

Management and Sale of Temporary Raw Water Assets



Council Policy Number	172
Date adopted	20 April 2022
Scheduled for review	April 2024

1. Preamble

This policy sets out how Campaspe Shire Council allocates and uses its raw water assets. This includes the sale of temporary raw water and the actions required to ensure sufficient raw water is available to conduct its activities and for the maintenance of nominated parks, gardens and recreation reserves.

2. Purpose

To provide guidance on the allocation, use and sale of Campaspe Shire Council's ('Council') temporary raw water assets.

3. Definitions

Raw Water Asset	Council owned raw water
Allocation Bank Account	Victorian Water Register Allocation Account for identification of ownership and registration of water licence details
Seasonal Allocation	Amount of water made available to holders of water shares depending on water availability and current seasonal conditions
Carry Over	Unused water in the ABA available to carried forward to the next season
High/Low Reliability Water Share	Legally recognised, secure entitlement to a defined share of water against which seasonal determinations are made
Market Price	Price determined by the highest of the last ten water sales

4. Policy Statement

Council requires an amount of raw water to conduct its business activities and for the maintenance of its parks, gardens and recreation reserves recognising the important health and wellbeing benefits that green spaces provide for its community. Council holds water assets of 826 megalitres of high reliability water and 338 megalitres of low reliability water. This water is primarily used to keep Council owned parks, gardens and recreation reserves green, in road making activities and in a small range of Council businesses e.g. the Saleyards and Echuca Caravan Park.

The Victorian Irrigation system is designed to enable businesses to plan with greater certainty. Through the use of "carry over" Council has been able to plan to meet business needs in periods of drought. Low percentage allocations of water can severely impact the amount of high reliability water available. In years of full water allocation Council will have an excess of water however in times of drought and low percentage allocation there is barely sufficient to meet priority needs.

It is important that a system is in place that ensures Council water users such as Council recreation reserves and their Committees have a clear understanding of how much water is allocated to them, their responsibilities regards tracking usage and how to attain/maintain water efficiencies.

In droughts the role of green spaces becomes even more important to our communities. Planning for extreme drought situations to ensure Council has sufficient raw water to meet its needs requires Council to determine an amount of water to hold in reserve. The system allows for water to be “carried over” when there is enough storage capacity. In this way Council can hold sufficient water to meet its needs for a set period. Council’s total raw water use in any given year varies considerably and is dependent on seasonal conditions however around 250 megalitres would be the maximum usage per annum.

In a year when there is a full raw water allocation Council has a surplus of water that may be sold on the temporary market. The use of water in agriculture produces an economic benefit in excess of the value of the water used. This policy seeks to increase the probability that the economic benefit produced from the use of the water Council has sold is retained (as far as possible) within the municipality. Council recognises that it cannot guarantee that the economic benefit can be retained in the municipality.

5. Recreation reserves access to Council’s raw water

Council contributes to the cost of maintenance at a number of recreation reserves (both Council owned and/or managed, and Crown owned and managed) under its Policy 093 Council Contributions to Recreation Reserves Maintenance.

Being consistent with Policy 93 Council will provide (when possible) access to its raw water regardless of the land tenure arrangements of a town’s primary recreation reserve i.e. if it is on Crown Land with a Committee of Management (‘CoM’) direct to the Crown, raw water will be provided on the same basis as Council owned and/or managed reserves.

If raw water access is not available to the reserve, Council will allow the use of up to 10% of a reserve maintenance funds to be used to pay potable water costs.

The amount of water available will be determined according to the assessed service level requirements and the particulars of the soil type of that reserve.

Recreation reserves seeking to introduce new activities that will require water or will increase the need for water must apply in writing to Council stating the rationale and providing evidence of need. An assessment will be conducted by the relevant department to determine if the proposal is in line with Council’s strategic directions and service levels, evidence to support the need and impacts on existing services. New activities that require water are an increase in Council service level and therefore require a Council decision. If approved, an appropriate amount of water will be allocated to the reserve.

6. Efficient management of Council’s water resources

- Council will consolidate its water assets into Allocation Bank Accounts (‘ABA’) that will limit the amount of transfer and sale costs.
- Only Council officers with the appropriate delegation and Goulburn Murray Water (‘GMW’) authorisation can sell and trade temporary water.
- An annual allocation of water will be made to each recreation reserve or green space based on historic use amounts (where possible). This amount is to act as a target and aims to encourage water use efficiency. This will be communicated to the appropriate recreation reserve committee of management at the start of each water year.
- The annual allocation is an indicative total only (based on the understanding that usage varies according to weather conditions, soil profile difference etc) and if necessary, additional water will be transferred after receiving a request to do so if there is sufficient water available.
- Facilities that require an increase in water allocated will receive a review of their water use that will include assessment of current practices and if required, the provision of professional advice from Council’s turf and garden maintenance specialists. This may include advice regarding soil conditioning, watering regimes or other ground management practices that might be implemented to achieve water savings.

Watering of additional playing surfaces

- Committees/Clubs located at Council owned and/or managed recreation reserves may purchase additional water on the open market at their own cost and transfer it into Council ownership if they wish to carry out additional watering activities above the service level set by Council.

