

Can my pets and stock drink the town water supply?

We have been advised that the town water supply is still safe for pets and stock to drink.

Why is there arsenic in the water?

This is still being investigated by Council but the most likely cause is the dwindling water level in Kentucky Dam resulting in higher than usual concentrations of arsenic going through the treatment plant. We are also investigating other sources of arsenic within the dam's catchment. Arsenic occurs naturally in our environment.

Is the water ok for washing dishes?

It is recommended that bottled water be used for drinking, food preparation, making ice, cleaning teeth and gargling. You can be assured that the town water is still safe to use for hand washing, showering, bathing, washing clothes, in the garden, consumed by pets and washing your dishes.

How long will this be going on for?

Unfortunately we cannot tell you an exact time frame however the best case scenario is things will be back to normal in a couple of days but residents do need to be prepared that efforts to reduce the arsenic levels could take some weeks, as a worst case scenario.

I'm a rural resident and have just had my tank filled, what do I do with the water?

Rural residents can be assured that any town water supply is safe to use for hand washing, showering, bathing, washing clothes, in the garden, consumed by pets and washing your dishes. It is recommended as a precautionary measure that bottled water be used for drinking, food preparation, making ice, cleaning teeth and gargling.

Free bottled water can be collected from Foodworks or Pursehouse Rural in Uralla. The Mayor has also arranged for bottled water to be made available at the Invergowrie Store.

I'm a rural resident, what do I do when this is over and I have to refill my tank? The water will be contaminated, will there be compensation? Will Council be paying for testing?

The water carted by private water carters is considered fit for domestic purposes apart from drinking. Drinking water is supplied free of charge. Council will discuss the potential testing of tank water storages with the Department of Health and any further information and updates will be shared on social media and the Uralla Shire Council website page.

Where can I get my free bottled water and what do I use it for?

You can pick up your free bottled water from Foodworks or Pursehouse Rural in Uralla and the Invergowrie Store.

Why has this happened?

Under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, potable water supplies should only contain up to 0.01 milligrams of arsenic per litre, however a routine test of Uralla's drinking water recorded an elevated reading of 0.04 to 0.05 milligrams per litre.

State Government and Uralla Shire Council have taken this precautionary measure to protect local residents' health, including a 'do not drink' alert for the town water supply.

I'm concerned for the health of myself/children/grandchildren etc?

We have been advised that health effects are very unlikely at the concentration present in Uralla's drinking water but locals are still being advised not to drink or cook with town water at the moment as a precaution.

What if the bottled water runs out?

Until the Uralla town water supply quality is restored around 40,000 litres of bottled water will be trucked into Uralla each day and distributed from Foodworks and Pursehouse Rural and the Invergowrie Store to local residents for free.

I haven't been able to get through to Council and no one has responded to my email?

Council has been experiencing a very high volume of calls and we are trying to get back in touch with people as soon as possible.

When will there be any updates?

Please be assured that Council will update the community as soon as we have any further information to share. Please follow the Uralla Shire Council Facebook page and visit the website for the most up to date information.

Updates will be provided until the water plant operations are safely removing the arsenic from the town water supply.

I'm a business - what do I do?

The recommendation is that bottled water be used for all drinking water. We have received advice that any food that has been prepared prior to the alert issued at 12 noon on the 18th of December can be sold and eaten. As a precaution, prepare any food with bottled water where possible.