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Level three water restrictions likely

Orange residents are being urged to make their homes and gardens more water efficient as level three water restrictions become more likely.

Based on Orange City Council modelling it's likely the city will move to level three water restrictions in early December.

Orange Mayor Reg Kidd said residents might want to investigate installing micro sprays, drip feeders and soaker hoses to keep gardens watered.

"Orange residents have always been very good at being water wise," Cr Kidd said.

"We're encouraging residents to take what they're already doing to reduce their water consumption and going that extra step.

"Level three restrictions means hand-held hoses can't be used, instead more water efficient watering techniques are needed.

"Soaker hoses, micro sprays and drip feeders are great and can be purchased at any hardware store or nursery and are fairly easily put together.

"According to the Bureau of Meteorology we have had record dry weather, for the last year and a half. We have done well to maintain our water supply above 50 per cent capacity for this long.

"The Macquarie to Orange Pipeline and the award-winning storm-water harvesting scheme have been invaluable and both will continue to take full advantage of rain events when they do happen."

In the last 12 months Orange City Council transferred about 870 mega litres of water to Suma Park dam, using the Macquarie to Orange Pipeline and the city's storm water harvesting scheme.

Based on the average daily consumption of residents, over the 12 months, that amount equates to about two and a half months of water supply.

"Having these two extra sources of water has made a huge difference in postponing the introduction of tighter restrictions.

“The Bureau reports severely affected areas from a lack of rain include the central west.

“Our neighbours at Bathurst are also going to level three water restrictions by the end of the month.

“Bathurst’s restrictions are slightly different to here in Orange. In some areas the Bathurst restrictions are more stringent, for example people may only water for half an hour a day, in a three hour time period, but in others they are more lenient.

“For example in Orange people can only use buckets to wash a car during level three water restrictions, in Bathurst people may use a hose with a trigger nozzle.

“We’re not alone, but we are placed well to weather this dry period.”

The Bureau reports the Orange Agricultural Institute weather station recorded the lowest rainfall on record for the 15 months from July 2017 to September 2018.

Council policy states once the city’s combined water storage levels hit 50 per cent, the city would move to level three restrictions.

The current storage level is 51.8 per cent and it’s likely it will hit 50 per cent in the first week of December.

Hand held hoses should not be used during level three water restrictions.

Watering of lawns and gardens with buckets, watering cans, drip feeders, soaker hoses and microsprays can be done between 6am and 9am and 6pm and 9pm, every second day as per the odds and evens , house number, system.

There are exceptions for freshly laid turf and residents can apply to be exempt from restrictions.

For water saving advice head to <https://www.smartwatermark.org/Centroc/>

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