

WATER RECYCLING: FAST FACTS

What is the water scheme about?

It's based on two simple principles:

1. Conservation of valuable drinking water resources, reduction in water consumption across the development area and using water appropriately and responsibly.
2. Elimination and/or to a large degree reduction of sewage and stormwater pollution through collection, treatment and onsite beneficial reuse of these valuable resources.

What are the benefits?

Reduction of drinking water use by 50 percent;

Reduction or rather almost complete elimination of sewage discharge from the Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) and Newington area. SOP is actually importing sewage from external sources to meet recycled water demands;

- Maximum beneficial reuse of sewage, through local treatment and production of a high quality recycled water for many non-potable uses;
- Significant reduction in stormwater pollution of creeks, rivers and beaches;
- Protection and enhancement of fauna and flora habitat in natural and constructed urban wetlands;
- Establishment of aesthetic, attractive and pleasant recreational areas.

How does it work?

The Water Reclamation and Management Scheme (WRAMS) is the main element of the water cycle system at SOP. It is the only scheme of its type in Australia and probably in the world. Currently, WRAMS has capacity to save more than 800-million litres of potable water annually.

A dual water reticulation network has been installed throughout Sydney Olympic Park, made up of separate potable and reclaimed water networks, to serve all new sporting, commercial venues and Newington residences.

Can you drink the water?

No. Recycled water from WRAMS is not designed for drinking. Recycled water from WRAMS is suitable for:

- Toilet flushing;
- Watering gardens, lawns and parks;
- Washing clothes;
- Fire-fighting;
- Washing cars, windows, brickwork;
- Filling ornamental ponds.

WATER SAVING: THE KEY TO BEING GREEN

The importance of saving water is nothing new to farmers and rural dwellers and to our grandparents' generation. But now city folk are also being urged to be more water savvy, though many are unsure of the best way to go about it. Today, ACA discovers one Sydney suburb which is setting the benchmark with a water recycling system.

In what was the Olympic Village, now known as the Sydney suburb of Newington, residents only draw about a third as much drinkable water from our dwindling dams as everyone else, thanks to an ingenious water recycling system.

According to the CEO of Sydney's Olympic Park, Brian Newman, the recycled water is treated to very high standards of filtration.

"It only takes about six or seven hours for water to leave someone's house, enter the recycling system through the plant and then back into the home again," Newman says.

This means residents like Rebecca and her neighbour Sherifa can water their gardens and wash their cars in the middle of the day.

"I often feel guilty about washing the car on the driveway with a hose, so I sneak into the garage with a bucket of water and scrub away there," says Sherifa.

It's hard to imagine why all new developments aren't implementing water recycling systems, but Rebecca reckons it's because people simply aren't thinking long-term.

"We've saved money long-term, you are also saving the environment and that's what we need in this day and age," she says.