

5.9. WATER RESTRICTIONS LEVEL AMENDMENT

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DEPARTMENT Water and Wastewater

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Water Restrictions Schedule within the Douglas Shire.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (the Act) Douglas Shire Council has the power to restrict water supply due to climatic conditions or for water conservation. Every spring season Douglas Shire Council have activated water restrictions within the shire due to the lack of rain and the significant drop of creek water intake levels.

The water restrictions are in place to help manage water demand and limit the number of water licence extraction exceedances.

The Douglas Shire Council community requires a greater water resilience and Council needs to encourage our community to be water wise users of potable water for environmental sustainability.

This updated water restrictions schedule introduces a level 0 (water conservation measures), which provides the opportunity for water users to practice water conservation within our shire. The updated schedule also provides a clearer definition of irrigation systems as well as modifying the allowable watering times. The daily number of hours available for irrigation is the same between the current and newly proposed schedule, the updated schedule will allow more flexibility for the community.

BACKGROUND

Douglas Shire Council adopted a revised version of the water restriction schedule in the 16 April 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting to align most of our times, days, and definitions with Cairns Regional Council. This assisted in communicating the water wise message within our community and no longer created confusion from the time/day's misalignment between Douglas and Cairns from media outlets.

In 2019, there was a prolonged dry winter and spring period which instigated a level 3 water restriction level for a period of 7 weeks. Our water restriction schedule timings greatly affected the landscaping industry representatives and resort groundskeeping staff and instigated dozens of water restriction exemptions. There were several individual visits to resorts to discuss water conservation measures.

The engagement with the landscaping industry was productive with several good ideas generated to assist with water conservation.

The biggest challenge arose where the allowable watering times were suited to handheld hoses and constant monitoring and not to efficient automated irrigation systems. Various industry meetings with business owners were held to discuss a better outcome to suit their business needs.

The result was to allow some businesses to continue operating under restrictions with a water exemption. This was to encourage the business to engage in water conservation practices to reduce water use and still allow the business to operate and make a living.

This system result became the preferred method of the landscaping industry to allow garden watering via timer-controlled irrigations system during nighttime hours. With no practical method to monitor or enforce water restrictions however it was a system that relies predominantly on voluntary participation.

COMMENT

As we approach the 2021 winter/spring dry period, it is important to revise our water restrictions schedule to be more inclusive of all water users whilst providing guidance to the community that reflects the status of the available water supply.

Level 0 (water conservation measures) provides the first formal opportunity for the community within Douglas Shire to start water conservation practices. The introduction of level 1 restrictions is based on familiarising the community to the fact that water resources are diminishing. The introduction of level 3 restrictions is essentially based on water extraction licence requirements that carry significant fines to council if not complied with.

This latest revised version of the water restriction schedule includes a level 0 water restriction, a clearer definition of irrigation systems as well as modifying the allowable watering times. The change in the timings will assist large or small-scale gardens to be watered within the water restriction time schedule. Such as, watering on a level 1 water restriction with an automated or manual irrigation system is allowed from 6pm through to 8am for a maximum of 4 hours.

This provides the flexibility to run automatic irrigation systems late at night without Council officers having to process many water restriction exemption requests. As the water level restriction level increases the number of hours reduce for the use of manual or automated irrigation systems. The daily number of hours available for irrigation is the same between the current and proposed schedule, the proposed schedule just allows more flexibility for the community.

As we start to roll out the smart water meter program, the near real-time water consumption data will become accessible to residents and council and provide a clear picture on the water consumption habits allowing greater end user understanding and control.

PROPOSAL

That Council endorses the updated water restrictions schedule within Douglas Shire which encourages water conservation practices and allows greater flexibility for the community.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The updated water restriction schedule has been amended to implement a level 0 (water conservation measures), a clearer definition of irrigation systems and modifications of allowable watering times. This will assist resources within water and wastewater department, frontline and local laws unit to succinctly communicate the rules and regulations of water restrictions as well as reduce resources time in processing water exemption applications. Nil additional financial or resource requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic:	Nil
Environmental:	Douglas Shire Council community requires a greater need for water resilience, security and we need to encourage our community to be water wise users of potable water for environmental sustainability.
Social:	The updated water restriction schedule allows flexibility for the community and meets the business needs of the various industries within the shire.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 3 - Leading Environmental Stewardship

Our visitors and residents deeply value the unparalleled environment in which we live. We recognise our responsibility in protecting and preserving our natural world for generations to come. We understand the strong link between the environment and the economy: they are interdependent.

