

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

Is there a central source of information about the drought in the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area?

Yes, Dubbo Regional Council's [Dubbo Drought Hub](#) is your central online hub for information about the drought in the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area.

When did the Dubbo Region go onto water restrictions?

Dubbo Regional Council moved to:

- ? Level 2 water restrictions 1 June 2019
- ? Level 3 water restrictions 1 October 2019
- ? Level 4 water restrictions 1 November 2019

- ? Level 3 water restrictions on 30 March 2020
- ? Level 1 water restrictions on 27 July 2020

What is allowed under each level of water restrictions?

Residential – the [residential water restrictions table \(190.8KB\)](#) provides an overview of activities permitted under each level of water restrictions. Further information can be found on the Dubbo Drought Hub [Residential Water Restrictions](#) page.

Non-residential – the [Non-residential/commercial water restrictions table \(295.8KB\)](#) provides an overview of activities permitted under each level of water restrictions. Further information can be found on the Dubbo Drought Hub [Non-residential Water Restrictions](#) page.

I'm confused by all the terminology about types of water. Please explain.

- ? Potable water – drinking water and water used for food preparation (also referred to as town water).
- ? Non-potable – water that is not of drinking quality, but still may be used for many other purposes, depending on its quality.
- ? Groundwater – water that is present beneath Earth's surface in soil pore spaces and in the fractures of rock formations.
- ? Surface water – water on the surface of the Earth such as rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands.
- ? Greywater – the waste water generated from households or office buildings from

showers, baths, spas, hand basins, laundry tubs and washing machines.

- ? Dark Greywater – water from dishwashers and kitchen sinks (which have higher levels of chemicals, fats and other organic matter).
- ? Recycled water – reclaimed or recycled water is the process of converting wastewater into water that can be reused for other purposes. Reuse may include irrigation of gardens and agricultural fields or replenishing surface water and groundwater.
- ? Bore water – water that has accumulated over time in underground aquifers (water storages). A bore is drilled down into the aquifer and water is pumped to the surface for irrigation, town water supply (following additional processing), crops, stock water etc.

What is backwash water and how is it used in the Dubbo Region?

Backwash water is created in the production of potable (town) water for Dubbo City. Water is drawn from the Macquarie River and passes through filters that remove the larger particulates suspended in the water.

Over time the filters become clogged with these particulates and need to be cleaned. To achieve this, the flow of water from the Macquarie River is reversed and sent back through the filters dislodging the particulates. This resultant backwash water is then transferred to settling ponds to allow the particulates to settle out.

The resulting water can then be reused for irrigation purposes, evaporated off, released to the river (with approvals), or put back into the system for processing into potable water.

There are seven sites in Dubbo City which backwash water is connected to:

- ? Bennett's Park (0.8ha)
- ? Tidy Town Park (0.5ha)
- ? Wahroonga Park (1.2ha)
- ? Pavan's Land (currently under development – 6ha)
- ? Regand Park BBQ area (0.2ha)
- ? Lady Cutler South (6ha)
- ? Lady Cutler Oval (southern side only – 6ha)

RESIDENTS

Under Level 1 water restrictions, how much water can I use per day?

The daily target per person per day is 380 litres of water.

What's a typical break-down of 380 litres of water per person at home?

Level 1 water restrictions means you have to be resourceful in meeting your daily residential target of 380 litres per person. Check out a [what a typical break-down of 380 litres looks like](#) and let's all be wise with our water.

How do I calculate my daily water usage?

How to Read your Standard Meter



A You only need to read the **Black** numbers.

B White numbers on red background register hundreds of litres, tens of litres, litres, and if there is a fourth red dial tenths of litres.

Step 1: Read your meter (e.g.3584kL).

Step 2: Read your meter the following day at the same time (e.g.4,824kL).

Step 3: Subtract your second read from your first read (e.g 4,824kL - 3,584kL)

Step 4: To convert to Litres divide the answer you found in Step 3 by 1000 (The number of people in your household (e.g. based on 4 person family,1,240 L / 4 people = 310L p/person p/day).

How to Read you Smart Water Meter

Residents will soon be provided with instructions on how to register for the customer portal MyDRC Water, to access and monitor their own water usage.

You can still read your Smart Water Meter manually

Step 1: Read the numbers from left to right

Step 2: Top line displays Kilolitres - Reading Shown is 8 m³ which is equivalent to 8 Kilolitres.

Step 3: Bottom line displays litres - Reading shown is 329.70 Litres



Water consumption is charged per Kilolitre.

For more information on how to read your water meter see the 'How can I keep track of my water usage' section on Council's [Daily Water Usage](#) page.

How long can I shower for?

Dubbo Regional Council encourages efficient water use when showering – aim to shower for five (5) minutes or less.

Can I use my evaporative air conditioner/cooler? Are there any restrictions?

Yes, evaporative air conditioners/coolers can be used at home and there are no restrictions on their use as many residential households require them so as not to compromise the health, hygiene and safety of people.

When can I water my lawn and gardens?

Under Level 1 water restrictions, households can water outdoors each day as follows:

LAWNS AND GARDENS

Watering is to be attended by a resident or on programmable timed systems.

