

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Recycled Water Services Policy 2023

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Section 1. Preliminary Information

1.1 About this Document

1.1 About this Document

1.1.1 Introduction

This policy refers specifically to the Port Macquarie and Lake Cathie / Bonny Hills Dual reticulation Recycled Water Schemes. Both drinking water and recycled water are supplied to properties within the new development areas of Lake Cathie/Bonny Hills (Area 14) and Thrumster (Area 13), as well as to some commercial customers in Port Macquarie. Recycled water is also used throughout the Local Government Area for irrigation of public facilities, unsealed road dust suppression and public toilet flushing. The use of recycled water is a nationally accepted approach to responsible water and environmental management and forms part of Council's commitment to water conservation.

The drinking water and recycled water are supplied in two separate networks, and each household or commercial user will have two independent water supplies and meters. All recycled water pipes, fitting and fixtures are identified by purple-colouring and/or purple-coloured markings and warning signage.

The recycled water is treated to a high level, to ensure the water quality meets the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling (AGWR 2006) for dual reticulation supply. A multiple barrier treatment process is incorporated into the recycled water supply, which includes microfiltration, UV disinfection and chlorination. The provision of recycled water is a key objective of Council's Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Strategy, providing a sustainable resource to help secure water supply for the future. Residential connections to recycled water also receive BASIX (Building Sustainability Index) points towards a BASIX certificate, as implemented under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

This Policy serves as the Agreement for Supply and Use of Recycled Water, for all recycled water users. The user accepts the terms and conditions of this procedure upon accepting recycled water to the property.

1.1.2 Policy Statement and Scope

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (PMHC) is providing recycled water to its customers with the aim to benefit the community as follows:

- ensure integrated and sustainable water resource management through fit appropriate resource substitution, reducing non-essential uses of potable water;
- reduce the amount of effluent discharged into the environment, thus protecting land, surface and groundwater resources, and public health and amenity;
- ensure optimum utilisation of the recycled water system;
- ensure safe and effective utilisation of recycled water;
- respond to current regulatory reforms, legislative requirements and state-wide changes in water management practice, environmental sustainability challenges and stakeholder objectives which ensure optimal water usage and maximum environmental benefit; and
- provide the terms and conditions for Agreement for Supply and Use of Recycled Water, for all recycled water users.

This Policy together with the Agreements for Supply and Use of Recycled Water and the Recycled Water Site Management Plans form the implementation framework for the supply and use of recycled water in Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and are part of the approval conditions required under Section 60 of the Local Government Act 1993.

1.1.3 Responsibilities and Authorities

The Group Manager Community Utilities - Planning and Design is responsible and accountable for:

- Implementing and communicating this policy
- Monitoring compliance of this policy
- Ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated to meet external compliance.

The Recycled Water Services Policy is applicable to all persons and properties with the Local Government Area who may use, access the local water supplies.

1.1.4 References

The Recycled Water Services Policy is a local policy made under the Local Government Act 1993. PMHC provides water appropriate to the current and future needs of local communities in accordance with the relevant Acts, Regulations and standards. Some of the relevant Acts, Regulations and standards are listed below:

- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
- Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022
- Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500:2021: Plumbing and Drainage
- Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managing Health and Environmental Risks 2006
- Plumbing Code of Australia (NCC) 2022
- State Environmental Planning Policies
- North Coast Regional Environmental Plan
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Environmental Plan 2011
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Operational Plan
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Development Servicing Plan 2014
- Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011
- Public Health Act 2010
- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021
- Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957
- PMHC Drinking Water Management System.
- WSA 03-2011 Water Supply Code of Australia Version 3.2

Refer to PMHC's website for more information.

