

» recycled water facts for the real estate industry



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It is important for real estate agents and landlords to explain to tenants the acceptable uses of recycled water. Solicitors and conveyancers need to ensure they explain these responsibilities to sellers and buyers of properties connected to recycled water.

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 across the Ballina Shire.

» Solicitors, conveyancers, vendors and buyers of real estate

It is important for solicitors, conveyancers, vendors and buyers of real estate, and real estate agents, to be aware of the legal requirement for audits of recycled water services prior to the sale of a property.

This protects the owner from incurring additional costs and the inhabitants of the property from any inappropriate contact with recycled water.

Solicitors and conveyancers should make an application to Council for a pre-sale audit. The application form can be found at ballina.nsw.gov.au (under 'Council Forms' and 'Dual Water Supply Certificate of Compliance').

Buyers of real estate should ensure their conveyancing solicitor checks the property's 149 Certificate and confirms a pre-sale recycled water audit has recently been carried out by Council. If a property is sold without an audit, Council will undertake an audit after the sale has been completed and the new owner will be charged for the cost of the audit.

» Owners, landlords and real estate agents

Owners and landlords have a legal obligation to ensure guests and tenants are aware that the property is supplied with recycled water, and know what recycled water can and can't be used for.

» Getting connected

Recycled water is supplied to new properties through a separate pipe network which is coloured purple for easy identification. Builders and/or plumbers will need to apply to Council for a connection, just as they do for drinking water connections. The recycled water plumbing will then be checked by Council's Building Services section during construction to ensure that it is properly installed.

» Recycled water plumbing

Plumbers must connect all toilets and cold water washing machine to the recycled water supply. It will be a condition of connection that property owners must have at least one recycled water tap, plus only one drinking water tap, in either the front or backyard. If the recycled connection is locked-off, this means the plumber has not yet completed all the tasks required by Council. Please contact your plumber or builder to discuss.

» Meters

Properties supplied with recycled water will have two meters which will sit side by side and approximately 300mm apart. The recycled water meter will be purple. When planning driveways and landscaping, you should make allowances for two meters at the front of the property.

» Signage

The 'Recycled Water Do Not Drink' signs on each purple tap have a limited life span due to sunlight and wear and tear. Once they deteriorate, it the responsibility of the householder to replace these. New signs can be purchased from plumbing suppliers and are not expensive.

» How owners and tenants can check a property's recycled water supply

Checking a property's recycled water supply is a simple seven step process that you can undertake at any time.

Seven steps to check for cross connections:

1. Turn off drinking water supply at the property boundary and rainwater tank pump and/or valve.
2. Turn on all internal taps. Taps should run dry.
3. Flush all toilets. Toilets should refill if connected to recycled water supply.
4. Turn on external taps. Your drinking water tap should run dry. Taps that continue to run are connected to the recycled water supply and should be coloured purple and marked with appropriate signs.
5. Turn off recycled water supply and turn on drinking water supply and rainwater tank pump and/or valve. Run recycled water supply dry via external taps or toilet flushing.
6. Turn on internal appliances. Appliances that do not fill are connected to incorrect supply. Only the washing machine and toilets should be connected to recycled water.
7. Turn on recycled water supply. Slowly turn on a tap connected to recycled water supply. It is best to use a tap that is located furthest from the meter to purge all air from the pipeline while it is being recharged.

If you encounter problems while undertaking the check please contact a plumber or call Council on 02 6686 4444 for assistance.

» Did you know how recycled water can be used?

Recycled water can 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.

» Recycled water cannot be used for:

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

» 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.

» 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 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
T 02 6686 4444 E council@ballina.nsw.gov.au

