

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.

Recycled water and alternative water supplies

Recycled water involves re-using highly treated wastewater from treatment plants or from stormwater for non-drinking water purposes including industrial processes, irrigation of green spaces, residential use (such as toilet flushing, garden watering and clothes washing), agricultural use and operational use at Hunter Water's treatment plants.

Increasing the level of water recycling in the Lower Hunter is an important part of the plan's program of actions as it reduces demand on drinking water supplies.

The plan's approach to increasing the level of recycled water and alternative water supplies includes:

- improving institutional arrangements and removing barriers to delivering recycled water and integrated water management solutions
- increasing recycled water use at Hunter Water treatment plants
- working with industrial customers to increase the supply of recycled water for industry schemes, which will use a combination of recycled water, stormwater harvesting and groundwater
- working with local councils to deliver local recycled water schemes at local sporting fields and parks - irrigation schemes will use a combination of recycled water, stormwater harvesting and groundwater
- working with local councils and developers to explore viable opportunities for recycling in new residential developments.

Where are we now

Recycled water schemes in the Lower Hunter produce around 8 billion litres of recycled water each year, which is the equivalent of around 12% of the total wastewater generated. Of this amount around 6 billion litres per year replaces drinking water. Recycled water is used for a range of activities that do not require water of drinkable quality.

Target for recycled water use

The program is estimated to increase the volume of recycled water and alternative water supply by 1.3 billion litres per year. This is an increase of 15% on current levels.

Key features

- Increase recycled water supply by up to 1.3 billion litres per year
- Reduces demand on drinking water supplies
- Provides rainfall-independent water supply
- Helps delay the need for major water supply augmentation in the future
- Reduces volume of wastewater released to waterways
- Supports liveable communities by providing rainfall-independent supply to irrigate parks and sporting fields