1.1.5 Glossary of Terms and Definitions

ADWG	Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*
AS	Australian Standard
Auspec	Standards for construction and design for water supply
Augmentation	Works to increase capacity of a treatment plant
Backflow	When the water in a pipe is forced to flow in reverse
CEO	1st tier management position and titled as such
Council officer	A member of Council staff
Cross connection	Any connection between the potable water supply system to any pipe or fixture, which under some conditions may allow contaminated water or other substances to enter the potable water supply
CSO	Community Service Obligation
Director	2nd tier management position and titled as such
DN	Diameter Nominal
DSP	Development Servicing Plan
EPA	Environment Protection Authority

kL	Kilolitre (1,000 litres)
kPa	Kilopascals
LGA	Local Government Area
mg/L	Milligrams per litre
ML	Megalitre (1 million litres)
NSW	New South Wales
PCA	Plumbing Code of Australia
PE	Polyethylene
PMHC	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Potable Water	Drinking water
Private service	Includes all water service assets (pipes, fixtures and fittings) on the customer side of the water meter
Recycled Water	Water that has been treated and provided for reuse
Reticulation	A network of pipes supplying water
RPZD	Reduced Pressure Zone Device
Ultra-filtration	Filtration through a medium which allows small molecules (e.g. water) to pass but holds back larger ones (e.g. viruses, bacteria)
Water	Refers to both potable and recycled water unless specified
WSAA	Water Services Association of Australia

* **Australian Drinking Water Guidelines:** *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011*, including the framework for management of drinking water quality, as amended or updated from time to time.

1.1.6 Process Owner

The Group Manager Community Utilities - Planning and Design is the policy owner and can be contacted for any information in relation to this policy.

1.1.7 Amendments

This is a new Policy. Previously the information for Recycled Water sat with the Recycled Water Information and Guidelines document. With the expansion of existing schemes and the addition of more schemes, this has been modified to a stand-alone Policy.

Section 2.

Services Provided

- 2.1 Supply of Recycled Water**
- 2.2 Recycled Water Quality**
- 2.3 Permissible Uses**
- 2.4 PMHC and User/Owner Responsibilities**

2.1 Supply of Recycled Water

2.1.1 Commercial Supply

Supply to commercial customers is determined on a case-by-case basis, and will be dependent on the availability of connection, the proposed use and the availability of supply.

When all recycled water users, commercial or residential, accept recycled water on the property via a metered connection and/or paying the usage account, the user accepts the terms and conditions of this Policy.

Agreeing and adhering to the terms and conditions set out in this procedure is mandatory for all users (and premise owners if different from the user) of recycled water.

The Property Owner owns and is responsible for maintain all pipes and fittings beyond the water meter, this includes piping to the property, the internal plumbing of any buildings and taps and fittings within or on the building. For more information on this Delineation of Responsibility, refer to section 2.2 of the Water Supply Services Policy 2023.

PMHC will supply a customer with recycled water to meet a customer's reasonable health and amenity requirements, except:

- in the case of planned or unplanned interruptions;
- in the case of severe drought or major operational difficulty;
- where PMHC is entitled to restrict or discontinue supply; or
- in the case of events beyond PMHC's reasonable control.

PMHC may cut off or restrict the supply of water to premises (refer *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - clause 144*), as outlined in section 2.3.4 of the Water Supply Services Policy 2023.

2.1.2 Residential Supply / Dual Reticulation schemes

PMHC operates two separate dual reticulation schemes - one at Lake Cathie, supplied by the Bonny Hills Plant, and one in the Thrumster area of Port Macquarie, supplied by the Port Macquarie Recycled Water Plant. The approved uses for recycled water in the dual reticulation areas are listed in Section 2.3.

Supply to residential homes is constant, serving as an alternate for drinking water to supply toilets, external taps for watering gardens, and in some homes the cold water tap connection for washing machines. The requirements for this supply will be outlined in the property's BASIX certification and/or development approval for new builds or modifications.

