

Water in the Lower Hunter



Planning our water future

Hunter Water is planning for our future now to ensure our region has a sustainable and resilient water system that can adapt and respond to change. We need to consider new sources of water (supply) and find new ways to reduce the water we all use (demand). This series of information sheets provide an overview of the potential water supply and demand option types we're discussing with our community as we plan our water future together.

Demand option: Recycled water (non-drinking)

What is it and how does it work?

Recycled water involves the treatment of sewage to a standard suitable for non-drinking end uses, such as industrial and commercial use, toilet flushing or irrigation of parks, gardens, crops and golf courses.

The process relies on advanced water treatment, such as UV disinfection or chlorination, to ensure water quality standards are met.

What is currently in place in the Lower Hunter?

There are currently 15 recycled water schemes in the Lower Hunter which produce a total of around 6 billion litres of recycled water each year.

Two large-scale recycled water schemes supply more than 3 billion litres of recycled water each year for industrial use.

There are several smaller schemes which provide recycled water for golf courses and crop irrigation, as well as two dual-reticulation schemes that provide recycled water for garden and toilet flushing in housing estates.

Things we need to consider

Recycled water for non-potable (non-drinking) use reduces the demand on the drinking water system and is a reliable climate-independent supply of water, particularly during drought.

Recycled water provides environmental benefits such as reducing pollutants released to the environment.

Due to advanced treatment requirements and associated infrastructure, as well as high energy use, recycled water schemes are relatively high cost to build and operate for the volume of water produced.

The demand for recycled water can also vary depending on weather, which can make the option less cost effective.

Rating of considerations

We've developed a matrix to rate all option types against key considerations based on current industry knowledge. We've considered both positive and negative impacts to come up with a rating out of five for each category. The greater the number of dots, the greater the impact. Reliability has been rated using stars. The greater the number of stars, the more reliability the option type adds to our water system.



Consideration	Rating				
Cost to build	●	●	●	●	
Cost to operate	●	●	●		
Environmental impact	●				
Social impact	●				
Reliability	★	★	★	★	