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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Level 5 Water Restrictions for St George**

In response to escalating drought conditions the Balonne Shire Council will implement new Level 5 water restrictions in St George on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2020.

Mayor Richard Marsh said Council's river water allocation went below the 350ML trigger mark at the end of December. "It's disappointing we haven't been able to stretch our allocation further."

The town's average daily water usage dipped to 2.85ML per day for December but returned to 3ML per day at the start of January. "The temporary reduction seems driven by people being away over the Christmas holidays, rather than an intentional reduction," Cr Marsh said.

Forward calculations put the river water allocation at less than 250ML by 20<sup>th</sup> January, which would have triggered Level 6 water restrictions and banned all external water use.

Cr Marsh said Mallowa Irrigation has shown tremendous community spirit by assisting Council with infrastructure, committing to a water trade and leaving their remaining allocation in Jack Taylor Weir so Council can access its remaining allocation in full.

"We really appreciate the proactive partnership that has developed with the channel irrigators and their willingness to assist St George through this challenging time."

Cr Marsh said the town now has another chance to work together to avoid a total watering ban. "It's heartbreaking for residents to lose their gardens but with no guarantee of good summer rain we have to be water wise. We remain fortunate to have ample bore water for household use."

Level 5 water restrictions reduce hand-held watering to three days a week between 6pm to 8pm. Residences, businesses and schools with odd street numbers will water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Even street numbers will water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

In line with community expectation Council will also reduce watering in public areas to only the oval at Rowden Park, the War Memorial, Cemetery and the Swimming Pool between pools only.

"If people don't abide by the Level 5 restrictions, we will not have enough water for critical services such as firefighting, amenities and air-conditioning," Cr Marsh said.

River water users should aim to use a maximum of 1.2KL per day and can monitor usage by taking two readings from their river water meter, the difference between is the water usage for that period.

"We've worked hard to conserve a river water supply drained by drought and repairs to Beardmore Dam. We need all residents to work with us, respect the restrictions and reduce their water use."

Cr Marsh said a working group of Balonne Shire Council, Department of Natural Resources Mines & Energy, Mallowa and Sunwater, meet weekly and continue to monitor the situation closely.

For more information:

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