Douglas Shire will be at the forefront of environmental protection by developing strategies, setting policies, and working with all stakeholders to become the envy of and to inspire locations across Australia and the World.

Goal 3 - *We will continue to build water infrastructure so that the Douglas Shire may enjoy water security and water quality.*

Goal 4 - *We will partner with the community to educate and monitor.*

Operational Plan 2020-2021 Actions:

3.3.1 - *Progress the intake as a matter of urgency.*

3.3.2 - *Develop options for long-term water storage capacity of at least one billion litres.*

3.4.1 - *Implement an education campaign targeting schools and residential properties within the Shire to raise awareness of water security, how it is produced, impacts on the reef and how to live a more water efficient life.*

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Builder/Owner	Council makes a significant investment every year in the infrastructure that underpins the Shire through its capital works program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.
Information Provider	Council provides the community with important information on services, events, policies, rules, strategies, and any other relevant data that helps the community to stay informed. In performing this role, Council seeks to be open and transparent.
Regulator	Council has a number of statutory obligations detailed in numerous regulations and legislative Acts. Council also makes local laws to ensure that the Shire is well governed. In fulfilling its role as regulator, Council will utilise an outcomes based approach that balances the needs of the community with social and natural justice.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Water and Wastewater and Councillors

External: Various business industry groups

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Industry business engagement workshops

ATTACHMENTS

1. Schedule 1 - (Including a Level 0) Revised Water Restriction LEVEL 0 - 4 (May 2021) [5.9.1 - 6 pages]

LEVEL  RESTRICTIONS	Unless otherwise noted, the restrictions refer to all private, public, commercial and industrial sectors within the Douglas Shire Council water supply
Activity	Description
Watering plants/gardens/lawns	Watering cans/buckets allowed at any time.
	Hand-held hoses with trigger/twist nozzles allowed at any time and must be attended at all times.
Use of manual sprinklers (that are turned on and off by hand) or automated sprinklers, micro spray or drip watering irrigation systems	Irrigation systems are allowed between 6pm-8am on alternate days: Even Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun OR Odd Street No: Tue, Thu, Sat OR No Prescribed Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun Not permitted on Mondays
Filling swimming pools, spas and portable wading pools	Filling allowed at any time to the minimum operating level.
Operation of water features (ponds, fountains and water ornaments)	Allowed at any time. Water fountains/ornaments must recycle water.
Using water toys and facilities	Allowed at any time, provided they are operated in an efficient way to ensure that water is not excessively wasted.
Filling water storage tanks and dams	No restrictions.
Cleaning of vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers	Water must not be used except by means of: 1) Commercial car washing facilities that recycle water. 2) Hand held hoses with trigger/twist nozzles including high pressure, low volume cleaners. 3) Watering cans/buckets filled directly from taps. 4) Boat motors may be flushed and rinsed after use. Where possible, vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers are to be cleaned on grassed areas.
Washing windows/external house cleaning	Windows can be cleaned at any time using: 1) High pressure, low volume cleaners 2) Trigger hoses 3) Buckets or watering cans
Cleaning of paved areas/concrete surfaces	High pressure, low volume cleaners or hand held hoses are allowed for use at any time. The use of a bucket is permitted at any time.
Filling mobile water tankers (other than those directly used for fire fighting purposes)	Only by using Council approved/issued metered standpipes. Fees & charges and terms & conditions apply.
Construction Industry	No restrictions.
Fire fighting or other emergency purposes	Any time as reasonably required.
Supplying water for livestock and other animals	Any time as reasonably required.
Any other purpose not listed in the water restrictions (except fire fighting, public health and safety, domestic purposes)	NO unless an exemption has been approved.

