

Changes to Portland's water treatment



We're changing the way Portland's water is disinfected with the goal of maintaining the long-term safety and quality of the drinking water supply.

What the project involves

The project involves switching from chloramine (chlorine + ammonia) disinfection to free chlorine (just chlorine) disinfection.

It's likely that some of our customers will notice a change in the taste and/or odour of their drinking water, as it is likely to have a stronger 'chlorine' taste or smell.

We're planning to start the process on 27 July 2026, although customers are unlikely to notice any impact until the following week as the water moves from the storage reservoir and into the system.

Some of the most common questions and answers are listed below.

Q&A

Why do you disinfect our water?

Safe drinking water supplies are critical to our health and wellbeing. Water from untreated sources such as streams, bores, dams and rainwater tanks can sometimes contain harmful pathogens, such as bacteria and viruses, that cause serious illness or, in some cases, death. Disinfection is the single process that has had the greatest impact on drinking water safety. As a result, many water-borne diseases such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid have been effectively controlled.

What will you be doing?

We're changing the disinfection system from chloramine (chlorine + ammonia) disinfection to free chlorine (just chlorine) disinfection.

Are there any health impacts?

No. This project is being done to maintain and improve the long-term safety and quality of the drinking water supply. Chlorine has been used around the world for more than 100 years to disinfect drinking water supplies.

Why might there be a change to the taste or smell of the water?

Chloramine can have a different taste to chlorine. A smell of chlorine is not always a bad thing as it's a good indication that the water is effectively disinfected and is safe to drink.

I can smell chlorine. Is there too much chlorine in my water?

No, the chlorine residual will be within safe levels and comply with Australian Drinking Water Guideline limits. Chlorine is constantly monitored at the water treatment plant and precautions are in place to prevent overdoses. You may notice a change in chlorine smell or taste - this is due to the change in the disinfection process. The amount of chlorine will stay within safe levels.

Portland's water supply is sourced from the Dilwyn Aquifer, the water is pumped out of the ground from two 1250-metre deep bores at Bald Hill, south of the city. A bore at our Wyatt Street site provides a back-up supply with its own treated water storage.



**6,015
customers**



**1374 million
litres treated
each year**



**155 litres
per person
per day**

What can I do to improve the taste of my water?

You can reduce any additional chlorine taste or smell you may notice in your drinking water. Fill a jug from your tap and store it in the fridge for a few hours before drinking. Chlorine dissipates naturally over time and is less noticeable in cold water, so this will reduce the impact of any additional chlorine taste.

What if I am undergoing kidney dialysis at home?

Customers undergoing home kidney dialysis will need to continue their disinfection residual neutralisation processes. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice on whether any changes are necessary.

What if I use tap water in my home aquarium?

While the chlorination process poses a lower risk to fish than the chloramination process, you should continue to use an appropriate water conditioner to treat any tap water used in fish tanks and aquariums.

Is this process part of the Quality Water for Wannon (QWW) Program?

This changed treatment process is separate to the QWW Program. QWW is a major project to improve the quality and taste of the water in Portland, Heywood and Port Fairy through the construction of new reverse osmosis water treatment plants in each town.

Following extensive community engagement last year, Wannon Water is aiming to have a design and construct major works contract in place by early 2027.

If you'd like further information, we're here to help on 1300 926 666 or email us at info@wannonwater.com.au