2.2 Recycled Water Quality

PMHC is committed to supplying high quality recycled water that consistently meets or exceeds the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling (AGWR 2006), our customer's expectations, and regulatory requirements. To achieve this, in partnership with our customers, NSW Health, NSW Office of Water and other relevant government agencies, PMHC will:

- understand, maintain, implement and continuously improve a Recycled Water Quality Management System that is consistent with the AGWR 2006 and to the satisfaction of regulators;

- use a risk-based approach in which all potential risks to water quality are identified and effective measures are taken to minimise any threat to recycled water quality at all points along the delivery path from catchment to tap;
- manage water quality at every point from the source to the consumer;
- undertake accurate, timely, and meaningful monitoring and reporting to supply prompt and relevant information to our customers and regulators that supports confidence in our recycled water supply network;
- ensure effective incident and emergency response plans are in place, reviewed and performed as required;
- ensure all staff and contractors involved in the supply of recycled water are aware of the importance of maintaining water quality at all times, including the provision of regular water industry training and qualifications in these areas;
- welcome customer feedback on water quality issues and respond effectively to meet customer concerns and needs;
- engage in the development of industry regulation and guidelines, and undertake targeted research and development aimed at better understanding and improving recycled water quality;
- use a Total Water Cycle Management approach to identify issues and inform long-term planning and strategising;
- continually review and improve our work practices by assessing the performance of our water supply against criteria including the AGWR 2006, whilst always considering our customers, our regulators, and our business drivers;
- incorporate stakeholder needs into our recycled water quality planning and management activities; and
- maintain effective disinfection of the recycled water supply distribution system.

PMHC has adopted a risk-based management approach to the management of recycled water quality and as such has adopted the following principles for the supply of recycled water, and in accordance with the AGWR:

- Protection of public and environmental health is of paramount importance and should never be compromised
- Protection of public and environmental health, dependent on the implementation of a risk-based management approach
- Application of preventative measures and requirements for water quality should be commensurate with the source of the recycled water and the intended use

2.3 Permissible Uses

Permissible uses for Recycled Water have been determined by PMHC in accordance with NSW Regulatory requirements and the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling (2006).

Recycled water that is supplied to residents through the dual reticulation system can only be used for the following purposes:

- Toilet flushing
- Cold water washing machine tap
- Irrigating gardens and lawns
- Filling ornamental ponds
- Washing cars, pathways and walls

Recycled water supplied for Council managed facilities and commercial customers has been approved for the following purposes:

- Toilet flushing

- Laundry / clothes washing
- Irrigating public gardens, open spaces and sports facilities
- Dust suppression
- Amenities wash down
- Vehicle washing and detailing
- Irrigating crops
- Wash down of hardstand and paths
- Site services wash water at Councils Wastewater facilities

Recycled water **cannot** be used for the following purposes:

- Drinking
- Cooking or other kitchen purposes
- Baths, showers, hand basins or personal washing
- Filling of Swimming Pools
- Water contact recreation (for example, playing under a sprinkler)
- Topping up of rainwater tanks

2.4 PMHC and User/Owner Responsibilities

2.4.1 PMHC Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of PMHC to:

- install, maintain and repair the recycled water system up to and including the recycled water meter
- use all due care and diligence to ensure, to the best of their ability, that recycled water is of a quality that meets appropriate guidelines and that the supply is uninterrupted, except during times of maintenance and/or emergency situations
- monitor, record and report on the quality and quantity of recycled water supplied to the User in accordance with PMHC's sampling and testing protocol and regime
- carry out inspections of Owner/User premises at various stages including at the time of new installations (i.e. prior to connection to the recycled water supply), every five years or at the request of a customer
- ensure management systems are in place to maintain and repair the recycled water network as required
- provide recycled water that meets or exceeds the standards outlined in the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling
- monitor the quality of recycled water in the network and report these results to Regulators
- inform and educate customers about the uses and benefits of recycled water
- independently audit all dual reticulated properties as required by the NSW Department of Primary Industries. All outlets for drinking and recycled water services are to be checked for cross-connections during these audits, and
- respond to customers reporting plumbing compliance issues by organising a site investigation to be performed.

