

## About recycled water

### Where does recycled water come from?

The recycled water will be supplied from the Bendigo Recycled Water Factory at the Bendigo Water Reclamation Plant in Epsom and is treated to what is referred to as 'Class A' water. This is the highest quality class of recycled water.

### What is Class A recycled water?

Class A recycled water is treated to a standard suitable for non-drinking domestic use using advanced treatment processes that are carefully controlled and monitored. Recycled water is supplied to customer homes through a third (purple) pipe system.

### Does it look different to drinking water?

You may notice from time to time that the water has some slight colouration. This is normal. There is no need for concern as the water is treated to a very high standard and will still be perfectly safe to use.

### Do water restrictions apply to recycled water?

While recycled water will not be subject to water restrictions, Permanent Water Savings Rules will apply to its use. These rules aim to encourage ongoing water conservation and best practice water use. Like all water resources, recycled water should always be used wisely. For more information on Permanent Water Savings Rules >click here.

### How does recycled water benefit the environment?

It will reduce household demand for drinking water, saving water in our reservoirs. Also, reusing water that is treated by state-of-the-art treatment facilities means less wastewater entering our waterways.

## Recycled water connection

### Who will make sure that the recycled water is connected correctly?

Your builder or plumber makes an application to Coliban Water to connect, the same as they do for drinking water. The Plumbing Industry Commission will then check your plumbing at three stages of the fitting to ensure that it is properly installed for recycled water. Your recycled water meter will not be unlocked until your plumber provides Coliban Water with proof that the Plumbing Industry Commission has verified the connection.

### What are my responsibilities when recycled water is connected to my house?

- Maintain appropriate signs above your recycled water taps, ensuring that they are easy to see and read. It is your responsibility to replace any missing or damaged signs.
- Inform visitors and family members about the appropriate uses of recycled water.
- Ensure that all plumbing work on your property is carried out by a licensed plumber and that they are aware that your property is connected to recycled water
- Use approved recycled water taps with removable handles to prevent children accidentally misusing recycled water. Remove the recycled water tap handles when not in use to safeguard from theft.
- Perform an annual cross connection check.

**How much does it cost?**

There is no stepped pricing system for recycled water, which means that all recycled water use will be charged at the same rate, no matter what volume is used.

Up until June 2013, the cost per kilolitre for recycled water is approximately 80% of the cost of drinking water (this comparison is to the price per kilolitre for the first step of our drinking water stepped tariff pricing structure for the central area of our region).

There will also be an additional access charge for recycled water and this has been set at 50% of the drinking water fee.

Prices to apply from July 2013 will be determined by the independent regulator (Essential Services Commission). Part of this process includes consultation with Coliban Water and our customers.

**Will I receive a separate water bill for recycled water?**

No, you will receive one bill each quarter with different sections for drinking water, recycled water and wastewater charges.

## Plumbing requirements

**Who is responsible for the plumbing?**

The builder's plumber will be responsible for recycled water connection to the property service and installing the household's recycled water plumbing, just as they are for drinking water.

**How are the recycled water pipes and taps different from those providing drinking water?**

To ensure that recycled water is not confused with drinking water, the colour purple is used to identify recycled water pipes. This alerts plumbers that the pipe carries recycled water when future plumbing works are undertaken.

All outside taps that supply recycled water will also be purple. They are installed when the house is being constructed and will have removable handles, which allow the handles to be stored separately to prevent accidental drinking of the recycled water.

Warning signs with the words 'Recycled water – do not drink' must be fixed above each purple tap. These signs are to be installed by the plumber during house construction and must not be removed at any time. They have a limited life span due to sunlight and wear and tear. Once they deteriorate, it is your responsibility to replace these. New signs can be purchased from plumbing suppliers and are not expensive.

**Will I have recycled water taps and where will recycled water be connected to the house?**

As a condition of connection, you must have two recycled water taps – one at the front and one in your backyard. Internally, your toilets must also be connected to recycled water.

**How many drinking water taps do I need?**

There must be at least one outside tap connected to the drinking water supply, but we recommend that drinking water taps be installed front and back of your house.

