

FACT SHEET



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HOW RIVERINA WATER IS HELPING TO REDUCE URBAN SALINITY



Operating the System

Riverina Water does not discharge water to ground, all process water (after suitable treatment) being recycled or returned to the river. When breaks occur in the pipe system, water will run to waste until the section is isolated for repair.

The response time is kept to a minimum, and valves are usually being turned off within half an hour of a burst occurring. Although there are around 10 to 15 burst mains per month, the practice of giving immediate attention (day or night) results in an insignificant impact on the moisture content of the city's soil.

Small water leaks in mains or service pipes can take a little while before they become evident by a damp patch of ground. In these instances, repairs are usually carried out on the next working day, so again, the quantity of water that might be contributing to a rising water table is small.

All leaks, both large and small are now recorded on a database, which gives further assurance that attention has been given.

Underboring

Riverina Water uses an underboring machine to lay pipes under existing road pavements and driveways.

This practice reduces the number of times that existing surfaces are disturbed and reinstated, but does require water to be fed through the auger to lubricate the digging surface. The wastewater from this process is now collected by pumping into a tanker so that neither the water nor its suspended matter is discharged to the surrounding ground or drains.

Leak Detection

Water leaks which could cause the most damage or have the greatest effect on the salinity problems are the larger leaks that come to our attention soon after they occur.

Riverina Water has also been active in checking for smaller leaks and other water losses. Sample areas at Turvey Park and Glenfield have been checked on a house by house basis, and while several houses were found to be losing water from the toilet cistern, there were very few other leaks. Testing of water mains in Turvey Park and Calvary Hospital area did not reveal any noticeable losses.

Unaccounted for Water

Water extracted from the river and bores is measured by large bulk meters and over a year this volume is compared with the volume of water measured through all the customers individual meters. The difference is usually about 14 percent unaccounted for, but including such things as evaporation, flushing mains, firefighting, repairing burst mains, faulty customer meters, and illegal use of water. In the past bulk meters have only provided approximate readings and Riverina Water is progressively replacing these meters with the more accurate magnetic flow type. Comparisons will then be possible within different zones of Wagga Wagga and areas where discrepancies are higher can be further investigated.

Information & Education

Riverina Water gives strong support to the wise use of water, by involvement with the Urban Salinity Group, the Waterwise Programme, and through publicity in advertising and editorial contributions when water is featured in the regional press. Riverina Water contributes part of the Water Week display in both equipment and personnel.

A range of helpful and supportive fact sheets is available on our website www.rwcc.com.au and are also on display at 91 Hammond Avenue, Wagga Wagga.

Plumbing inspectors are happy to give advice on household plumbing and leak detection and can be contacted on 69220671.

Water Pricing

Beginning in 1994 Riverina Water County Council (then Southern Riverina County Council) moved to what has been called two part pricing of water. The historical practice of setting a water rate with a minimum payment, and then granting a matching allowance before excess would be applied, tended to encourage waste, particularly in the winter months when soil moisture may already be excessive. The two part pricing which generally has a stepped tariff price per kilolitre for all Wagga Wagga users, is recommended by the Independent Tribunal and the Water Wise programme as the way to discourage waste. Since moving to this system the average annual water use per customer has fallen by 8 percent.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Be water wise in the garden

- ✓ Buy a tap timer so you can't leave taps on too long, or set an alarm clock to remind you.
- ✓ Water before 10 am and after 5 pm to reduce water loss through evaporation. Avoid watering on very windy days and mulch garden beds.
- ✓ Avoid fine mist sprays, use low trajectory sprinklers.
- ✓ Sweep paths rather than water them and use the leaves for mulch.

Divert roof water from your rubble pit if you have one

- ✓ Connect to the storm water system if possible. Install a water tank and pump the water to the street if the water cannot be used on the garden.

Check water pipes for leaks

- ✓ Turn off ALL taps on property. Check water meter. If it is turning, call a plumber to identify and repair the leak.

If you think your house may be salt affected

- ✓ Contact a consulting engineer for an inspection. They are listed in the yellow pages. Look under Engineers then Consulting Engineers.
- ✓ Contact Wagga Wagga City Council for salinity information. Phone 6926 9511. Or contact Riverina Water County Council for water supply information. Phone 6922 0660.

If you see unattended water running to waste in the street

- ✓ Contact Riverina Water County Council on 6921 4170 (all hours) so that the necessary repairs can be made without delay.