

Tara Water Supply - FAQs

How much does the Tara Reverse Osmosis (RO) Water Treatment Plant produce per day?

The Tara Reverse Osmosis (RO) Water Treatment Plant can produce almost 400 kilolitres of clean safe water per day. The plant was sized to sufficiently meet the town's domestic and commercial water needs, even if the lagoon is dry, as well as provide a base load source at other times.

How much did the RO plant cost?

Construction of the RO Water Treatment Plant itself cost approximately \$2 million, however the overall project cost including installation of pipelines and evaporation ponds was budgeted at \$8.3 million. In actual fact, Council has spent \$6.2 million to basically deliver the project, and even with the unexpected issues with the bores the project will be fully delivered under budget.

Why don't we desilt the Tara lagoon?

The lagoon currently holds about 375 megalitres (ML) but to make any worthwhile improvement in reliability of this surface water storage it would have to be increased by about 200ML. To achieve this would require the removal of 200,000 cubic metres of earth from the bottom of the lagoon which would cost about \$1.25 million.

The lagoon has a very small catchment area approximately 84 square kilometres which is unreliable in dry weather. If there is no inflow of water into the lagoon it will eventually run dry, regardless of the storage size.

Additionally under the current Murray-Darling Basin Plan the lagoon is classified as off-stream storage. Therefore, to be permitted to increase the storage by 200ML would mean an entitlement would have to be traded or purchased from somewhere in the Tara area. Although unlikely to occur, if such a purchase of an entitlement was possible this would cost around \$2,000/ML or \$400,000.

Furthermore, the secondary water plant in Tara that treats the lagoon's surface water would also have to be upgraded as it lacks the capacity to meet 100% of Tara's water needs at all times.

Is the Tara supply suitable for drinking / potable?

The township of Tara is currently supplied with a clean and safe non-potable water source. Due to high levels of fluoride, sodium and other salts, the water is unfit for human consumption.

How much water does Tara use?

The water usage for the town can vary between 250 and 800 kilolitres per day.



Why can't we use the bores as they are?

The bore water being pumped out, in its untreated state, is not suitable for human consumption, due to higher levels of fluoride, sodium and other salts present in its natural form. These levels do exceed the recommended levels set by the World Health Organisation, and would be similar to most bores using groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin across the Western Downs.

Due to high levels of salt and an imbalance between the levels of sodium, magnesium and calcium, the water source is also not recommended for gardening as it can cause long-term soil damage unless gypsum is regularly applied to stabilise the pH levels.

What is Council doing about the Tara water supply?

Western Downs Regional Council reassures residents that it is working hard to resolve the complex and multifaceted issues surrounding the town's water supply.

Thorough investigations are continuing, involving remedial works and the extended testing of the RO Water Treatment Plant that will provide the township with a clean safe reliable supply of water into the future.

How often does Council test the water supply?

Water supplies across our region are tested regularly against a set of strict parameters approved by the State Government.

Samples are taken from the source water, so these test results are reflective of the quality of water before the treatment process as would be common to groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin across the Western Downs.

Can the public have access to the water supply reports?

Yes. The water supply report is presented to Council each month and is a publically available document that can be viewed on Council's website - <http://www.wdrc.qld.gov.au/about-council/councillors-connect/council-meetings/meeting-agendas-and-minutes/>.

Why are residents required to pay full water rates for a non-potable water supply?

Council's standard water charges for non-potable water supplies, such as Tara, is 10% lower than the standard water charge for potable water supplies.

