

# News Release

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**Premier Mike Rann**  
**Hon Karlene Maywald**

Minister for the River Murray  
Minister for Water Security

Monday, 16 November 2009

## **SIMPLER, MORE FLEXIBLE WATERING TIMES**

Premier Mike Rann and Minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald said Cabinet has today taken the decision to ease Level 3 water restrictions and provide South Australians with more flexibility in the current watering times.

**From midnight tonight, households can water their gardens, using a hand-held hose with trigger nozzle or drippers, for a maximum of five hours a week – on any day of the week.**

**The odds and evens system will no longer apply.**

**The hours of watering - 6 am to 9 am - and 6 pm to 9 pm - remains.**

Mr Rann says expert advice has convinced Cabinet that given this year's lower water use over winter, the extra watering times will not jeopardise Adelaide's water supply for critical human needs before the desalination plant comes on line at the end of next year.

"The important factor in making this decision was ensuring the security of our future water supplies," Mr Rann says.

"I needed categorical assurance from the people who can do the maths on water supply, demand, evaporation, daily usage, and so on that this move was not going to mean we run short of drinking water in the coming year.

"Despite all of the hype we have seen in the media about people not observing water restrictions, water usage has not exceeded expectations so far for the month of November.

"This means the vast majority of people continue to observe the current restrictions.

"From 1 July Adelaide has used about 44.5 gigalitres – which is about 8.5 gigalitres less than SA Water forecast would be used until this date.

"Given we can be confident that most people observe restrictions, we can allow an easing without compromising future water security – although we will continue to closely monitoring water use.

Minister Maywald says South Australians using less water over the winter months has helped to provide more flexibility for summer watering while still remaining within our annual target under the Level 3 Enhanced restrictions.

"South Australians have done a great job since the introduction of restrictions to conserve water, which has put us in a better position as this summer approaches.

“By no longer applying the odds and even-numbered system, households will have maximum flexibility to choose their own watering days while still staying within the 6-9am and 6-9pm time frame.”

The ban on sprinklers remains in force but people can use drippers and hand-held hoses fitted with a trigger nozzle for up to five hours a week.

Other level 3 enhanced restrictions remain, which means:

- Watering cans and buckets can be used at any time.
- The ban on sprinklers and other water systems remains in force.
- Watering permits for the elderly and disabled are unchanged.

The decision to introduce greater flexibility this year follows advice from experts including representatives of the SA Water Customer Council, Urban Water Drought Reference Group and gardening professionals.

“These changes should help gardeners ensure their plants’ survival by giving them more time to pre-hydrate gardens before extreme events,” Minister Maywald says.

“Of course, we will continue to keep a close eye on water use and reassess the situation on a month-by-month basis.

“As long as South Australians continue to comply with these restrictions, we should be able to maintain this greater flexibility throughout summer.

“The onus is on households to do the right thing and continue to conserve water inside and outside of the house.

“If water usage does spike up above our water security targets then the Government will have to reconsider imposing tighter restrictions.”

South Australians are using less water in smarter ways, and this has been proven for 2009 with Adelaide’s consumption about 44 billion litres less when compared to the 2002 extreme drought year.

People are also looking at new ways to save water, with more than \$23.2 million in H2OME Rebates granted across the State and contributing to water savings around people’s homes.

“South Australians are learning to better cope with the extreme days of heat,” Minister Maywald says.

“In past years Adelaide has used anywhere up to 1 billion litres of water a day during heatwaves. However, during the 2009 extreme heatwaves we have averaged 30-40 per cent less water than this level of consumption.”

Special exemptions for Port Pirie and the Whyalla iron oxide zone will remain to help residents manage dust impacts. Eyre Peninsula, which adopted Level 3 Enhanced Water Restrictions in July this year, will also be able to use the more flexible watering times.