2.4.2 User/Owner Responsibilities

It is the User/Owner's responsibility to:

- accept and adhere to this policy upon accepting recycled water to the property
- use recycled water in accordance with this procedure and the PMHC Water Supply Procedure and Water Conservation and Drought Management Procedure.
- ensure any works on private recycled water systems, including pipework, are:

- carried out in accordance with AS3500 and the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006*;
- designed and installed to prevent any cross-connections between the potable and recycled water systems; and
- ensure all work and maintenance on the recycled water system is undertaken by a NSW Licenced plumber
- seek Section 68 Approvals from PMHC prior to any changes or additions to either potable or recycled plumbing or systems on site
- ensure recycled water is used only for suitable purposes
- advise anyone entering your property that recycled water is on site and of its correct uses
- ensure recycled water taps are not removed or replaced with conventional taps (may increase the potential risk for misuse of recycled water and result in a health risk to the customer)
- ensure approved signage is displayed at all recycled water outlets, and any missing, damaged or faded signage pertaining to recycled water is replaced or repaired immediately
- ensure all recycled water fixtures are compliant with conditions in this procedure
- allow access to PMHC staff for the purposes of meter readings, inspection, maintenance and emergency situations
- maintain recycled water pipes and taps in the home or business, up to the outlet side of the water meter.
- ensure that no cross connections are made between recycled water and drinking water systems. Cross connection means connecting drinking water pipes, taps or hoses to recycled water pipes, taps or hoses. Appropriate purple accessories including hoses and sprinklers should be used to connect to the recycled water network.

In addition to the above, Commercial Users shall also be responsible for:

- prepare, implement and comply with the conditions of the approved *Site Management Plan*
- ensure all people who could potentially handle the recycled water and associated infrastructure are appropriately trained and briefed on the safe use of recycled water, and are familiar with PMHC's Recycled Water Policy and, if applicable, the appropriate sections of the *Site Management Plan*
- take out and maintain public liability insurance and workers' compensation.

2.4.3 Concerns or complaints

If a customer identifies an issue with recycled water quality or suspects that there is an issue with their supply, they should contact Council immediately so that appropriate action can be taken. Council has an internal process for managing complaints or potential issues relating to the supply of recycled water, to minimise risk and ensure that NSW Health requirements relating to supply and use of recycled water are met.

Section 3. New Connections

- 3.1 Connecting to Recycled Water**
- 3.2 Household Plumbing**
- 3.3 Non-compliance of Internal Plumbing**

3.1 Connecting to Recycled Water

Under the Local Government Act 1993, the prior approval of Council is required for any plumbing work involving water supply or recycled water systems and the work must be carried out in accordance with the NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006. Before the commencement of any plumbing work on dual reticulated premises, builders, property owners or their nominated agents must submit a Section 68 Application under the Local Government Act with Council with the relevant council fees.

All commercial user Section 68 applications submitted to PMHC's Development and Environment Department with proposals for dual plumbing arrangements and use of alternative water sources, are to be referred to the Water and Sewer section, prior to the issuing of the approval.

Council encourages all residential areas that have a water service in designated dual reticulated areas to be connected to both supplies.

The installation of drinking and recycled water services is to be executed by, or supervised by, a license plumber in a usual manner in accordance with the NSW Plumbing and Drainage Act (2011), Plumbing Code of Australia, Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZ) 3500.

3.1.1 Connection of Commercial User

Where the uses differ substantially from domestic uses of the applicant is responsible for non-domestic infrastructure (pumps, water mains etc) or Non-Treatment Barriers are required, then the plumbing requirements shall be determined by Council on application and will be reinforced through an individual Site Management Plan (binding legal document between user and Council). For further details on PMHC procedures for applying for and implementing a water connection, refer to Section 3.1 of PMHC's Water Supply Services Policy 2023.

Commercial users will be required to prepare, implement and maintain a *Recycled Water Site Management Plan* to demonstrate acceptable practices for the safe and efficient use of recycled water. PMHC staff can assist in the initial preparation of a Site Management Plan if required. This plan is required to be approved by Council's Utilities Planning & Design Section, prior to approval for connection.

