



Birregurra Sustainable Communities Water Update

This month we're putting the spotlight on our Birregurra Living Laboratory project. In 2022, we launched our second Living Laboratory which focussed on outdoor water use; in the garden. Garden watering is one of largest uses of household water in Birregurra, especially during the warmer, summer months.

Garden Living Laboratory

The Garden Living Lab was developed to support Birregurra residents to adopt sustainable water use behaviours in their gardens. We engaged Barwon Water contractor, Cam McGregor from McGregor Project Service who is a local irrigation/water efficient garden specialist, to carry out free garden visits, providing advice on water efficient gardening practices such as plant zoning, plant choice, soil health, mulch, and watering requirements (when to water and how much to water). Cam also provided recommendations to improve garden watering and irrigation efficiency, checked watering systems for leaks and conducted quick fixes, as well as adjustments and upgrades to existing garden watering set-up's where necessary.

Seventeen residents participated in the Garden Living Lab which included Gayle and John Davis. Gayle and John are keen gardeners who own a very large property in Birregurra. They use an irrigation system to water high value garden beds and hand watering is required in some areas of the garden. Cam found their current garden watering practices were relatively water efficient, however, he was able to provide advice and tips to help Gayle and John increase water efficiency as well as keep the garden a lovely space to enjoy.

Gayle and John installed shrubler irrigation which uses stream drippers/mini sprinklers capable of delivering water at a high flow rate directly to the roots, and is recognised as being relatively water efficient, but it can be difficult to determine flow rates. Cam suggested a more water efficient alternative 'teeline', which uses drip line irrigation system tube, to supply precise amounts of water to lawn and garden areas, as well as using an existing rainwater tank to irrigate high value garden beds. Advice was also provided on the importance of using water storing granules/wetta soil, maintaining turf and established trees, and the best time/duration to water to keep these maintained to encourage drought hardiness. Cam also suggested reducing the number of planter pots which require a high volume of water and being selective about plant choice in the future.

Gayle said that it was a very encouraging sign from Barwon Water to be shown an efficient and effective watering system such as teeline, that not only saves time and labour (by dragging hoses around) but most importantly saves water. Gayle also noted the water storing granule product had been amazing and that she received some great tips and ideas for the future.

Water supply upgrade drop in

We've commenced construction on the new underground pipeline that will connect Birregurra to Colac's water supply. The upgrade will ensure we can continue to provide high quality, affordable and secure services for our existing customers, as well as cater for future growth. We're hosting three community pop-ups over the coming months to provide more information about the community's new water supply upgrade and we'll be available to answer any questions you may have. Drop in any time on:

- **Tuesday 12 September**, between 5pm and 7pm
Birregurra Mechanics Hall
- **Wednesday 11 October**, between 8am and 11am
outside the Birregurra General Store
- **Sunday 12 November**, between 9am and 2pm
Birregurra Sunday Market

We hope to see you there! To stay up-to-date about the project, please visit <https://www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/birre-upgrade>

For further details on the Birregurra Sustainable Communities – Water program and our Living Laboratory project, visit www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/birregurra

Thankyou Gayle (pictured) and John for sharing your beautiful garden and experience with the Garden Living Laboratory initiative.

