



Media release

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## **Water restrictions introduced in Selwyn**

Selwyn residents are being urged to reduce their water consumption as water restrictions are introduced for a number of supplies in the district.

Selwyn District Council's Assets Manager Murray Washington says an extended period of hot dry weather has resulted in demand for water for irrigation increasing significantly at peak times - and the restrictions will help to smooth demand for water use more evenly throughout the day.

"This summer has been particularly dry so far and as a result of this the overall demand for water has been very high. Water use peaks in the morning and evening period when many people decide to water their lawns and gardens at the same time which creates a spike in demand," he says.

Selwyn District Council manages 30 water supplies. The water restrictions will affect properties on eight Council supplies: Doyleston, Kirwee, Leeston, Lincoln, Prebbleton, Rolleston, Springfield and West Melton. The restrictions mean that properties connected to these supplies can't irrigate lawns between 6am and 9am or between 4pm and 9pm, until further notice. Selwyn residents connected to these supplies are being asked to avoid irrigation at these times from now onwards, as water supplies are already under pressure.

Mr Washington is encouraging residents to both conserve water by reducing the amount of irrigation carried out and to also irrigate lawns during the early morning between midnight and 6am (when demand for water is lowest) if they have the option to set a timer. "The early morning is actually the best time to irrigate as water has the opportunity to soak into the ground and be retained there," says Mr Washington. "When irrigation is carried out in the daytime a lot of water evaporates and is wasted."

Mr Washington says that high levels of growth, combined with high water usage and increasing demand for water as a result of the dry weather mean that the introduction of water restrictions are necessary.

Improvements to add capacity have been programmed for some time and are planned for a number of water supplies. This year two new bores will be added to the Rolleston supply. One additional bore will also be developed to supply Lincoln and another to supply Prebbleton later this year. In Doyleston, a second pipe will be constructed this year to directly connect the town's reservoir to the water source, which will provide the water supply with more capacity.

In Springfield, water is drawn from the Kowai River and treated to supply the town. This river is experiencing lower flows due to the dry weather and Springfield residents are being asked to reduce irrigation as well as avoiding watering their properties at specific times.

Selwyn District Council has a graduated system of water restrictions and more stringent restrictions preventing all lawn watering could be introduced if weather conditions become drier and demand for water continues to be high.

“We hope that the introduction of the water restrictions will help ensure that there continues to be enough water to supply households and we are asking the community to help us to manage water sustainably by observing the restrictions,” says Mr Washington.

For more information on water restrictions see: [www.selwyn.govt.nz](http://www.selwyn.govt.nz)

## **BACKGROUND**

Summer water restrictions are commonly used in New Zealand as a way to manage demand for water and are currently operating in a number of areas including Wellington, Timaru, Akaroa, Ashburton and Nelson.

Water use by Selwyn households is high by New Zealand standards – residential properties in Selwyn connected to Council water supplies used an average of 1,300 litres per day in 2013/14.

Typical consumption for a New Zealand household is between 500 and 750 litres per day by comparison. In areas such as West Melton and Rolleston where many new sections are being developed, many households have particularly high water use as they establish their lawns.

Council data shows that demand for water on a hot summer evening, when many people are irrigating their lawns, can be many times greater than it is during winter months.

While council understands that residents wish to water their lawns, especially on newly-established sections, it is preferable for people to do this at times of lower demand when it has the least impact on other households.

It is preferable to manage these issues by reducing the level of demand for water at peak periods through water restrictions, as it would be very expensive to add additional bores which would be used less than 5% of the time.

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