Failure to comply with Water Restrictions may incur penalties as described in s43 (5) of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. Douglas Shire Council operates under the Water Conservation General Policy.

To apply for an exemption, please contact Douglas Shire Council and submit a form [WW1 - Application - Exemption During A Water Restriction](#)

LEVEL  RESTRICTIONS		Unless otherwise noted, the restrictions refer to all private, public, commercial and industrial sectors within the Douglas Shire Council water supply
Activity	Description	
Watering plants/gardens/lawns	Watering cans/buckets allowed at any time.	
	Hand-held hoses with trigger/twist nozzles allowed at any time and must be attended at all times.	
Use of manual sprinklers (that are turned on and off by hand) or automated sprinklers, micro spray or drip watering irrigation systems	Irrigation systems are allowed between 6pm-8am for a maximum of 4 hours on alternate days: Even Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun OR Odd Street No: Tue, Thu, Sat OR No Prescribed Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun Not permitted on Mondays	
Filling swimming pools, spas and portable wading pools	Filling allowed at any time to the minimum operating level.	
Operation of water features (ponds, fountains and water ornaments)	Allowed at any time. Water fountains/ornaments must recycle water.	
Using water toys and facilities	Allowed at any time, provided they are operated in an efficient way to ensure that water is not excessively wasted.	
Filling water storage tanks and dams	Water storage tanks and dams are not to be filled unless an exemption has been approved.	
Cleaning of vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers	Water must not be used except by means of: 1) Commercial car washing facilities that recycle water. 2) Hand held hoses with trigger/twist nozzles including high pressure, low volume cleaners. 3) Watering cans/buckets filled directly from taps. 4) Boat motors may be flushed and rinsed after use. Where possible, vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers are to be cleaned on grassed areas.	
Washing windows/external house cleaning	Windows can be cleaned at any time using: 1) High pressure, low volume cleaners 2) Trigger hoses 3) Buckets or watering cans	
Cleaning of paved areas/concrete surfaces	Using a hose is prohibited, cleaning allowed at any time using: 1) High Pressure, low volume cleaners 2) Buckets or watering cans	
Filling mobile water tankers (other than those directly used for fire fighting purposes)	Only by using Council approved/issued metered standpipes. Fees & charges and terms & conditions apply.	
Construction Industry	Unless an exemption has been approved, the use of water in construction is limited to buckets and handheld hoses with trigger/twist nozzles.	
Fire fighting or other emergency purposes	Any time as reasonably required.	
Supplying water for livestock and other animals	Any time as reasonably required.	
Any other purpose not listed in the water restrictions (except fire fighting, public health and safety, domestic purposes)	NO unless an exemption has been approved.	

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Activity	Description	
Watering plants/gardens/lawns	Watering cans/buckets allowed at any time.	
	Hand-held hoses with trigger/twist nozzles allowed at any time and need to be attended at all times.	
Use of manual sprinklers (that are turned on and off by hand) or automated sprinklers, micro spray or drip watering irrigation systems	Irrigation systems are allowed between 6pm-7am for a maximum of 2 hours on alternate days: Even Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun OR Odd Street No: Tue, Thu, Sat OR No Prescribed Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun Not permitted on Mondays	
Filling swimming pools, spas and portable wading pools	Filling allowed at any time to the minimum operating level.	
Filling water features (ponds, fountains and water ornaments)	Newly constructed ponds must not be filled for the first time. Existing ponds can be filled any time to the minimum operating level. Water fountains/ornaments must recycle water, lost water must not be replaced.	
Using water toys and facilities	Allowed at any time, provided they are operated in an efficient way to ensure that water is not excessively wasted.	
Filling water storage tanks and dams	Water storage tanks and dams are not to be filled unless an exemption has been approved.	
Cleaning of vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers	Water must not be used except by means of: 1) Commercial car washing facilities that recycle water. 2) Hand held hoses with trigger/twist nozzles including high pressure, low volume cleaners. 3) Watering cans/buckets filled directly from taps. 4) Boat motors may be flushed and rinsed after use for a maximum 5 mins. Where possible, vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers are to be cleaned on grassed areas.	
Washing windows/external house cleaning	Water must not be used except by means of a watering can/bucket.	
Cleaning of paved areas/concrete surfaces	Hosing is prohibited unless cleaning is required as a result of an accident, fire, health hazard or other emergency. The use of a bucket is permitted at any time.	
Filling mobile water tankers (other than those directly used for fire fighting purposes)	Only by using Council approved/issued metered standpipes. Fees & charges and terms & conditions apply.	
Construction Industry	Unless an exemption has been approved, the use of water in construction is limited to buckets and handheld hoses with trigger/twist nozzles.	
Fire fighting or other emergency purposes	Any time as reasonably required.	
Supplying water for livestock and other animals	Any time as reasonably required.	
Any other purpose not listed in the water restrictions (except fire fighting, public health and safety, domestic purposes)	NO unless an exemption has been approved.	

