

Recycled water management plan for Deep Creek, Romsey

Response to community concerns

We've heard your feedback. Here are our responses.

Why is this happening?

Due to a surplus of recycled water, Western Water needs to safely discharge or release the excess water that can't be stored at the Portingales Lane plant in Romsey.

Growth in our service region has meant the quantity of recycled water we are producing has increased rapidly. This, combined with the limited availability of land ready for irrigation, means we need to consider alternative options to release the excess water.

Developments up to now

Western Water held an initial consultation session in Romsey on Friday 16 August to provide the community with a forum to discuss the proposed discharge of recycled water into Deep Creek.

Those people who were unable to attend were given the opportunity to comment, and Western Water extended the original consultation period until 21 October 2019 (from 30 August). This followed feedback from customers and community members keen to learn more about the proposed release.

To capture as much feedback as possible, Western Water promoted the extended consultation period through local newspapers (print and online), Western Water's social media channels and face-to-face meetings.

Your feedback informing our approach

Planning

Some members of the community have told us we should have foreseen our recycled water storage challenges in Romsey.

Western Water is facing many varying challenges affecting our service region; growth, climate change, increasing compliance requirements and the rising cost of doing business. Solutions to many of these challenges we face are costly, and also need to be spread across our entire service region.

We have a dedicated planning team, using the best information from State and local government sources, but there are still areas outside our control like wetter weather, and customers increasing the amount of wastewater produced.

Alternatives to discharging

Some members of the community have told us there must be other options to discharging the excess recycled water into Deep Creek.

In addition to fast-tracking works on the extra land we have purchased, we have intensified our efforts to find alternative solutions. This could include:

- using tankers to transport the recycled water to other Western Water plants
- installing a recycled water standpipe so local landholders can access recycled water for appropriate uses
- exploring innovative evaporative technology that could release recycled water in ways that will not affect local waterways or land

Key points

- Western Water will not be releasing Class B recycled water into Deep Creek, Romsey this year. April 2020 would be the earliest, and only if all other options have been exhausted
- We're fast-tracking works to make extra land suitable for recycled water use sooner
- We're not applying to the EPA (for discharge licence amendment) before we've fully explored all our alternative options
- Community feedback has informed our decision making. We will come back to the community after other options have been considered



