

Lower Hunter Water Security Plan



The Lower Hunter Water Security Plan is a whole-of-government approach to ensuring the region has a resilient and sustainable water future that contributes to regional health and prosperity and is supported by the community. The plan outlines a program of actions to secure water for the Lower Hunter over the next 40 years.

Purified recycled water for drinking

All water is recycled as part of the natural water cycle. Purified recycled water is high-grade, ultra-clean water that meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and is safe to drink.

About purified recycled water

Purified recycled water is produced by taking treated wastewater or stormwater, and treating it further through advanced treatment processes, to filter and purify it before adding it to an existing water source, such as dams or aquifers (groundwater). Water is treated again when extracted from the water source at a water treatment plant before being added to the drinking water supply system.

Water is treated through several stages. Each stage uses a specific technology or control point which plays a specific role to manage impurities in the water. This is referred to as a multi-barrier approach.

Like the rest of our water supply system, any new purified recycled water scheme would be subject to strict treatment and monitoring, would be developed in close consultation with health authorities and experts and meet Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Actions in the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan

We will continue to explore purified recycled water for drinking as a potential future option to augment our drinking water supply. The plan proposes further engagement with our community and stakeholders about this option and the construction of a small demonstration plant and education facility to help the community understand the water cycle and the potential role purified recycled water could play in our regions' water future.

The plan doesn't commit us to using purified recycled water for drinking. The demonstration plant will not be connected to Hunter Water's supply system.

Where its used

Purified recycled water is part of the water supply mix in over 35 cities around the world, including Perth, Western Australia, which has an active groundwater replenishment scheme using recycled wastewater.

Key features

- We will continue to explore purified recycled water for drinking with our community as a potential future option to augment our drinking water supply
- We will construct a small demonstration plant
- A safe and reliable water supply option that doesn't rely on rainfall and is used around the world, including in Perth, Western Australia
- Delivers environmental benefits by reducing demand on the region's water resources and reducing the volume of wastewater discharged to waterways
- Delays the need for major water supply augmentation.