The Site Management Plan shall include:

- site details with appropriate maps
- accurate plans of all on-site plumbing (for potable and recycled water)
- specified uses and application of recycled water on-site
- times for recycled water use, if required
- run-off controls and stormwater management
- WHS policy/provisions for the use of recycled water
- on-site handling of recycled water
- maintenance of the recycled water system,
- auditing, monitoring and reporting requirements, and
- emergency response requirements.

Council regularly audits end users to ensure compliance with these conditions and reserves the right to cease supply of recycled water if a user is found to be non-compliant. End user awareness is maintained through regular contact with the users and an annual review of the Site Management Plans.

3.1.2 Connection to Dual Reticulation in Residential areas

Where a recycled water connection has been requested, Council will install both the drinking water meter and the recycled water meter within the property. The meters will be positioned together in

one corner of the property that fronts the street. For details on PMHC procedures for applying for and implementing a water connection, refer to section 3 of PMHC's Water Supply Services Policy 2023.

The purple-coloured recycled water meter will be installed beside the drinking water meter with approximately 300mm separation distance between the two meters. Like the drinking water meter, the recycled water meter will be installed above ground.

The recycled water meter coupling threads are different to those on the drinking water meter to prevent interchange of the meters.

3.1.3 Water Metering

Water meters are hired by owners but remain the property of PMHC. The property owner is responsible for ensuring the security and accessibility of the meter for reading and maintenance requirements. Further information around water metering and responsibilities can be found in section 3.2 of the Water Supply Services Policy 2023.

3.2 Household Plumbing

When carrying out plumbing in the dual water supply area, it should be remembered that the intention of the dual water supply is to conserve our drinking water resources by maximising the use of recycled water

3.2.1 Drinking Water Supply Plumbing

- In a dual water supply area, drinking water plumbing shall be connected as follows: Drinking water must not be connected to toilets and cold water washing machine tap
- One and only one drinking water outdoor tap must be provided (complete with hose connection vacuum breaker). The single outdoor tap must be located nearest to the swimming pool, if a swimming pool has been installed or must be relocated if a pool is contracted afterwards.
- Drinking water piping must not be installed within 100mm above ground or 300mm below ground of any parallel recycled water plumbing
- No cross-connections between drinking and recycled water supply systems are permitted at any point in the system

A strata/body corporate or similar style development may have one or more additional outdoor drinking water taps in common use areas depending on the nature of the proposed uses from those taps, to be approved by Council on a case-by-case basis. There must be one tap per dwelling/water meter, which allows for two taps for dual occupancies, secondary dwellings and the like, but does not apply in units and apartments that have no outdoor fixtures.

3.2.2 Recycled Water Supply Plumbing

In a dual water supply area, drinking water plumbing shall be connected as follows:

- Fixtures and fittings above and below ground must be clearly and permanently marked and labelled with Recycled Water – DO NOT DRINK in accordance to the Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZ 3500).
- Any underground recycled water pipeline must not be installed within 300mm of a parallel drinking water supply pipeline. The pipes may be laid in the same trench provided the 300mm
- separation is maintained. This separation can be reduced to 100mm when the pipes are located above ground.
- Above ground recycled water hose taps must be lilac in colour, have approved fittings with left handed threads on the outlets and have removable handles as per AS/NZ 3500.

- Dual reticulated properties must have at least one external recycled water tap but can have as many more than one as desired.
- All toilets and cold water washing machine taps must be connected to the recycled water supply line.
- If grey water is captured on a dual reticulated property it can only be re-used for outdoor purposes and in accordance with the NSW Guidelines (as applicable). No cross connections between grey water supply and recycled water supply are allowed.
- If a rain water tank is installed on the property the rainwater supply shall be independent and have no interconnection or top up device from the drinking water or recycled water supply. Rainwater can only be used for outdoor purposes, including pool-filling and top up and tanks may only have one outdoor tap.

3.2.3 Inspections

New development inspections will be carried out to ensure that proper plumbing standards are maintained. In dual water supply areas these inspections incorporate special requirements that apply to those areas. In addition, ongoing inspections will occur in dual water supply areas to ensure that the two water supplies are used for their intended and approved uses.

