

Recycled water management plan for Deep Creek, Romsey

Consultation period extended until 21 October

Western Water is proposing to discharge recycled water into Deep Creek, Romsey: here's what you need to know.

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.

Western Water purchased extra land for this purpose. However, it takes two years before the land is developed enough for recycled water use.

In the interim, as a temporary measure, Western Water is proposing to discharge the excess recycled water into Deep Creek.

Where is it taking place?

In providing wastewater services to the community of Romsey, Western Water collects and treats domestic wastewater at a recycled water plant in Portingales Lane, Romsey.

Western Water proposes to discharge Class B recycled water from this plant through a local stormwater drain - the 'Romsey South Drain' over a two year period. Discharging here will assist further dilution of the recycled water before it reaches the waterway.

Who will be affected?

Properties within 2km of the discharge site may be impacted if they are relying on direct access to Deep Creek for agricultural stock water use.

Although Class B recycled water can be used for stock water (excluding pigs), Western Water will work closely with these property owners to discuss alternative stock water provisions, should this be required as a precautionary measure.

The proposed amount of recycled water to be discharged is 150 megalitres per year. This will be mixed at a ratio of 1 to 5 dilution into Deep Creek. Due to the level of mixing and dilution, properties beyond 2km are not expected to be impacted.

When will this happen?

If the proposal goes ahead, recycled water will only be released when there is sufficiently high flow in the waterway (April-October).

The flow of discharge will be automatically matched to the flow in the creek via a flow meter in the discharge pipe and a flow gauging station in Deep Creek.

Nearby landowners can opt-in to receive notifications of discharge times, should this be needed for stock water management.



Figure 1: Map of projected mixing zones with discharge ratio of 1:5. Mixing zones are used as a tool for responsible management of the environment. Pink highlight: total nitrogen mixing zone. Yellow highlight: total phosphorous mixing zone.

How is recycled water produced?

Western Water produces three classes of recycled water: Class A, B and C, based on the level of treatment and water quality.

Class B recycled water is what we're proposing to discharge into Deep Creek.

Depending on the type of process used, the treatment period can last anywhere from eight hours up to approximately 100 days before it can be reused.

Acceptable uses of Class B recycled water include:

- stock water (excluding pigs)
- municipal water use
- human food crops grown over a meter above the ground and eaten raw
- human food crops cooked or processed before sale to customers
- non-human food production
- industrial
- non-food crops and aquaculture

All recycled water is produced in accordance with guidance provided by Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Recycled water management plan for Deep Creek, Romsey



What safeguards are there?

Western Water has engaged an independent expert in recycled water to assess whether there is any risk to stock in accordance with the published guidelines and recommended controls.

Should the proposal go ahead, Western Water will implement an extensive testing program to carefully manage the discharge. Both the recycled water and Deep Creek will be tested weekly at a number of designated locations.

Western Water has also undertaken an ecological risk assessment to determine any potential adverse effects to Deep Creek and the wildlife that uses the waterway.

The main effect is likely to be increased nitrogen and phosphorous levels downstream of the discharge (figure 1). Under certain conditions, one potential consequence of this increase in nutrients is the risk of algal blooms.

Knowing algal growth can speed up during warmer temperatures and low flows in the waterway, Western Water will mitigate this risk by limiting discharge of recycled water to April-October, when temperatures are colder and flows are higher.

Nevertheless, Western Water will routinely monitor the area for such activity and will take preventative measures as necessary.

Can the creek be used?

In consultation with the relevant landowners, Western Water intends to place signage near the discharge point to inform users of Deep Creek that recycled water is being released in the area.

The quality of the recycled water going into Deep Creek will meet the water quality indicators specified for swimming and fishing.

What are the next steps?

Western Water will need to obtain approval from Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) for a licence amendment to discharge recycled water into Deep Creek.

To ensure all community viewpoints are taken into consideration, Western Water is actively seeking feedback by 21 October 2019, prior to an application to the EPA. The application is anticipated to be lodged in November 2019.

Once received by the EPA, they will assess the application to ensure that there is minimum risk to the environment and public health.

Western Water will be directly engaging with customers within 2km of the proposed discharge. Customers up to 10km from the proposed discharge can find out more by contacting Western Water at feedback@westernwater.com.au or by visiting WesternWater.com.au.

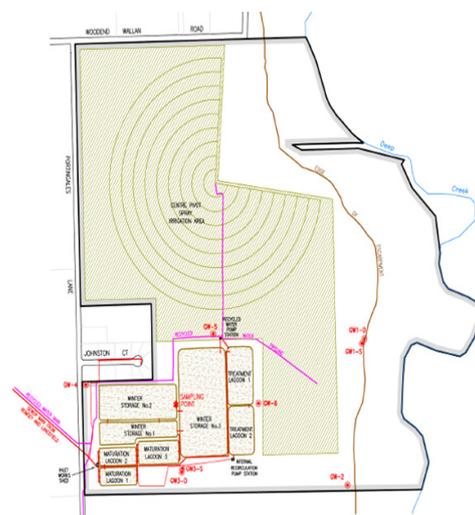


Figure 2: Romsey Recycled Water Plant site plan

What is recycled water?

Recycled water is wastewater that has been collected and treated to a high standard so that it can be used again for a variety of non-drinking water purposes.

Within the Western Water region, recycled water is being used by agricultural customers for fodder crops, fruit orchids, grapes and olives.

Recycled water is also used to irrigate many of the region's sporting grounds and open spaces as well as school ovals, local botanic gardens and in landscaping.