

RECYCLING WATER

Recycling is an integral part of ensuring a sustainable water supply for greater Sydney and has an important role to play in the 2006 Metropolitan Water Plan.

The Government already recycles a significant amount of wastewater in a number of residential, industrial and agricultural projects. There are currently 14 large recycled water schemes in greater Sydney along with a number of small schemes that together recycle approximately 15 billion litres of wastewater per year.

This current recycling volume will increase by an extra 15 billion litres per year through new schemes currently under construction or due to commence in the next few years.

In addition, the Government has announced plans to significantly increase the amount of recycled water provided through new large scale recycling schemes to new homes, industry, open space and rivers in Western Sydney.

Together, this will bring the total volume recycled to more than 70 billion litres per year by 2015. This will make Sydney one of the largest urban providers of recycled water in Australia.

Western Sydney Recycled Water Initiative

This major new recycling scheme in Western Sydney, now well under way, will see recycled water used for homes, industry and agriculture.

The North West will be the first area to receive recycled water, as there are already several high quality sewage treatment plants in the region. Future development plans for the South West are still being finalised and a South West recycling scheme will be implemented as development proceeds.

Further, highly treated recycled water will be used to replace water currently released from Warragamba Dam for environmental uses and irrigation.

Other large-scale residential recycling

The best opportunity for large-scale residential water recycling is in new suburbs, where recycled water pipelines can be constructed at the same time as drinking water mains. This is often referred to as dual reticulation, meaning two sets of pipes – one for drinking water and one for recycled water.

Already Sydney has Australia's largest residential recycled water scheme at Rouse Hill, where currently 15,500 homes are using 4 million litres of recycled water each day, or 1.5 billion litres per year.

Once Rouse Hill is fully developed, the scheme will service around 36,000 homes and save more than 4 billion litres of potable water per year. Pipelines for the next 10,000 homes will be in place by 2006.

Recycling for industry

Recycled water can be substituted for industrial processes where drinking water is not required, although potential opportunities are limited. Of all the drinking water consumed in Sydney, industry consumes just 12%.

Nevertheless, the Government is working with the private sector to provide up to 6 billion litres of recycled water every year to industry and agriculture. Australia's biggest industrial water-recycling scheme is soon to be launched by BlueScope Steel in Port Kembla.

Other projects have been announced recently for industries at Camellia and Kurnell.

Also, a new sewer mining policy has been released which will make it easier for businesses to obtain wastewater for recycling.

For more information visit waterforlife.nsw.gov.au