3.2.3.1 Plumbing During Construction

Three separate inspections must be completed by Council's Building Services after each of the following stages;

- Inspection 1 – Front of house run (meter to house)
- Inspection 2 – House internal & external
- Inspection 3 – Final inspection, all pipework exposed and prior to internal wall cladding to include watermain isolation and service verification

All inspections must be carried out by an authorised Council representative and cannot be conducted by private accredited certifiers. The inspections are carried out to ensure that usual proper plumbing standards are maintained and that the special dual water supply requirements are being adhered to. It is an important measure to protect public safety that occupation of a dwelling does not occur until a satisfactory inspection has occurred after the final commissioning and testing stage of works.

3.2.3.2 Ongoing Inspections

Ongoing cross connection inspections will be conducted by at least once every five years on every dual reticulated residence. The inspections will be carried out systematically by Council at no cost to the property owner (unless a cross connection is detected.)

If a cross connection is identified during the mandatory inspection, the owner will be responsible for having the problem rectified by a licensed plumber and also for paying Council's costs in inspecting and retesting the plumbing during and following remedial work. In addition, repairs / replacements required as a result of minor non-conformances not related to a cross connection are the responsibility of the owner to rectify, for example, non-compliant and or poorly identified signage, fittings and markers.

Homeowners are encouraged to undertake cross connection checks using the seven-step cross connection check for dual water supply properties, as detailed on PMHC website.

It is the responsibility of the owner and resident to inform all visitors of the correct use of recycled water.

3.3 Non-compliance of Internal Plumbing

Non-compliance with the requirements for recycled water plumbing and usage have been split into three categories. The level of non-compliance will drive the action to be taken. Compliance relates to the appropriate plumbing and fixtures being installed and operational, appropriately signed/labelled, and that usage is in line with approved uses.

Minor non-compliances include missing or incomplete recycled water signage or labels, or use of incorrect fittings. More significant non-compliances include cross-connections or unapproved uses of recycled water.

Any non-compliances that are identified will need to be rectified at no cost to Council. Once found, Council will arrange for interim supply of water to the recycled water fittings to ensure properties remain functional and liveable. However, ongoing need for this due to non-rectification of an issue or defect will incur further ongoing charges. Further information relating to disconnection of recycled water is outlined in the section below.

3.3.1 Property Disconnection from Recycled Water

Disconnection from the recycled water scheme (and subsequent reconnection to the potable water system) will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with NSW Health requirements. Note that most homes with dual reticulation recycled water supply will have this as a requirement of their BASIX approval for their build. If recycled water supply has been included in the BASIX certification and/or Development Application (DA) approval, a modification to the DA will be required, and a new BASIX certificate signed off, including any associated works needed for this new certificate. Further information regarding BASIX requirements can be found on the BASIX website (<https://basix.nsw.gov.au/iframe/basix-help>) or by contacting Council.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances deemed sufficient by PMHC senior management, disconnection from recycled water will only be approved if the BASIX and DA certificates allow for this.

Disconnection from the recycled water scheme can only be performed by PMHC staff, and all costs associated with disconnection will be the responsibility of the property owner. Disconnection will involve the removal of the recycled water service to the property, and the installation of a potable water meter in place of the recycled, connected to a secondary potable water service. The ongoing costs associated with this service will also be the responsibility of the property owner.

Section 4. Water Charges and Billing

4.1 Recycled Water Charges

4.2 Billing

4.1 Recycled Water charges

The two-tier structure of the recycled water charge matches that of the potable water charges as outlined in the Water Supply Services Policy 2023. Similarly, the recycled water charges that apply are determined each year through the Operations Plan process in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993. For current applicable costs for charges listed below see Council's 'Fees and Charges'.

For individual residential customers provided with both a potable water meter and recycled water meter a single water 'Access Charge' (\$/pa) will be applied. This will be equivalent to the greater of the two individual adopted Water Supply annual Access Charges. Recycled water usage will be measured through the recycled water meter and the 'Usage Charge' (\$/kilolitre) and is currently set at 80% of that applicable for potable water supply.