DAYLIGHT SAVING PERIOD

Watering permitted between 6pm and 9am

PERIOD OUTSIDE DAYLIGHT SAVING

Watering permitted any time.

The daily target per person per day is 380 Litres. Check out a [what a typical break-down of 380 litres looks like](#) and let's all be wise with our water.

There is also the choice not to water at all.

So, can I water my garden or lawn with a soaker hose?

Yes, under Level 1 water restrictions devices such as micro sprays, soaker hoses and manual sprinklers are permitted to be used if attended to by a resident or on programmable timed systems.

Can I still water outdoors if I have a rainwater tank or bore?

Yes. The water restrictions are for the use of our potable water supply (town water). If the restrictions say 'Not permitted' for a particular use, this means that Council's potable water supply cannot be used for this purpose.

Rainwater tanks that are filled by Council's potable water supply are subject to the same water restrictions as town water). Water from another source (such as bore or rain water) can be used, however water is a finite resource and should be used wisely regardless of where it is sourced from.

Signage must be installed at premises identifying non-potable water is in use (such as recycled or bore water). Council will monitor and may conduct inspections and water quality testing to confirm the water source being used.

Can I lay new turf around my house?

Under Level 1 water restrictions, watering is permitted for turf establishment – with use of suitable ground preparation and soil wetting agents.

How do I keep my pool/spa running under water restrictions?

Under Level 1 water restrictions, the topping up of swimming pools is permitted, provided a pool cover is then used to reduce water loss. Pool covers can help reduce evaporation by up to 90% and are a very effective way of reducing the amount of water needed to top up.

The first fill of swimming pools or spas under level 1 water restrictions is also permitted, provided a pool cover is then used to reduce water loss.

Further information on swimming pools and spas can be found on the Dubbo Drought Hub [Residential Water Restrictions](#) page.

Can my child still play in an inflatable pool?

Yes under level 1 water restrictions inflatable and temporary pools are permitted. Don't forget pools with 30cm of water or more require fencing and Council approval is required for pools and spas over 2000L in capacity

Can I access free water?

Dubbo Regional Council is proud to support Team Rubicon's initiative Litres for the Land, where more than six million litres of potable water will be donated and delivered to farmhouse tanks in the area.

The water, which is from Dubbo Regional Council's potable town water supply, can be used for everyday household use including showering, washing clothes, and cooking.

Farmers seeking support from Team Rubicon can register their interest by getting in touch with Team Rubicon directly by visiting teamrubiconaus.org or by calling: (02) 8815 8113.

Can I use greywater at home?

Yes, bucketing of greywater is permitted under every level of water restrictions.

Collecting greywater from laundries, sinks, and showers can hold harmful bacteria and high salt levels as well as other chemicals. With care, and in line with the [NSW Guidelines for Greywater](#)

Reuse in Sewered, Single Household Residential Premises, greywater can be used on gardens and lawns.

A greywater diversion device whilst not encouraged is permissible if it complies with the NSW Greywater Guidelines (as above), including the requirement for subsurface irrigation only.

Can I wash my pet under Level 1 water restrictions?

Yes, there should not be any compromise for maintaining health, hygiene and safety for people or pets. This includes the provision of drinking water for your pet. Therefore, cleaning outdoor areas, such as animal pens or similar, for these reasons are also acceptable.

Wash your pet with a bucket or hand held hose fitted with an on/off nozzle. Clean animal pens with efficient high-pressure washers.

Can I wash my car at home?

Yes. Under Level 1 water restrictions washing cars, trailers, boats, boat motors and jet skis at home is allowed with efficient high pressure, low flow rate cleaners with trigger control are to be used. Buckets are permitted.

What are some simple tips my family can use to save water at home?

Council encourages everyone to be 'wise with our water'. Some top tips include:

- ? Take shorter showers (aim for five minutes or less) and use a water efficient shower head.
- ? Always run your washing machine on full load (where you can save up to 10 litres of water each wash).
- ? Wait until you have a full dishwasher before running it.
- ? Turn the tap off while brushing your teeth.
- ? Use greywater from laundries, sinks, and showers on gardens and lawn if safe to do so (in line with the NSW Guidelines for Greywater Reuse in Sewered, Single Household Residential Premises).
- ? Fix leaky taps and pipes you have put off doing to stop water loss.
- ? For outside, mulch, mulch and more mulch to help keep garden soils moist.

Dubbo Regional Council has collaborated with Smart Approved WaterMark to provide a range of top tips and resources to help you save water inside and outside your home. Resources are available on the Dubbo Drought Hub [Save Water](#) page.

BUSINESSES

Do businesses have to comply with restrictions?

Dubbo Regional Council recognises that water is crucial to regional economic activity, which is why we are providing support to our business customers during restrictions.

Businesses are expected to comply with the water restrictions as per the

[Non-residential/commercial water restrictions table \(84.3KB\)](#)

Any business can develop a voluntary WSAP and Council encourages local business operators to save water where possible.

So, what is a WSAP and what is the purpose of a WSAP?

Business water consumers have an important role to play in conserving Dubbo's water and reducing the likelihood that greater restrictions will be introduced.

