble manganic dioxide causing dirty water problems.

Council has a comprehensive monitoring program to ensure the safety of the drinking water.

It is regarded as a nuisance rather than a toxic component of drinking water. Although unsightly it is harmless to health and the water is safe to drink, however it is sensible you avoid doing so.

Rocky Creek Dam has low levels of soluble manganese ranging from 0 to 0.05 mg/L. However, at concentrations as low as 0.02mg/L manganese will form manganese oxide sediments in pipes.

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines has an aesthetic guideline of 0.1mg/L for manganese and a health guideline of 0.5mg/L. Our water treatment plants ensure levels are always below the aesthetic guidelines.



DISCOLOURED Water

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q What should I do if I experience discoloured water?

A If you experience discoloured water, it is usually only a temporary situation. We advise you to run the garden tap closest to your water meter into a bucket for two minutes to see if it clears. If it doesn't clear, please call Council on 02 6686 4444.



Manganese build up in pipes may be a souvenir from the 1960's when drinking water quality was not as well monitored as it is today.

Q Is discoloured water safe to drink?

A Discolouration caused by Manganese or Iron is not a health risk. However, because discolouration can be due to other causes, it is sensible to avoid drinking discoloured water.

Q What can I do if it stains my laundry?

A Please see the information brochure on 'how to clean laundry stained with discoloured water' on Council's website or at council chambers. It's essential to keep stained laundry immersed in water. Citric acid is usually used to remove stains. **DO NOT USE BLEACHING AGENTS.** They will make the stain worse.

Q What if I have milky or white coloured water?

A Water that is milky or white in colour is the result of small air bubbles within the water. This water is harmless and left in a container on the bench, the air will quickly dissipate and the water will become clear.

CONTACT INFORMATION

02 6686 4444
ballina.nsw.gov.au/discolouredwater
40 Cherry Street, Ballina 2478

