

MEDIA RELEASE

Sydney moves to water wise rules

Sunday 21 June 2009

NSW Water Minister Phil Costa today announced the introduction of Water Wise Rules for Greater Sydney, ending more than five years of tough drought restrictions.

Mr Costa said the announcement comes after careful consideration of storage levels, rainfall forecasts and additional water sources, such as recycling and desalination.

“Our dam levels have been on the rise over the past year and we have 20 recycling schemes across greater Sydney now recycling about 25 billion litres of water per year,” he said.

The new rules will take effect from midnight tonight, giving residents of Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Illawarra a common-sense blueprint for using water.

“These few simple rules reinforce the importance of using water responsibly and minimising waste,” said Mr Costa.

“We know the days of wasting water are gone - Water Wise Rules are a simple set of water saving measures which replace drought restrictions.

“It gives people more flexibility to maintain their gardens and manage water around the home.

“Businesses such as nurseries and landscaping companies will no longer have to apply for exemptions to access the water they need.

“Water Wise Rules set in concrete the responsible practices that are now common place across Greater Sydney.

“Continuing to use water wisely will make a big difference in securing our water supply for generations to come.”

Current Level 3 restrictions include:

- Hand held watering only on Wednesdays and Sundays before 10am and after 4pm – watering systems and sprinklers are banned.
- Permits are required to fill new swimming pools and special permits must be obtained by outdoor businesses and community and sporting groups who maintain facilities.
- No hosing of hard surfaces

The new Water Wise Rules allow:

- Hand-held hoses, sprinklers and watering systems on any day before 10am and after 4pm. Hand-held hoses must be fitted with a trigger nozzle when watering
- Children to play under the sprinkler on a hot day
- Washing vehicles using a trigger nozzle
- Fire hoses for fire-fighting only
- No hosing of hard surfaces except for health and safety purposes or emergency and construction activities

- Automatic exclusion for nurseries, market gardeners, landscapers, garden contractors, bowling greens, cricket wickets, golf tees and croquet, hockey, tennis and racing surfaces.

Mr Costa said the Government has a comprehensive formula of dams, desalination, recycling and water efficiencies to secure the future of Sydney's water.

"The community has responded tremendously during the drought to save every drop and the people of Sydney should be congratulated for their efforts," Mr Costa said.

"Water efficiency measures like dual flush toilets and water efficient taps and showers will continue to minimise Sydney's water needs into the future.

"Recycled water will soon meet around 12 per cent of Sydney's water needs while the desalination plant coming online next summer can provide up to 15 per cent of water supply," he said.

Fines of \$220 for individuals and \$550 for businesses apply for breaches of the Water Wise Rules.

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Media Contact Peter McCabe 0439 707 101