



**RECENT WIDESPREAD DROUGHT IN AUSTRALIA, COMBINED WITH THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF CITIES AND REDUCED FLOWS IN OUR RIVER SYSTEMS, HAS PLACED PRESSURE ON DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES IN MOST LARGE CITIES AND MANY REGIONAL AREAS.**

Domestic greywater from single households is a resource and can be reused on-site for non-drinking water uses. By reusing greywater you can reduce the amount of drinking water you use, which will help maintain water supplies in your area.

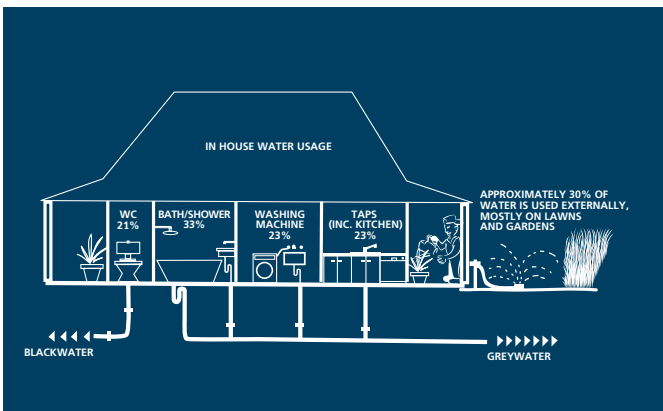
The NSW government has recently changed regulations to allow the reuse of untreated greywater using a diversion device for sub-surface irrigation without approval from your council if certain conditions are met.

To find out more about using greywater, please visit: [www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au) or phone the Department of Water and Energy on (02) 8281 7777.



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## HOW CAN GREYWATER BE USED?



## What is greywater?

Greywater is wastewater generated from bathrooms (shower and basin), laundries and kitchens, or those components of household sewage that **DO NOT** come from a toilet, urinal or bidet.

Kitchen wastewater must not be reused as untreated greywater. It may be reused after treatment, but it is recommended that since bathroom and laundry water is relatively uncontaminated compared to kitchen water, and can be generated in higher volumes, **greywater should be primarily sourced from the bathroom and laundry.**

## What is in greywater?

The characteristics of greywater produced by a household will vary according to the lifestyle, health status and water usage patterns of the occupants.

Greywater contains micro-organisms, chemical contaminants (in particular nutrients and salts) and physical contaminants (such as dirt, lint and sand).

A number of strategies can be easily followed to prevent and minimise any negative effects from the reuse of greywater, such as selecting the right detergents when using greywater for watering gardens and lawns. The **NSW Guideline for Greywater Reuse in Sewered, Single Household Residential Premises** covers this and other important issues to ensure that when greywater is in use, the environment and people stay healthy.



## What are the main advantages of greywater reuse?

Reusing greywater provides a number of benefits including:

- Reducing your potable water consumption
- Reducing the amount of sewage discharged to the ocean or rivers
- Reducing your water bills
- Irrigating your garden during drought periods.

## What are the main disadvantages of greywater reuse?

The disadvantages of greywater reuse may include:

- The potential for pollution and undesirable health effects if the greywater is not reused correctly
- Initial cost of a greywater system and plumbing requirements
- Ongoing maintenance.



## How can you use greywater?

Untreated greywater can be reused for:

- Sub-surface irrigation (irrigation buried at least 10 cm below the surface of soil or mulch).

Treated greywater can also be reused for sub-surface irrigation, as well as for:

- Surface irrigation
- Toilet flushing
- Washing machine use.

It is important to realise that over irrigation with greywater may lead to adverse public health and environmental impacts. You need to ensure that greywater is diverted back to the sewer after irrigating your garden, in the same way you turn off a tap.

**To find out more about greywater use, a series of five fact sheets are available from the Water for Life website:**

Greywater Fact Sheet 1:

**Greywater diversion devices – Dos and Don'ts**

Greywater Fact Sheet 2:

**Choosing the right greywater system for your needs**

Greywater Fact Sheet 3:

**Irrigating with greywater**

Greywater Fact Sheet 4:

**Keeping your plants and soil healthy with greywater**

Greywater Fact Sheet 5:

**Maintenance of greywater treatment systems and diversion devices**

To download the Guideline and Fact Sheets, or find more about how you can help secure our water for life please visit: **[www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au)** or phone the Department of Water and Energy on (02) 8281 7777.