Plumbing checks – by Ballina Shire Council and you

All new houses will have their plumbing inspected by a Ballina Shire Council staff member before recycled water enters the property. This will make sure your house meets regulatory requirements and Council’s conditions. It is therefore safe to receive recycled water.

Council inspections will then occur every five years but we also recommend that you conduct your own plumbing check every year to ensure you are confident the correct water is going to the correct fixtures.

Here’s an easy plumbing check you can do yourself:

**Step 1**  
Turn off drinking water supply at the property boundary and rainwater tank pump and/or valve.

**Step 2**  
Turn on all internal taps. Taps should run dry.

**Step 3**  
Flush all toilets. Toilets should refill if connected to recycled water supply.

**Step 4**  
Turn on external taps. Your drinking water tap should run dry. Taps continuing to run are connected to recycled water supply and should be coloured purple and marked with appropriate signs.

**Step 5**  
Turn off recycled water supply and turn on drinking water supply and rainwater tank pump and/or valve. Run recycled water supply dry via external taps or toilet flushing.

**Step 6**  
Turn on internal appliances. Appliances that do not fill are connected to incorrect supply.

**Step 7**  
Turn on recycled water supply. Slowly turn on tap connected to recycled water supply that is located furthest from meter. This will purge all air from the pipeline while it is being recharged.

If you encounter problems whilst undertaking the check (e.g. sink taps don’t run dry when they should), you will need to contact a certified plumber or call council on (02) 6686 1415 for assistance.

* Figures taken from savewater.com.au.  
Visit this website for more water-saving tips around the home.
Your guide to using recycled water

In Ballina Shire we use millions of litres of drinking water every year. However not all of it is needed for uses such as garden watering, toilet flushing and clothes washing. 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 the 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 of producing recycled water. The wastewater from our homes is transferred to a state-of-the-art treatment plant where it undergoes a rigorous treatment process. It works hard to produce high quality recycled water which meets Australian Standards as a safe water supply.

Recycled water is supplied to your toilets, outdoor taps and cold water washing machines taps.

For more information on the treatment process, go to ballina.nsw.gov.au - water and wastewater.

Benefits of recycled water

• Take pressure off our drinking water supplies
• Water your garden all year round without relying on precious drinking water to do it
• Being prepared during potential times of drought
• Being prepared for population growth
• Cleaner waterways due to advanced treatment processes

At home use recycled water to:

• Flush toilets
• Wash clothes
• Water garden plants
• Wash cars and pathways
• Ornamental ponds

At home don’t use recycled water to:

• Drink
• Cook or use in the kitchen
• Shower or bathe
• Fill swimming pool
• Fill rainwater tank
• Play under sprinkler

What you need to do

It’s important that you 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 you falling ill is extremely low because it is thoroughly treated and monitored to assure its high quality. However any signs of illness should be acted upon by seeking medical advice.

You can identify recycled water by its purple pipes, taps and meter. Recycled water fittings all need to be marked with signage that says: Recycled Water Do Not Drink and these signs should not be changed or painted over in any way.

For further information about fitting and signage requirements please visit the dual water supply plumbing policy available at ballina.nsw.gov.au – water and wastewater.

Your toilets

About 10-15%* of all water consumed in the home is flushed down the toilet. That’s why using recycled water in your toilets is a smart move environmentally and financially.

Your laundry

15-20%* of all water consumed in the home is used in the laundry, making this room a high consumer of not only water but also energy. That’s why using recycled water in your cold water washing machine tap is also smart from a financial and environmental perspective.

Your garden

Your garden, herbs and lawn will love recycled water so use as much recycled water as you like, but do it wisely. Water at the roots, do it regularly in the morning and evenings and use a garden mulch to retain water.

Your bill

Council will read your drinking water and recycled water meter to measure the volume of each type of water you’ve used. We use this to calculate your bill. You will use less drinking water when using recycled water.
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Recycled water is perfectly safe to water your home grown herbs and vegetables.
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