A Water Saving Action Plan (WSAP) is a tool to assist business users in assessing their current water use levels and implementing changes that can be made to improve their water efficiencies. Benefits of completing a WSAP include:

- ? Improved management of water consumption resulting in reduced water-related costs,
- ? Change in staff behaviour and strengthened reputation,
- ? Development of a plan for the continuity of activities, where appropriate, in times of drought, and
- ? Support of broad community efforts in reducing the likelihood that greater restrictions are introduced in the future.

Types of measures that a business may identify in their WSAP include:

- ? Upgrading inefficient equipment (toilets, showers, tapware and machines),

- ? Identifying and fixing leaks in systems,
- ? Include water wise information for customers/guests, and
- ? Setting water consumption reduction targets.

Watering of landscaped areas and lawns at your business

Under level 1 water restrictions, businesses can water landscaped areas and lawns anytime of the day.

There is also the choice not to water outdoors at all.

I would like to lay turf outside my business; is this permitted?

Like residential water restrictions, under Level 1 water restrictions, watering is permitted for turf establishment –with use of suitable ground preparation and soil wetting agents.

I am an accommodation provider; can I top up or fill my pool?

Yes, under Level 1 water restrictions you can top up your swimming pool, providing a pool cover is then used to reduce water loss.

The first fill of your swimming pool is also permitted. Again, a pool cover must then be used to reduce water loss.

I operate a facility that has a hydrotherapy pool; are there any restrictions for these pools?

No, under Level 1 water restrictions there are no restrictions to health and wellbeing facilities.

Can businesses wash down hard areas such as driveways, paths or even windows?

Washing down of hard areas, driveways, roofs, walls and paths and cleaning windows is permitted under Level 1 water restrictions for health and safety reasons or to continue core business activities.

Efficient high pressure, low flow rate cleaners with a trigger control are to be used for cleaning purposes. Buckets are also permitted.

What are the restrictions for pet care or animals?

Similar to residential water restrictions, there should not be any compromise for maintaining

health, hygiene and safety pets/animals. This includes the provision of drinking water, washing pets and cleaning outdoor areas, such as animal pens or similar.

Wash pets/animal with a bucket or hand held hose fitted with an on/off nozzle and clean animal pens with efficient high-pressure washers.

Water use for car wash facilities and car yards

Under Level 1 water restrictions, water use is permitted for activities at car wash facilities and car yards.

Washing vehicles by hand is permitted with use of efficient high-pressure, low flow rate cleaners with a trigger control. Buckets are also permitted.

Water use for commercial cleaning businesses

Under Level 1 water restrictions, water use is permitted with the use of efficient, high-pressure, low flow rate cleaners with trigger control.

COUNCIL

What is Council doing to reduce its use of

town water?

Dubbo Regional Council have undertaken a thorough review of all Council's water usage and have put measures in place to ensure the current water usage is reduced, but also ensuring the needs of the community are met. Council has turned off the water for many of its own assets including selected open spaces and all median strips.

Does Council own, operate and manage Burrendong Dam?

No, Dubbo Regional Council does not own, operate or manage Burrendong Dam, rather the NSW Government through WaterNSW manages this water supply.

Where does Dubbo's groundwater come from and what is Council's allocation?

Dubbo Regional Council has an annual local water utility entitlement of up to 4.3 gigalitres from the Upper Macquarie alluvial aquifer. The aquifer is managed by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment where groundwater is owned by the Crown.

What government assistance is available for farmers across the Dubbo Regional LGA?

Council continues to monitor government drought stimulus and financial assistance packages available for farmers, rural businesses, rural landowners and communities across the Dubbo Region.

The NSW Government's Rural Assistance Authority has a range of assistance programs – covering economic, social and wellbeing programs – for farmers and rural business owners to access. For instance, the Emergency Drought Transport Subsidy, which is for use to assist with the cost of transporting fodder, water to a property for stock or domestic use, stock to/from agistment, stock to sale or slaughter.

The NSW Department of Primary Industry's Drought Hub also connects those affected by the drought with services and support.

At a federal level, the Australian Government's Farm Household Allowance, which is administered by the Department of Human Services, provides financial assistance to farmers and their families, while FarmHub is the Government's one-stop shop connecting Australian farmers with federal services and support.

There are many other assistance programs available such as (but not limited to) Rural Aid, CWA of NSW Drought Aid, Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul Society.

REPORTING AND PENALTIES

What happens to those who don't do the right thing?

Dubbo Regional Council compliance staff undertake patrols across the Dubbo Regional LGA to ensure compliance with restriction activities, both residential and non-residential/commercial.

If compliance staff see someone breaching water restrictions they will issue a breach card that provides an overview of the breach, which is then followed up with a written warning letter. Any subsequent offence will incur an on the spot fine of \$220.

What do I do if I see someone breaking the rules?

Report it. You can report a breach by filling out an online [Suspected Water Restriction Breach Form](#). Take photographic evidence if possible as it would help council to investigate the issue. You can also contact Dubbo Regional Council by email at council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au or by phone 02 6801 4000.

Please provide as much detail as possible so Council can investigate the matter.