7. Sale of Temporary Water

To determine what water is excess to Council's needs the following process will be followed:

- 250 megalitres will be allocated for Council use each year. This will be regardless of the "seasonal allocation" percentage. If there is insufficient water, then the maximum available will be allocated.
- 250 megalitres will be allocated to "carry over" (or the maximum available to carry over if there is insufficient).

All water in excess of the above arrangements should be sold on the temporary market via a locally based Water Broker. Council recognises that it is not able to ensure that the water sold will be delivered/used within the municipality. However, by selling through a locally based water broker there is an increased chance this might occur.

8. Sale of Permanent Water

This policy relates to the sale of temporary water only. Permanent water is a Council asset and its sale requires a Council decision. Council's current practice is to not sell permanent water assets.

9. Distribution of infrastructure costs

Raw water access incurs infrastructure costs which are determined by Goulburn Murray Water and charged to Council annually. To ensure that Council can equitably recoup the set costs associated with the provision of raw water to recreation reserves a standard formula will be used.

- A unit cost will be set each year based on the formula: Total set infrastructure costs related to the all reserves/number of high reliability water shares used in the prior year at all reserves.
- The unit cost for set charges is then multiplied by the amount of megalitres used at each individual reserve ensuring the proportion of set costs paid is directly related to usage

10. Administration Requirements

Each season the recreation reserves ABA will receive a temporary allocation of water. Committees watering Council facilities are required to:

- Maintain appropriate records and provide meter readings to Council as requested
- Ensure water use does not exceed the annual allocated amount
- Make requests for any additional water at least one month prior to it being required
- Advise Council of the Committee nominee to be authorised to order water at a reserve through WaterLine
- Ensure only the authorised individual(s) are used to order water

Overuse of water (using water in excess of the amount allocated without prior authority) may result in being charged for the additional water used. In the case of overuse the five year average price of temporary water will be used as the rate at which water is charged.

Repeated overuse and failure to apply for additional water and will result in access to the ABA being removed.

11. Places of Pride

During times of severe water restrictions Council has in the past negotiated the use of potable water for key community green space locations in exchange for providing the water authority with an amount of temporary raw water. This practice requires Council to pay potable water prices to cover the treatment cost incurred by the water authority

While Council can plan for times of drought by allocating a carry over amount, severe drought will likely mean that raw water will only be available for priority sites.

The sites that are prioritised to access raw water are listed below:

- Council owned or managed Recreation Reserves
- Echuca – Civic Centre and Library surrounds, the roundabouts located on major roads in the CBD, Alton Reserve and Hopwood Gardens
- Kyabram – Memorial Gardens, Edis Park
- Rochester – Rotunda Park
- Tongala – Village Green and sound shell area
- Lockington – Lions Park
- Girgarre – Girgarre Park
- Colbinabbin - Hall and playground
- Rushworth – High Street
- Stanhope – Birdwood Hub
- Gunbower – Lions Park water frontage around public toilets and as far as the bridge

12. Charging of Community groups using Council Raw Water

Council has made a number of arrangements with organisations that involve the use of its raw water. These organisations and /or the facility have been the subject of a specific Council resolution or there is an historic ongoing Council involvement. The two facilities that fall into this category are:

- Echuca Lawn Tennis Club – uses Council's watering infrastructure to access raw water however pays for the water it uses.
- Back Nine Golf Course – The facility is leased to the Echuca Neighbourhood house. Council's resolution in awarding the tender to the Echuca Neighbourhood house states that the course will receive 44 megalitres per annum at no cost and will be charged for water in excess of this amount.

Recouping the opportunity cost of providing water to these groups is undertaken using the five year average temporary water price achieved on the relevant water system.

13. Ad hoc requests for water by community and sporting clubs in the event of severe water restrictions/low allocations/high water prices

In the event of severe water restrictions and/or high temporary water prices Council will prioritise access to its raw water assets based on the following order:

- Council owned recreation reserves, gardens and parks that can access raw water.
- The nominated places of pride listed within this policy.

Crown land owned and operated recreation reserves as nominated in Council's Funding of Recreation Reserves policy as the primary recreation reserve for that town.

Note: access to water in circumstances where there are severe potable water restrictions is reliant on the potable water authority's cooperation.

14. Exclusions

Nil

15. Human Rights

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

16. Consultation

Communication with recreation reserve committees occurs on a regular basis with at least two face to face meetings annually. The way Council charges and allocates water is discussed at these meetings.

17. Related Legislation

Nil

18. Related Policies, Procedures and Strategies

Council Policy 093 – Council Contributions to Recreation Reserves Maintenance

19. Attachments

Nil

20. Review Period

Two years

Responsible officer

General Manager Development

21. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter the policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

22. Approval History

Adopted 28 January 2020
Revised 22 February 2021

Minute Book Reference No 15 (item 7.4)
Administrative update to apply consistent reference to
Campaspe Shire Council ('Council') and abbreviations
Minute Book Reference No (Item 9.5)

Revised 20 April 2022

Chief Executive Officer:



Date: 26 APRIL 2022