

Water recycling

Key words

Under the Metropolitan Water Plan, the NSW Government has a range of initiatives, including recycling, to save precious drinking water.

Here are some commonly used words and definitions to do with water recycling.

Recycled water	In the broadest sense, all water on earth is recycled because it has been used, purified, and used again countless times. The term 'recycled water' is also used more specifically to describe water that has been used, usually in human activities, and purified using a series of treatment steps so it can be used again. Stormwater is usually classed as a type of recycled water if it's reused.
Direct potable reuse	Where recycled water is added directly to the drinking water supply.
Indirect potable reuse	Where recycled water is added to an aquifer, river or other water source, which later joins the drinking water supply.
Blackwater	Wastewater that includes water from toilets.
Greywater	Wastewater from any part of the home, except the toilet.
On-site systems	Small treatment plants, usually privately owned and managed, that clean wastewater so it can be used on site or nearby.
Sewer mining	Taking, treating and using wastewater straight from the wastewater pipes.
Stormwater	Rain that hits the ground and runs off to drains or elsewhere. The term is often used in an urban context where rain runs off hard surfaces such as roads and car parks, often picking up contaminants.
Wastewater	Water that has been used, usually in human activities. This includes water from households (blackwater and greywater) as well as water from industrial and commercial uses. The wastewater going to Sydney Water's treatment plants is about 99.8% water.
Water recycling	This term can be used in two ways. It's the act of purifying wastewater using a series of treatment steps, so it can be used again. ('There is a water recycling plant at St Marys in Sydney's west'.) It's also the act of using recycled water. ('Water recycling saves drinking water'.)