



Australian Drinking Water Guidelines – Fact Sheet

Examples of drinking water parameters include:

- **Microbiological parameters** – such as *E. coli* or total coliforms, which indicate possible faecal contamination.
- **Chemical parameters** – such as lead, arsenic, nitrate, fluoride and pesticides.
- **Physical parameters** – such as turbidity, colour, temperature and total dissolved solids.
- **Aesthetic parameters** – characteristics that affect taste, odour or appearance, such as iron, manganese and hardness.
- **Operational parameters** – such as pH, chlorine residual and conductivity, which help assess how well the water treatment and distribution system is operating.

Reference

This information is based on the **Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)**, published by the **National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)**.

Parameter	Unit	Australian Drinking Water Guideline
E. coli	CFU/100 mL	Not detected in 100 mL
pH	pH units	6.5–8.5
Turbidity	NTU	≤5 NTU aesthetic; preferably <1 NTU for effective disinfection
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)	mg/L	≤600 mg/L aesthetic
Total Hardness as CaCO ₃	mg/L	≤200 mg/L aesthetic
Nitrate as NO ₃	mg/L	≤50 mg/L
Nitrite as NO ₂	mg/L	≤3 mg/L
Fluoride	mg/L	≤1.5 mg/L
Arsenic	mg/L	≤0.010 mg/L
Cadmium	mg/L	≤0.002 mg/L
Lead	mg/L	≤0.005 mg/L
Mercury	mg/L	≤0.001 mg/L
Nickel	mg/L	≤0.02 mg/L
Copper	mg/L	≤2 mg/L health; ≤1 mg/L aesthetic
Manganese	mg/L	≤0.10 mg/L health; ≤0.05 mg/L aesthetic
Iron	mg/L	≤0.3 mg/L aesthetic
Aluminium	mg/L	≤0.2 mg/L operational/aesthetic
Zinc	mg/L	≤3 mg/L aesthetic
Chloride	mg/L	≤250 mg/L aesthetic
Sodium	mg/L	≤180 mg/L aesthetic
Sulfate	mg/L	≤250 mg/L aesthetic
Ammonia	mg/L	≤0.5 mg/L aesthetic/operational