A combined water and recycled water 'usage threshold' of 270kL for a 20mm meter will apply, being the design quantity for an average residential house.

The annual 'Access Charge' for non-residential recycled water customers will be based upon the recycled water meter size. The 'usage threshold' for non-residential recycled water customers will be based upon the recycled water meter size or the 'capacity' the customer initially bought through Developer Charges.

The Usage Charge and annual Access Charge are currently set at 50% of the charges applicable for potable water for commercial and business customers connected to the Port Macquarie Recycled Water Supply Scheme. This is a temporary special incentive arrangement to encourage existing non-residential water customers within the Port Macquarie urban area to convert to the use of recycled water to reduce the demand upon the water supply network. The pricing/charging will be reviewed as the recycled water network expands.

Any other charges relating to recycled water (e.g. water meter installation) will be as per those for potable water, as outlined in Council's current Fees and Charges.

4.2 Billing

PMHC will issue water accounts which outline the recycled water that is supplied to a property, the resultant Usage Charge, and the recycled water service Access Charge.

Residential customers will be sent an account on a quarterly basis, unless otherwise agreed. Commercial customers with high water usage may be sent an account on a monthly basis.

The User will be required to pay the recycled water bill under the same terms and conditions as the potable water bill, outlined in Section 4.3 of the Water Services Supply Policy 2023.

4 Water Conservation

5.1 Efficient Use of Water

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5.1 The Efficient Use of Water

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (PMHC) encourages the efficient use of water. In accordance with the current *Local Government Act*, property owners, occupiers or managers must take any reasonable action to prevent waste and misuse of water. PMHC has developed a strategy to ensure conservation and demand management is a priority in the Local Government Area, with the aim of promoting efficient water usage and reducing water wastage.

The benefits of water conservation and demand management include:

- the potential to defer capital and recurrent expenditures in the water system by reducing excessive consumption;
- providing consumers with greater control over the size of their water bills by following the NSW Government's current *Guidelines for Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage* to increase the proportion of the bill based on usage; and
- improving environmental performance (such as reducing water extraction and energy consumption) by reducing waste and misuse of water resources.

PMHC's strategy for conservation and demand management includes the following components:

- water pricing reform by following the NSW Government's current *Guidelines for Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage*
- Water Conservation Measures, to encourage the efficient use of water and recycled water
- minimising losses in the water system, including a meter replacement program
- community education programs
- building code measures, including the promotion of NSW Government initiatives like BASIX, and
- investigating and developing water recycling schemes, such as recycled water and effluent reuse to substitute for potable (drinking) water.

5.1.1 BASIX – the NSW Government's 'Building Sustainability Index'

Introduced by the NSW Government as a world-first sustainability tool in July 2004, the BASIX is a major initiative to reduce the amount of drinking water consumed and greenhouse gas emitted by new homes throughout NSW. In the Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Government Area, the BASIX Policy includes a requirement for all new homes, from single dwellings to high-rise developments, to reduce the amount of drinking water used by 40% compared to homes built prior to the introduction of BASIX. This can be achieved through a range of water saving measures, such as water efficient shower heads, dual-flush toilets, use of recycled water, rainwater tanks, greywater treatment systems and more. From October 2006, BASIX also applies to alterations and additions to residential dwellings, swimming pools and spas.

If recycled water is a part of the BASIX certification for a property, any changes to be made relating to the use of these will trigger the need for a new BASIX review and certification. This may require further infrastructure changes to ensure water saving targets are made (e.g. removal of recycled water may require the installation of a rainwater tank or similar).

5.1.2 Water Conservation and Restrictions

The use of recycled water is an important part of water conservation, by reducing the need for and pressure on the supply of drinking water for non-drinking purposes. During water restrictions, there are some restrictions that apply to recycled water once the need for higher severity restrictions come into play.

Further information about water restrictions and water conservation practices can be found in the Water Supply Services Policy 2023.