



Water conservation

By reducing the amount of water your business uses you are not only contributing long-term operational cost savings, but you will also be helping to conserve our water supply.

What can you do?

Here are a few simple ways to help your business reduce water consumption.

In the tearoom

- Turn taps off tightly, but gently, so they don't drip.
- Avoid rinsing or washing your dishes under a running tap. Instead, quarter fill the sink to prevent unnecessary water wasting.
- Turn taps on slowly and run them slowly to reduce the volume of water flowing out of the tap.

In the bathroom and toilet area

- Ensure that your toilet system is always in good working condition. A leaking toilet can waste up to 16,000 litres of water per year.
- Check if your toilet is leaking by putting a little food colouring in the cistern. If the colouring begins appearing in the bowl even without flushing, you should get the cistern repaired.
- Replacing your single flush toilet with a 6/3 dual flush toilet can save up to five litres of water per full flush.

In the kitchen

- When preparing fruit and vegetables wash them in a kitchen sink half filled with water (about 12 litres). If your washing takes around three - five minutes, you'll save 33 to 48 litres of water.
- Rinse your dishes in a sink quarter filled with water, instead of under a free flowing tap.
- When washing dishes reduce the amount of detergent you use so fewer chemicals are going down the drain-pipe.

In the garden and outdoor areas

- Water your business's garden in the early morning or late evening, when your plants can get the maximum benefit from the water you give them. Frequent watering makes your plants shallow rooted and more dependent on you for survival.
- Water your business's garden less often, but more thoroughly. This encourages your plants to extend their roots deeper, making them hardier, and less thirsty.
- Choose water-wise plants when planting up new areas of your garden.
- Never clean the footpath or driveway with a hose - use a rake or broom instead.
- When washing your car do it on the grass and water your garden at the same time.

Water facts

Here are some interesting facts about water that you can share with work colleagues, staff members, customers, family and friends.

- A running tap can use between 15 and 200 litres of water each minute.
- A dishwasher can use up to 35 litres on each wash cycle. Where possible only use the dishwasher when it is full and follow the manufacturer's instructions to ensure you maximise its water efficiency.
- A lawn soaks up more water per square metre than any other area in your garden.
- Australia is the driest continent on earth (excluding Antarctica), but we are the greatest consumers of water per capita.
- Australians use more than one million litres of freshwater per person each year, or about 24 giga litres - that's enough to fill Sydney Harbour 48 times over!
- Water is a precious resource, yet less than 10 per cent of the water used by urban and industrial consumers in Australia is recycled.
- Increasing the use of recycled water helps conserve drinking water supplies, lessens the impact on the marine environment and makes use of a valuable resource.

The hidden uses of water- seeing beyond the tap

There is often a high amount of 'embodied water' (total amount of water used to produce an item) associated with many items we use or consume. For example:

- It takes 41,500 litres to produce a kilo of meat
- It takes 500 litres to produce one orange
- It takes 1,340,000 litres to produce one tonne of aluminium
- It takes 50 litres to produce a copy of Saturday's newspaper
- It takes about 5,000 litres of water to create one kilogram of rice.
- It takes four litres to produce a bottle of beer

Acknowledgements

Information contained in this fact sheet was sourced from a variety of organisations. For further information about water quality and conservation please visit their websites:

Melbourne Water - www.melbournewater.com.au

Save Water - www.savewater.com.au¹

South East Water www.southeastwater.com.au

For more information

To find out more about saving water in your business, contact the Sustainable Traders Project Officer on (03) 9209 6474 or email karcher@portphillip.com.au, or visit <http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/ecoedge.html>

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