

Reclaimed Water Policy

**For more information contact
Shoalhaven Water**

City Administration Centre

Bridge Road (PO Box 42)
Nowra NSW Australia 2541
P: (02) 4429 3214
F: (02) 4429 3170
water@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au
www.shoalwater.nsw.gov.au

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1 PURPOSE

To provide a commitment to the safe and sustainable management of reclaimed water. The policy provides a basis for the development and operation of reclaimed water management schemes involving Shoalhaven City Council's wastewater treatment facilities.

2 STATEMENT

Reclaimed water is recognised as a valuable resource in the urban water cycle management. Up to 30% of the treated wastewater produced in the Shoalhaven is currently recycled onto land.

A range of State and Federal Government guidelines have been developed to assist water authorities in the development and management of reclaimed water schemes. More recent guidelines (EPHC, 2006) place increased emphasis on health risk management similar to the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2004). The 2006 reclaimed water guidelines encourage water authorities to develop a robust management framework including clear statement of goals/values, scheme development processes and having appropriate operating and management practices in place. A well-defined policy, development and management framework will be essential in gaining NSW Government and community approval/support for new schemes.

3 PROVISIONS

Shoalhaven City Council will *responsibly and sustainably* manage reclaimed water by:

- Ensuring that protection of public health, environment and water resources are of prime importance and that reclaimed water is 'fit for purpose' (for the intended end-use);
- Working with our employees, the Shoalhaven community, health and environmental regulators and other stakeholders to ensure reclaimed water schemes are planned, constructed and operated consistent with industry best practices.
- Adopting a risk management approach to ensure that potential risks are made explicit, are understood, managed and accepted by customers and other stakeholders.
- Regular monitoring and reporting of control measures and reclaimed water quality.
- Assessing all proposed schemes and initiatives consistent with long term economic, social and environmental sustainability criteria.
- Aiming to recognise and capture the economic value of reclaimed water over the long term by applying appropriate cost recovery principles in line with Government policies.
- Agreeing to the level of service to be provided with users of a reclaimed water scheme as part of the process of formulating use/supply agreements.
- Continuing to substitute potable water supplies with reclaimed water where appropriate.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

Shoalhaven City Council will *support* this Policy by:

- Implementing appropriate operation and maintenance procedures for all reclaimed water schemes.
- Reporting on outcomes of its reclaimed water management schemes.

- Having regular contact and meetings with stakeholders and end-users.
- Preparing Reclaimed Water Quality Management Plans.
- Conducting regular NSW Health Liaison Meetings.

5 RELATED DOCUMENTATION

This is a policy document only and is supported by the following guidelines that pertain to the design and management of reclaimed water schemes:

- Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managing Health & Environmental Risk (EPHC, 2006)
- Environmental Guidelines: Use of Effluent by Irrigation (NSW DEC, 2004)
- NSW Environmental Protection Licenses 1736, 4128 and 2419.

6 REVIEW

The Reclaimed Water Policy and associated development guidelines will be reviewed on a periodic basis and particularly where new guidelines and/or management information dictates.

7 APPLICATION OF ESD PRINCIPLES

The policy will permit the conservation of the City's water resource allowing more water to remain in the environment, reduce pumping and transportation costs and greenhouse gas emissions.