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LEVEL  RESTRICTIONS		Unless otherwise noted, the restrictions refer to all private, public, commercial and industrial sectors within the Douglas Shire Council water supply
Activity	Description	
Watering plants/gardens/lawns	Watering cans/buckets allowed any time. Hand-held hoses with trigger nozzles allowed between 6pm - 7am for a maximum of 1 hour , must be attended at all times.	
Use of water efficient automated sprinklers, micro spray or drip watering irrigation systems	Irrigation systems are allowed between 6pm-7am for a maximum of 1 hour on alternate days: Even Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun OR Odd Street No: Tue, Thu, Sat OR No Prescribed Street No: Wed, Fri, Sun Not permitted on Mondays	
Use of manual sprinklers (that are turned on and off by hand)	Not permitted at any time.	
Filling swimming pools, spas and portable wading pools	New swimming pools and spas must not be filled for the first time unless an exemption has been approved. Existing swimming pools can be filled to the minimum operating level.	
Filling water features (ponds, fountains and water ornaments)	New ponds must not be filled for the first time Existing ponds can be filled any time to the minimum operating level. Water fountains/ornaments must recycle water, lost water must not be replaced.	
Using water toys and facilities	NO unless an exemption has been approved.	
Filling water storage tanks and dams	Water storage tanks and dams are not to be filled with a hose unless an exemption has been approved.	
Cleaning of vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers	Water must not be used except by means of: 1) Commercial car washing facilities that recycle water. 2) Watering cans/buckets filled directly from taps. 3) Boat motors may be flushed and rinsed after use for a maximum 5 mins. Where possible, vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers are to be cleaned on grassed areas.	
Washing windows/external house cleaning	Water must not be used except by means of a watering can/bucket.	
Cleaning of paved areas/concrete surfaces	Hosing is prohibited unless cleaning is required as a result of an accident, fire, health hazard or other emergency. The use of a bucket is permitted at any time.	
Filling mobile water tankers (other than those directly used for fire fighting purposes)	Only by using Council approved/issued metered standpipes. Fees & charges and terms & conditions apply.	
Construction Industry	Unless an exemption has been approved, the use of water in construction is limited to buckets and handheld hoses with trigger/twist nozzles.	
Fire fighting or other emergency purposes	Any time as reasonably required.	
Supplying water for livestock and other animals	Any time as reasonably required.	
Any other purpose not listed in the water restrictions (except fire fighting, public health and safety, domestic purposes)	NO unless an exemption has been approved.	

