

Wettest shire dries up

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Level-one bans as region's hot spell drags on

Julie Lightfoot

lightfootj@tcp.newsld.com.au

AUSTRALIA'S wettest shire has resorted to watering bans as the Far North bakes under an unseasonably hot sun and cloudless skies.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council imposed level-one water restrictions yesterday, after reports that residents in elevated areas were being left high and dry because of their neighbours' watering habits.

"Some people are going without any water at all during peak times for water usage in the morning and evenings," the council's water manager Ross Jennings said.

Innisfail has recorded its hottest August in five years.

Further north in Cairns - where the average maximum temperature for August was 28.3C this year - it has been 11 years since August was as hot.

Coupled with low rainfall, the Far North is unseasonably dry.

Mr Jennings said water restrictions were rare for his shire's northern end but the former Cardwell Shire was used to permanent sprinkler limits, despite Tully being one of Australia's two wettest towns.

WEATHER FACTS

- Cairns' average maximum temp - 26.5C (2C above average for August)
- Cairns rainfall - 7.8mm (19mm below average for August)
- Innisfail rainfall - 38mm (79mm below average for August)
- Cardwell Range rainfall - 0mm (a record-breaking low for August at 52mm below the average)
- Weipa recorded one of Qld's warmest days on average with 33.3C

On the hose: Innisfail gardener Frances McLaughlin will have to use her hose more after water restrictions were brought in. Picture: JULIE LIGHTFOOT

Cassowary Coast councillors voted against permanent restrictions for the new amalgamated shire on Thursday, instead bringing in temporary level-one restrictions.

Mayor Bill Shannon said a handful of homeowners were turning on their taps to see either a trickle or nothing during peak watering

times. "Because of the increased use there isn't enough (water) pressure for them on really hot days," he said.

The council wants to reduce average daily water consumption from 330 litres to 270 litres a person.

The new restrictions ban sprinkler use on Mondays and limit use

to between 5am and 7am and 7pm and 9pm for the rest of the week. Odd-numbered properties can water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and even-numbered homes limited to Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

There is no limit on hand-held hosing.

TV stars set off on mission

SEA Patrol stars Lisa M Cune and Ian Stenlake will be back at Missic Beach next week for filming of the four series of the Nine Network's hit show.

The tourist town south of Cairns will be bursting at the seams with actors, extras, boaties and navy personnel from Friday.

A spokesperson said the crew would spend five weeks at Mission Beach for offshore filming on navy patrol boat HMAS *Launceston*, and four days filming in Cairns in November.

"There will be about 60 actors and 100 crew involved this year," a spokesperson said.

Far Northerners are expected to again play their part as extras.

Up to 100 navy personnel are believed to be involved in the series, and film employees are said to already be in town setting up digs.

A Nine Network spokesperson said McCune and Stenlake would be back for the fourth series but Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, Saskia Burmeister and Jay Ryan would not be returning.

