

 City of Mount Gambier	COUNCIL POLICY C355 COUNCIL LAND - IRRIGATION	Version No:	5.0
		Issued:	19 September 2023
		Next Review:	September 2027

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the policy of the City of Mount Gambier (“Council”) for the irrigation of Council land.

Council appreciates the need to both preserve and conserve the valuable water resource available to the Council and surrounding districts.

Permanent water conservation measures were introduced in 2003 by the State Government and Council will endeavour, by way of this Policy, to embrace the spirit and intent of the measures in its own operations (as well as meeting all legislative requirements).

Council has a significant financial and social investment in its Parks, Gardens and Reserves. This investment needs to be integrated with an environmental investment that delivers water conservation outcomes and still meets the needs of the wider community.

2. MEASURING WATER USAGE

- (a) Council will measure all water usage (whether from mains supply or bores). The bulk of water usage by Council is through the irrigation of parks, gardens and reserves. This policy recognises the social benefit of ensuring that sports fields and key garden areas of the City (i.e. Cave Garden, Vansittart Park Gardens and Umpherston Sinkhole) are adequately watered.
- (b) Council will identify areas where irrigation can be either reduced or eliminated.
- (c) Elimination where appropriate should be the first preference. Options that require little or no irrigation should be explored and implemented. Where appropriate such options may include the utilisation of indigenous species and/or Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).

3. AUTOMATED WATER SYSTEMS

This policy recognises that automated watering systems at the Cave Garden, Frew Park, Vansittart Park Oval, Umpherston Sinkhole, Vansittart Park Gardens, Blue Lake Sports Park, Marist Park and Carinya Gardens Cemetery have been installed. These automated watering systems have moisture monitoring as part of the system, which ensures that watering will occur during the night time, for the shortest time, to conserve water and maximise the benefit of irrigation.

Roundabouts are a key feature within the Council area, and a minimalist approach to watering is to be adopted. This will include, as a minimum, a time clock operated water system that will only water during the night time.

Any proposed ‘greenfield’ development of a reserve, where irrigation is desirable, should consider sub-surface watering systems or if surface irrigation is accepted, the use of modern technology which will optimise water usage (including time clocks and in-situ moisture measurement).

If and when financial resources are available, Council will consider the retro-fitment provision of automated watering systems to Council reserves.

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4. IRRIGATION OF PUBLIC GREEN SPACES

Key Council staff and curators of Council owned sporting facilities have been provided with ‘waterwise’ training which references State Government regulation and policy, this City of Mount Gambier Policy and best practice watering and irrigation techniques for urban parks, gardens and reserves.

Sports grounds in Mount Gambier are predominately Kikuyu/Couch grass (*Rhizomatous sp.*). Council promotes this species of grass because of its resilience during summer.

The SA Water ‘Code of Practice for Irrigated Public Open Space’ outlines that turf should be maintained to meet quality and risk management standards appropriate for its intended use – that is, it should be ‘fit for purpose’.

Accordingly, five different categories of public green space are identified, for the classification of sites:

- Premier Sports Turf: State/regional competition
- Local Sports Turf: Local competition
- Premier Recreation Reserve: High profile recreational area
- Passive Recreation Reserve: Non-sports turf recreational area
- Verges and Stormwater Retention Basins: Functional spaces for stormwater events.

The annual performance targets for irrigation from Council bores are as follows (see table 1):

Table 1: Annual Performance Targets for irrigation

Classification	Site	Performance Target l per m ²
Premier Sports Turf	West Gambier	300
Premier Sports Turf	South Gambier	300
Premier Sports Turf	Frew Park	300
Premier Sports Turf	McDonald Park	300
Premier Sports Turf	Blue Lake Sports Park	300
Premier Sports Turf	Malseed Park (Soccer)	300
Local Sports Turf	Marist Park	250
Local Sports Turf	Reidy Park	250
Premier Recreation Reserve	Cave Gardens	320
Premier Recreation Reserve	Vansittart Park	320
Premier Recreation Reserve	Railway Lands	320
Passive Recreation Reserve	Aquatic Centre	160
Passive Recreation Reserve	Umpherston Sinkhole	160
Passive Recreation Reserve	Carinya Gardens	160
Verges & Stormwater Retention Basins	Various	0

The ‘Code of Practice for Irrigated Public Open Space’ has been used as a guide, in developing these performance standards and consideration has been given to average annual rainfall, evapotranspiration, local climate etc.

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Where performance targets are greatly exceeded and/or there is consistent poor performance, Council may impose penalties upon lessees of Council owned facilities (such as turning off taps / financial penalties), for excess water use.

It is recognised that application rates may rise during exceptionally dry summers and that extra irrigation may be required to prepare 'fit for purpose' turf for one-off elite sporting events at State/National level.

It is recommended that an annual review of this irrigation policy and the actual irrigation levels achieved, be undertaken. The annual review should also identify Council Officers who need training.

All users of Council irrigation bores are to be advised of this policy and be requested to comply with the performance targets as listed in Table 1.

5. REVIEW & EVALUATION

This Policy is scheduled for review by Council in September 2027, however, will be reviewed as required by any legislative changes which may occur.

6. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

This Policy will be available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours and on the Council's website www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au. Copies will also be provided to interested members of the community upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

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File Reference:	AF18/47
Applicable Legislation:	Water Industry Regulations 2012
Reference: Strategic Plan – Beyond 2015	Goal 2: Our Location
Related Policies:	
Related Procedures:	
Related Documents:	Code of Practice - Irrigated Public Open Space (SA Water)

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Responsibility:	General Manager City Infrastructure
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