Failure to comply with Water Restrictions may incur penalties as described in s43 (5) of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. Douglas Shire
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<p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL  RESTRICTIONS</p>	<p>Unless otherwise noted, the restrictions refer to all private, public, commercial and industrial sectors within the Douglas Shire Council water supply</p>
Activity	Description
Watering plants/gardens/lawns	<p>Watering cans/buckets allowed between 7am - 8am and 7pm - 8pm.</p> <p>Hoses must not be used at any time.</p>
Use of manual sprinklers (that are turned on and off by hand) or automated sprinklers, micro spray or drip watering irrigation systems	Irrigation system must not be used at any time.
Filling swimming pools, spas and portable wading pools	NO unless an exemption has been approved.
Filling water features (ponds, fountains and water ornaments)	<p>Existing ponds sustaining fish or bird life can only be topped up to their minimum operating level.</p> <p>Other ponds must not be topped up or filled.</p> <p>Water fountains/ornaments must not operate.</p>
Using water toys and facilities	NO unless an exemption has been approved.
Filling water storage tanks and dams	Water storage tanks and dams are not to be filled with a hose unless an exemption has been approved.
Cleaning of vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers	<p>Water must not be used except by means of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Commercial car washing facilities that recycle water. 2) Watering cans/buckets filled directly from taps. 3) Boat motors may be flushed and rinsed after use for a maximum 5 mins. <p>Where possible, vehicles/boats/jet skis/trailers are to be cleaned on grassed areas.</p>
Washing windows/external house cleaning	Water must not be used unless cleaning is required as a result of an accident, fire, health hazard or other emergency.
Cleaning of paved areas/concrete surfaces	Water must not be used unless cleaning is required as a result of an accident, fire, health hazard or other emergency.
Filling mobile water tankers (other than those directly used for fire fighting purposes)	Only by using Council approved/issued metered standpipes Fees & charges and terms & conditions apply.
Construction Industry	<p>Unless an exemption has been approved, the use of water in construction is limited to buckets and handheld hoses with trigger/twist nozzles.</p> <p>Water must not be used for dust suppression.</p>
Fire fighting or other emergency purposes	Any time as reasonably required.
Supplying water for livestock and other animals	Any time as reasonably required.
Any other purpose not listed in the water restrictions (except fire fighting, public health and safety, domestic purposes)	NO unless an exemption has been approved.

Failure to comply with Water Restrictions may incur penalties as described in s43 (5) of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. Douglas Shire Council operates under the Water Conservation General Policy.

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Definitions - Applies to all Water Restriction Levels

The following definitions apply to all Water Restriction Levels.

" Alternate days " means designated days of water use, such that where permitted in Schedule 1:

- (a) Properties with an even street number may water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday
- (b) Properties with an odd street number may water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
- (c) Properties without a Council prescribed street number may water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

NO WATERING IS PERMITTED ON MONDAYS

" Authorised Officer " means a person authorised by Douglas Shire Council to exercise the powers of an authorised person under the Water Act, Local Government Act and State Penalties Enforcement Act.

" Domestic purposes " means potable water taken from the water supply system inside any premises for drinking, cooking, washing persons and clothes, use for dishwashing, or cleaning, heating and cooling a building, and sanitation purposes, e.g. flushing a toilet.

" Exemption " means permission approved by Douglas Shire Council in writing that modifies or waives any water conservation measure under this policy.

" Exemption notice " means a permit issued by Douglas Shire Council granting an exemption from water restrictions to an approved exemption holder. An exemption notice is provided to the applicant confirming the exemption conditions. Where possible, the exemption notice should be displayed in a prominent position on the property or be available upon request.

" Hand held hose " means a hose or pipe used to convey water. Preferably a trigger or twist nozzle, held in the physical possession of a person, controlling the efficient distribution of water.

" Irrigation system " is identified as manual sprinklers (that are turned on and off by hand) or automated sprinkler, dripper, soaker hose, micro spray or drip watering systems.

" Paved area " means a footpath, driveway, hard standing area or similar having an impervious surface, such as concrete, asphalt, paving stones, tiles, etc.

" Portable wading pool " means any demountable, temporary and transportable pool.

" Gardens and Lawns " means land, garden, lawn or grassed area used for any purpose.

" Level " means the increment as set out in Schedule 1 of this policy designating particular water conservation criteria.

" Trigger/twist nozzle " means a control nozzle intended to be used by persons that stop the flow of water by means of a lever or similar device that positively shuts off the supply of water when released.

" Water supply " means Douglas Shire Council's infrastructure assets associated with the provision and distribution of water to customers, consumers, users and transporters of water.

" Water toys and facilities " means any entertainment toy or structure, which is operated by, or uses water from the Douglas Shire Council water supply system.

" Watering can/bucket " means a portable container that is filled directly from taps.