

Water

Actions leading to an overall reduction in water usage can make a significant contribution to the local environment and to the long-term sustainability of your travel and tourism operation.

Why should you reduce your water consumption?

There are both environmental and financial benefits of reducing water consumption. Did you know, for example:

- > Larger hotels can save up to \$25,000 each year by reducing their water usage, and
- > Water efficiency audits in the Australian hotel industry show that water consumption can be reduced by an average of 20% without compromising guest comfort.

This is good news for both tourism operators and the environment.

It's important that we all play a role in minimising water consumption, particularly when you consider that:

- > A leaking tap can waste 9 litres in one day or more than 2,500 litres in one month, while leaking toilets use much more. Checking taps regularly can help reduce water bills by up to 5%.
- > Potable water resources are consumed not only by drinking but also through recreational facilities, gardens, doing the laundry and cleaning of surfaces.
- > The average medium to large hotel in Australia uses 79,000 litres per day (or 301 litres per room per day). This is equal to the amount of water needed to fill 29 Olympic-sized pools each year.
- > Showers are the most significant users of water in hotels. Yet water efficient shower flow rates of less than nine litres per minute are only used in approximately 20% of Australian hotels.

Why do I need to act on this now?

Australia is expected to have an extra five million people living mostly in major cities by 2032. Coupled with a forecast reduction in water supply due to climate change, this will place growing pressure on the demand for water and a general increase in water costs.

Tips for reducing your water consumption and managing potable water

In general, always:

- > Fix leaking taps, pipes and toilet cisterns.
- > Encourage staff to report all water leaks needing attention.
- > Use a mop and bucket rather than a hose to clean external areas.
- > Place notices about water conservation which suggest ways that staff and guests can minimise their water consumption around the complex.

In the bathroom:

- > Encourage staff to minimise water use when cleaning – particularly toilet flushes.
- > Use a highly rated water-efficient showerhead (using around 10 litres per minute) rather than older models (using 20 to 30 litres per minute). Using water efficient showers reduces the volume of hot water needed as well as the energy required to heat the water.
- > Use passive infra-red (PIR) sensors for urinals in the men's toilets. These generally use 20% less water than a normal urinal flushing system.
- > Install dual-flush or water saving toilets, which use approximately 4 to 6 litres, less than half the water quantity used by a standard single flush toilet which uses 10 to 15 litres per flush. In a 100-bed hotel, dual flush toilets could save over 200,000 litres of water per year.

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> In the kitchen:

- > Use only full loads in the kitchen and laundry washing machines unless they have the option of a smaller load setting.
- > Operate dishwashers and washing machines on the Economy cycle.
- > When purchasing new appliances or replacing old ones, select those which have a short wash cycle that uses less water.

Outside:

- > Use insulated covers for spa pools and swimming pools to reduce evaporation, which can exceed 200 litres per day for larger pools in hot climates.
- > Watering plants and gardens in the early evening or later can achieve water savings of up to 25%.
- > Group plants with similar watering needs and give them the appropriate amount of water. Plant drought resistant plants where possible.
- > Ensure automatic watering systems are turned off in rainy periods.
- > Consider diverting surface water runoff and water from roof gutters to the hotel's gardens landscaped areas, instead of directly to stormwater drains.
- > Consider a water tank – in the current climate, with record populations, high water usage and the worst drought in generations, water tanks in urban and rural areas are becoming more and more of a necessity. There are also government rebates available in some cases.

Useful links

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
environment.gov.au/settlements/government/water-efficiency.html

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
waterrating.gov.au/

Water Corporation WA
watercorporation.com.au/W/waterwise_business.cfm

Australian Water Association
awa.asn.au

Facility Management Association of Australia Ltd
fma.com.au/cms/index.php

NSW Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability
deus.nsw.gov.au/water/water.asp

South East Water
southeastwater.com.au

Sydney Water Corporation
sydneywater.com.au

SaveWater.Com
savewater.com.au

Water Services Association of Australia
wsaa.asn.au

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