



WATERWISE

All landowners along the Mongarlowe catchment, such as yourselves and others who rely on catching rainwater are well aware of how important it is to conserve this commodity. FMR has recently asked various people how they personally become even more diligent with their water use. Some of the suggestions below you will be already implementing but FMR hopes there are some new ideas you may consider. It is well known that the increasing utilisation of water resources is placing undue stress on the majority of aquatic ecosystems in south eastern Australia. Keeping in mind that South-eastern Australia is in the grip of the worst drought in living memory planning for higher temperature scenarios and other changes would prove helpful to yourself and to the biodiversity of the river ecosystem. Understanding the flow regime of the river and its effects on the flora and fauna using the Mongarlowe catchment facilitates the understanding of caring for the waterway that will protect the ecosystem therefore protect our future usage of water.

Found in Judith Wrights files from the inception of FMR (1986) were quote -"flow records for the gauging of the Mongarlowe River over the years 1950-71 indicating that for many of these years the abstraction of 3 megalitres per day would cause relatively little effect on downstream flow or downstream users. However, in the summers of 1955-56 and 1968-69 there were both zero flow days and a larger number of days when the flow was below 3 megalitres. As Mongarlowe is well downstream of Monga the number of days in dry years when flow could be expected to be close to zero with pumping, could conservatively be as high as 60 or 70 days. The implications for users downstream of the pump are therefore obvious".

How you can help conserve water:

- Pump from the waterway only when at a healthy flow.
- Increase the number of water tanks and use these for the drier times only and for emergencies such as fire protection.
- Many plants thrive in droughts—these make a great addition to any garden and do not require excessive watering. Ask for advice from our local nurseries.
- Be aware that pot plants dry out quickly therefore need regular watering.
- Reduce evaporation by watering your garden early in the morning or later in the evening. Add some wetting agent & use mulch.
- Install a dual flush toilet cistern or better still a dry composting toilet.
- On average, a two to three person household generates 185 litres of greywater per day from the hand basin, shower and bath. Greywater can be recycled for use in the garden or toilet by purchasing a water diversion system. It is important to understand the potential health risks from misuse of greywater. Check greywater usage guidelines with your local council. More information is available through NSW Department of Health website at: www.health.nsw.gov.au
- Install a AAA rated showerhead if your pressure pump is adequate. Spend less time in the shower. While waiting for the hot water to flow have a bucket under the shower. Use this water for your garden or pot plants. Fix any leaking taps. Shower with a friend.
- Make sure washing machines are full before using. Use machines with high water efficiency rating.
- Use a plug when washing vegetables.
- Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth.

There is a wealth of information, rebate schemes and other help to be accessed either through the local council or Googling on the net. With growing focus on Australia's limited water resources, ranges of products are emerging on the market. These can be simple ideas from a new style of washer to large scale irrigating. Farm & garden expos happen locally each year and of course your local produce store, landcare group and catchment management office will steer you in the right direction.

Compiled from many current sources
By Friends of Mongarlowe River
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