

MEDIA RELEASE

November 20, 2024

BE WATERWISE THIS SUMMER

With the summer months nearly here, Council reminds residents, business owners, community organisations and visitors to be waterwise.

Our island home is a beautiful place, but local conditions and our remote location means that water is a limited resource on Norfolk Island. We are heavily reliant on rainwater tanks and ground water storage, and extended dry spells in the weather can quickly impact on our water supplies.

Small changes in our behaviour and attitude can make a big difference to our community's water consumption and make life easier when drought does hit Norfolk.

Try these water saving tips to reduce water usage:

- Limit yourself to one shower a day. Encourage the family to take short showers.
- Turn off the shower while you soap yourself down or shampoo hair, and back on again for a final rinse off.
- Turn the tap off while you brush your teeth. Just wet your toothbrush before you begin and use a glass of water to rinse your mouth.
- Collect water during your shower to be used to water gardens or for soaking soiled clothing.
- Divert grey water from your washing machine to use on your gardens (do not do this if you use harsh chemicals, such as bleach).
- When the time comes to buy new household items, look for water efficient dishwashers, shower heads and taps.
- Fix any leaks in your plumbing – make sure taps and pipes are in good order.
- Maximise rainfall roof catchment by fixing leaky gutters and connecting all downpipes to water storage.
- Mulch vegetable gardens to reduce moisture loss and prevent weeds. Lawn clippings and leaf litter are a great, free mulch and NIRC currently has free woodchip available to the community.
- Water gardens in the early morning or evening to reduce water loss through evaporation.
- Water gardens deeply, but less often, to encourage strong deep roots.
- Plant natives in the garden, or hardy plants that are tolerant of island conditions.
- If rain is forecast set up additional rainwater catchments around your property – old bathtubs, buckets, and so on, then use this water to water your gardens.
- Wash your car using use a bucket and sponge, rather than the hose, or dry wash using a waterless car wash product and microfibre cloth.

As rainwater tank supplies are depleted and bore water usage increases, the possibility of poor water quality may also increase, and that has the potential to impact human health.

If you are topping up a tank with bore or creek water, it's wise to boil water for at least one minute before drinking. Over the counter products can also be used to treat bacterial contamination in your water supply.

Alternatively, consider installing a UV system at your home or business. This is an effective way to treat water without the use of chemicals. Replace water filters regularly and replace as needed. For additional peace of mind, professional testing of bore water will let you know if it is safe to drink.

ENDS