## Using recycled water safely

### What can recycled water be used for?

The recycled water you will be supplied can be used for the following:

- ✓ Toilet flushing
- ✓ Garden watering including vegetable gardens
- ✓ Washing machine use
- ✓ General outdoor use such as car washing and dust suppression
- ✓ Fire-fighting purposes
- ✓ Water features and ornamental ponds – water may need to be changed regularly as algae may grow
- ✓ Irrigation of human food crops and pasture/fodder for livestock (excluding pigs)
- ✓ Livestock drinking water (excluding pigs)

### What am I not to use recycled water for?

The recycled water you will be supplied is not to be used for the following:

- ✗ Drinking
- ✗ Cooking or kitchen purposes
- ✗ Bathing or showering
- ✗ Laundry
- ✗ Filling swimming pools or spas, including children's wading pools
- ✗ Children's water toys
- ✗ Any and all uses involving contact with pigs

### How do I know that the recycled water is safe?

The Bendigo Recycled Water Factory at the Bendigo Water Reclamation Plant in Epsom produces high quality 'Class A' recycled water that is treated to EPA Victoria and Department of Health standards. The treatment processes are monitored closely to ensure that these guidelines and high standards are constantly met.

### What kind of testing is done on the recycled water?

The Bendigo Recycled Water Factory has 24 hour online monitoring equipment to monitor critical water quality indicators. If any of these do not comply with guideline requirements, the factory will automatically shut down to stop supply to the pipeline. The recycled water is also monitored within Spring Gully Reservoir to ensure the quality of the recycled water is consistent and low risk.

### Can I drink recycled water?

Although recycled water has been treated to very high standards, it is not treated to Australian Drinking Water Guidelines; therefore, it is not suitable for personal uses such as drinking, cooking or bathing. If you do accidentally drink it, do not panic as the likelihood of illness is extremely low. If you accidentally drink recycled water and experience any signs of illness, seek medical advice.

**Can I water my vegetable garden with recycled water?**

Yes, you can. It is safe to handle and eat vegetables that have been grown with Class A recycled water. As a normal hygiene practice it is recommended that all vegetables be washed before eating them as there may be disease-causing micro organisms present in soils and fertilisers (for example compost or manure).

Although recycled water is slightly saltier than drinking water, any effects on the plants should be minimal unless you have impermeable soil (i.e. poor soil drainage where it takes a long time for water to soak in) or if you spray recycled water onto sensitive plants (eg carrots, lettuce) in the heat of the day.

**Can I wash my car with recycled water?**

Yes, it is perfectly safe to use on your car. Recycled water contains nutrients that are good for the garden but not good for the storm water system, as it can pollute waterways. It is therefore preferable to wash your car on a lawn. If this is not possible, try to avoid water running into the storm water system.

**Is it safe if I am sprayed with recycled water while watering the garden or washing my car?**

Yes it is. Class A recycled water has been treated to a high standard, making direct contact safe – even wet clothes are safe to wear.

**Is it safe for children to come into direct contact with recycled water?**

Although it is safe for children to come into direct contact with the recycled water, water toys and playing under sprinklers are not considered acceptable as children can swallow water while undertaking these activities.

**Do I need to wash my hands after being in contact with recycled water?**

If you have been in direct contact with recycled water, there is no great need to wash your hands before undertaking further activities. It is advisable, however, to wash hands after gardening or agricultural activities before eating and drinking, as disease-causing micro organisms may be present in soils, fertilisers (such as compost or manure), and other irrigation sources.

**Why can't I fill my swimming pool or spa with recycled water?**

Filling swimming pools or spas with recycled water is not considered acceptable as people can swallow significant amounts of water while in the spa or pool, and Class A recycled water does not meet Australian Drinking Water guidelines.

**Is it safe to use parks and other public areas that have been irrigated with recycled water?**

Yes, the high standard treatment process makes the recycled water safe for irrigation, not only for public open spaces such as parks and sporting grounds, but also for irrigating human food crops, pasture and fodder for stock (excluding pigs) and non-human food crops such as flowers and turfs.

**Is it safe for my pets to drink?**

Yes. Due to the high standard of treatment, it is safe drinking water for pets such as dogs and cats, and stock such as cows and sheep. However, it is not safe for pigs due to particular sensitivities. Under current Victorian environmental regulation, pigs must not come into contact with recycled water at any time or be fed fodder and pasture grown with recycled water.