

## Fact Sheet for Residents

The supply of recycled water to suitable new housing developments is an exciting new initiative of Cairns Regional Council. We know that the introduction of recycled water generates a lot of questions for new users. This fact sheet is designed to inform you, as a recycled water customer, about the use of recycled water on your property

### What is recycled water?

Recycled water is treated wastewater sourced from a wastewater treatment plant. The source of recycled water is wastewater that has already been used in homes and businesses for showers, toilets, laundry, kitchen and industrial uses. Recycled water is treated to different qualities depending on its intended use. Cairns Regional Council recycled water delivered to homes for use, will be treated to the highest level for non-drinking purposes (Class A+ quality) in accordance with State and National water quality guidelines.

### Why is recycled water being used?

Recycled water is a safe alternative water source that can be used for a range of non-drinking uses. The use of recycled water reduces the demand on our drinking water supplies and reduces the amount of treated wastewater discharged to the ocean and rivers. Establishing new water supplies such as building new dams or extracting more water from rivers can have significant environmental and social impacts, so by recycling we can also help to delay the need for new water supplies.

### What can recycled water be used for?

Class A+ recycled water supplied by Cairns Regional Council is suitable for:

- ✓ Watering gardens
- ✓ Car and boat washing
- ✓ Washing of houses and hard surfaces (external)
- ✓ Toilet flushing
- ✓ Fire fighting
- ✓ Filling ornamental water features and ponds not used for swimming

Class A+ recycled water supplied by Cairns Regional Council **MUST NOT** be used for:

- ✗ Drinking (human or animal consumption)
- ✗ Cooking or other kitchen purposes
- ✗ Swimming pools and spas
- ✗ Evaporative coolers
- ✗ Recreational activities involving water contact e.g. playing under sprinklers
- ✗ Personal washing such as baths, hand basins, showers or bidets
- ✗ Indoor household cleaning





## **Is recycled water safe to use?**

Yes. Recycled water is produced to high standards to meet water quality criteria set by the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Resource Management. Rigorous monitoring, testing and quality assurance systems are in place to ensure the recycled water meets strict environmental and health guidelines. While Class A+ recycled water is of high quality, there are specific activities recycled water should not be used for, in particular as drinking water. Refer to Council's *Recycled Water – Do's and Don'ts* fact sheet for more information on approved uses and customer responsibilities relating to the use of recycled water.

## **How much will recycled water cost?**

The price for recycled water used on residential properties is approximately half the price of potable water. An access charge applies for each residence, flat, strata title unit and each vacant allotment categorised as residential. There is a charge to connect to the recycled water service which is in addition to the potable water connection. A discount applies if an application is made for both the recycled water and the potable water connections.

## **Do I still have to install a rainwater tank at my new home if I am connected to recycled water?**

If recycled water is supplied to your new home for flushing toilets and for outdoor use you do not have to install a rainwater tank to meet the Water Saving Targets requirements of the Queensland Development Code for new homes.

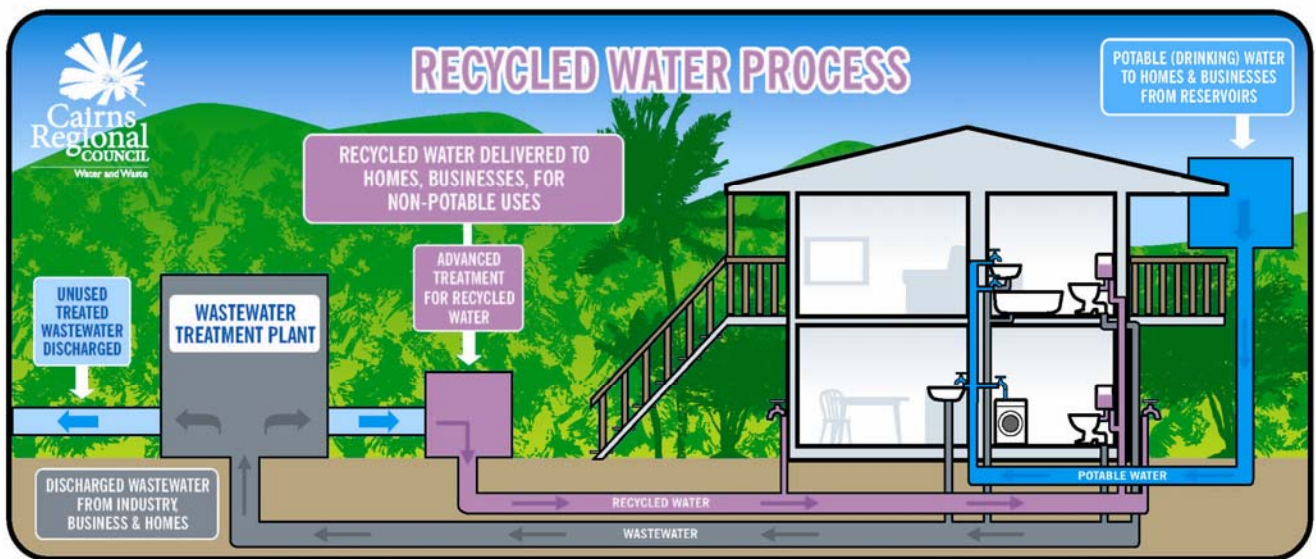
## **How is recycled water delivered to homes?**

For developments where recycled water is available, the recycled water and drinking water are delivered to homes via separate water supply networks. This is known as 'dual reticulation'. Homes are plumbed with separate drinking and recycled water pipes.

For easy identification, recycled water pipes are coloured purple and drinking water pipes are coloured blue. A separate purple water meter for recycled water will be installed on the property boundary. The recycled water meter and all pipe work are coloured purple to ensure there is no chance of connecting recycled water to the drinking water supply.

Refer to Council's *Recycled Water – Do's and Don'ts* fact sheet and *Recycled Water Plumbing Guide* for more information regarding customer responsibilities in relation to the recycled water plumbing.





### How will I know how much recycled water I use?

The recycled water meter will be read at the same time as your drinking water meter. The charges for recycled water and drinking water will be shown separately on your water bill. The amount of drinking water and recycled water you use will also be shown on the water bill.

### Will recycled water affect my garden plants?

Recycled water will have a higher level of nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen than drinking water. So you may be able to reduce the amount of fertiliser used on your garden. Some plants may be sensitive to higher nutrient levels. When selecting plants, check with your nursery about the nutrient needs of your plants.

Recycled water may be more saline than drinking water. It is better to water deeply once or twice a week during the dry season as this will wash salts down past the root zone. Frequent shallow watering could increase soil salinity. Class A+ recycled water is suitable for watering plants and vegetables but just as with normal handling of vegetables they should be washed before use. Avoid overwatering your garden and minimise runoff from your property to prevent recycled water from entering the stormwater system.

### Do water restrictions apply to recycled water?

No. You are not required to adhere to Council's permanent water conservation measures or other restrictions that may be implemented during times of water shortages in relation to your use of recycled water. You must still adhere to water restrictions for the use of water from the drinking water system. As with all water, recycled water is a valuable resource and should be used wisely. It is important to only use what you need and use it only for the approved purposes.

For more information and fact sheets on recycled water use contact Cairns Regional Council on Phone: (07) 4044 3044, Fax: (07) 40443022 or Email: [council@cairns.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@cairns.qld.gov.au)