

## Recycled water and your home

In Melbourne, we use billions of litres of drinking water every year. However, not all of it is needed for uses such as garden watering and toilet flushing. Recycled water is a sustainable alternative, as it replaces drinking water for those uses that don't really need it. You can recognise the homes that use recycled water by the purple coloured taps and meters their recycled water is supplied through.

### What is recycled water?

You may not realise it, but we're all an important starting point in the process to produce recycled water. The sewage from our homes is transferred to a state-of-the-art treatment plant where it undergoes a rigorous treatment process. It's produced to what is called Class A standard, and we work hard to ensure it meets the Australian Recycled Water Guidelines as a high quality and safe water supply. Recycled water is suitable for many household purposes, but not for drinking or other personal uses. It's supplied to your toilets, to your laundry for your washing machine and to taps in both your front and backyard.

Learn more about the treatment process at [southeastwater.com.au/recycledwater](https://southeastwater.com.au/recycledwater)

#### Benefits of recycled water

- Make a positive contribution to the environment.
- Save money on your water bill.
- Enjoy a lush, green garden all year round without needing to lay fake turf or plant a drought resistant garden.

#### There's a lot to like!

With recycled water, you'll be part of a growing community across Melbourne's south east that is already accessing the benefits of recycled water and helping to ease the demand on our drinking water supplies.



## At home, use recycled water to

- ✓ Flush toilets
- ✓ Water plants and vegetables in the garden
- ✓ Wash clothes
- ✓ Water lawns
- ✓ Wash cars (on the lawn only)
- ✓ Clean outside areas, including furniture
- ✓ Fight fires
- ✓ Wash and feed pets (excluding pigs)

## At home, don't use recycled water to

- ✗ Drink
- ✗ Cook with or use in the kitchen
- ✗ Shower or bathe
- ✗ Fill swimming pools or spas
- ✗ Operate evaporative cooling systems
- ✗ Fill children's water toys

It's good practice to inform all visitors to your home about recycled water and what it can and cannot be used for.

If you do accidentally drink it, don't panic. The likelihood of falling ill is extremely low because it is such a high quality and thoroughly treated water supply. However if there are signs of illness, please seek medical advice.

### Purple pipes – standing out for good reason

You can identify recycled water by its purple pipes, taps and meter. Recycled water fittings should not be changed or painted over in any way as the colour helps to avoid confusion with your drinking water supply.

Our conditions of connection to recycled water require your home to have a purple recycled water tap in its front and backyard, and a *Recycled Water, Do Not Drink* sign displayed within 15 centimetres of these.



## What do I need to know?

### Your bill

We read your drinking water and recycled water meters to measure the volume of each type of water you've used. We use this to calculate your bill.

For each of your drinking water and recycled water supplies, your bill will include a usage charge for water used in the previous quarter. These will be listed separately on your quarterly bill.

### Stormwater runoff

Your garden and lawn will love recycled water as it has a higher nutrient level than drinking water. However, recycled water isn't good for the stormwater system. To prevent recycled water running off your property and into the street and gutter, simply wash your car on the lawn instead.

### Toilet talk

In warmer months, unless you flush your toilets every few days the inactive water in the cistern may develop a slight odour. As well as flushing regularly, you can use a toilet or in-cistern product to mask or reduce any colour or odour.

### Clothes washing with recycled water

Just like using drinking water to wash clothes, different detergents can produce varying wash results. Choose which detergent works best for you when using recycled water in your washing machine.

### Expanding our network

We're working to expand our recycled water network each day. We have a large distance to cover and this takes time, so our recycled water infrastructure may not have reached you yet. We'll let you know by mail when your recycled water supply is ready. In the interim, you'll have drinking water supplied through your purple taps and meter.

## Approved for use

Until your home is commissioned, a locking device will be placed on your water meter to restrict the supply. Your plumber is responsible for performing the three required inspections of your home's plumbing with the relevant authority before the locking device can be removed.



## Plumbing checks – both ours and yours

Each year, we audit the recycled water plumbing at selected houses. This ensures it meets regulatory requirements and our own conditions for connection.

We also recommend that you conduct your own plumbing check once a year to ensure the right water supply is connected to the outlet it's intended for.

It's easy to conduct your own plumbing check:

1. **Turn off the stop valve on your drinking water meter** and test your toilets, indoor taps and outdoor taps. Your recycled water toilets and outdoor taps should run as normal, but the indoor taps should run out of water after a few seconds. If not, this could indicate a cross connection.

**Note:** When you turn your drinking water meter valve back on, make sure all drinking water taps are turned off. You can then slowly turn them on to allow trapped air to escape.

2. **Turn off the valve on your recycled water meter** and test your outdoor recycled water taps. If they keep running, this may indicate a cross connection. Likewise, test your indoor taps and appliances. If they don't run as normal, they could be connected to recycled water instead.

If you think you may have a cross connection, call us on **131 694** and ask to speak to our Plumbing Team Leader.

## Gardening with recycled water

Sustainable and full of nutrients, recycled water is truly the new 'green' in gardening.

From trees to shrubs, flowers to turf, vegetables and climbers, recycled water helps many plants to flourish and thrive. Just keep an eye on any rose, citrus, azalea or camellia seedlings though, as they can be sensitive to recycled water's salt content while they're being established.

### Watering tips

Recycled water is a sustainable water source, but it's still important to get the best out of your supply. Here are some tips:

- Water at the roots, not the foliage.
- Regular, deep watering in the morning will keep your plants healthy.
- Apply mulch and compost to help retain moisture.
- Group plants with similar needs for efficient watering.

### Replacing your purple tap handles, hoses and signs

If you need to replace any of your recycled water taps and fittings, a reputable plumbing supply store is the place to go.

### Landscaping with recycled water

With recycled water, your new garden will thrive. If setting up an irrigation system, make sure you have the right fittings to connect to your recycled water taps. It's also important that your recycled water meter is not moved or painted over. If you're thinking of moving your meter, call us as only South East Water can do this for you.

## To contact us

For more information about recycled water, visit [southeastwater.com.au/recycledwater](https://southeastwater.com.au/recycledwater)

### Phone

Account enquiries	<b>131 851</b>
Faults and emergencies	<b>132 812</b>
Hearing impaired service	<b>133 677</b> (ask for 131 851)
Interpreter service	<b>(03) 9209 0129</b>

### Email

[southeastwater.com.au/enquiries](mailto:southeastwater.com.au/enquiries)

### WatersEdge

201 Wells Street Frankston VIC 3199  
PO Box 2268 Seaford VIC 3198

[southeastwater.com.au](https://southeastwater.com.au)