

# 4 WATER FACT SHEET



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## WATER IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE, FORTUNATELY BUSINESSES HAVE MANY SIMPLE WAYS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION AND SAVE MONEY.

**Water usage in businesses varies greatly depending on** the sector. From hairdressers and gyms to hotels, increased water efficiency will always reduce operating costs and help the environment. Reducing water consumption means improving business processes in how water is used as well as utilising water efficient appliances and fixtures. This allows

the same results and standards with less wastage. Reduced hot water consumption also provides worthwhile returns because less use saves water and energy providing greater savings. This fact sheet will provide general information on simple ways to reduce water use as well as efficient hot water systems and current energy efficiency technology.



### WATER METERS

Familiarise yourself with your water meter. It's the best way to check if there are water leaks or unexplained usage. Read meter at the end of the day, and again in the morning.



### USE TRUSTED PLUMBERS

Make sure plumbers you use are licensed, professional and experienced. (see Water and Sewerage Act 2000, Water and Sewerage Regulations 2001, [www.actpla.act.gov.au](http://www.actpla.act.gov.au)).



### INVOLVE STAFF

Engage staff to help identify water saving opportunities. Communicate new processes throughout the business and provide incentives for water savings.



### CHECK FOR LEAKS

Leaks are a common source of water wastage which is normally easily fixed with the replacement of washers. Remember to check toilets and urinals as well.



### ENGAGE CLIENTS

Communicate to clients what you are doing to save water and encourage them to do likewise, not just in your business but at home as well.



### REVIEW PROCESSES

Determine how water is used in your business and what changes can be made to reduce usage. Include behavioural change and retrofitting water saving devices.



### REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Fixing problems pre-emptively is more cost effective and stops problems becoming bigger and more expensive to fix. Some small jobs can be completed by yourself



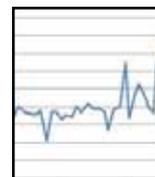
### PLANTS AND LANDSCAPING

Use plants that need less water. Most native Australian plants are hardy, can tolerate drier conditions and are generally better suited for Australian climate.



### WATER AUDIT

An audit shows exactly how much and whereabouts water is being consumed. Contact ACTSmart for further details on how to conduct a water audit at your premises.



### SET GOALS

Setting water saving goals is an excellent way to commit to new processes and keep staff engaged. Money saved can be reinvested for staff incentives.



**The Australian Self Defence Academy** in Mitchell approached the ACTSmart team

in mid 2013 in an attempt to improve their businesses efficiency and reduce running costs. They had an assessment carried out and were delivered a report that identified a number of energy and water saving opportunities available to them. One of the recommendations from the report that

the Australian Self defence Academy chose to implement was the replacement of 2 old single flush toilets with new WELS rated water efficient units. The old units had small leaks in the cisterns which were barely visible but were dripping constantly. It is estimated that the new toilets will save the Academy over 40,000 litres of water per year. As participants in the ACTSmart program the Australian Self Defence Academy were able to claim a rebate for 50% of the cost of the toilet upgrades.

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## HOT WATER SYSTEMS

**Reducing hot water usage through an efficient system or reduced usage, not only saves you water but reduces your**

electricity use as well. When choosing a new system, look at usage amounts and patterns, budget and location.

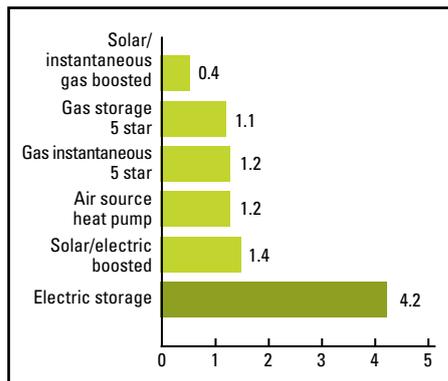
**SOLAR** – The most efficient hot water system with highest up front costs. Requires either electric or gas boosting.

**INSTANTANEOUS (GAS OR ELECTRIC)** – Only heats water when needed and can be efficient when small quantities of hot water are required.

**HEAT PUMP** – Very efficient in warmer climates, with units extracting heat from the air. New models exist that work well enough in cold climates.

**STORAGE GAS** – Not as efficient as solar but a better solution than electric storage.

### GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS OF HWS



## WATER EFFICIENT PRODUCTS

**Retrofitting water saving devices** into existing systems is often a low cost and an easy way to reduce water consumption. Technological

improvements and improved government standards mean that most new water related products are more efficient than older counterparts.

**LOW FLUSH TOILETS** – If efficient half flush toilets aren't installed they can be retrofitted. For a simple low-tech solution a 2L milk container full of water can be put in the cistern to reduce volume of the flush.

**AERATOR AND FLOW RESTRICTORS** – Can be retrofitted onto taps to mix the flow of water with air or reduce water flow to increase efficiency.

**SHOWER HEADS** – Low flow showerheads have improved dramatically over recent times with excellent pressure and performance while using a lot less water.

**WATER EFFICIENT APPLIANCES** - When buying new appliances that use water, such as dishwashers, ensure that they have a good WELS rating indicating their efficiency.

**WATER TANKS** - Water tanks come in a large variety of shapes and sizes making the urban collection of water (where space is a premium) much easier.

## GLOSSARY

### AERATOR

Mixes air into a stream of water in order to smooth the flow of water, reduce splashing and conserve water.

### FLOW RATE

The volume of water that flows within a given unit of time. (ie. litres per minute or hour for most domestic products)

### FLOW REGULATOR

Maintains a constant flow rate regardless in variations of line pressure as well as water and energy saving at high pressure.

### GREY WATER

Water that is discharged from household appliances and fixtures in the laundry, kitchen or bathroom. Grey water can be filtered through a grey water system and be reused in toilets and gardens.

### HWS

Hot Water System

### POTABLE WATER

Water with a quality suitable for drinking. Non potable water is unsuitable for drinking.

### LOW FLOW

Reducing the flow of water to increase efficiency as in a low flow showerhead.

### WELS

The Water Efficiency Labeling and Standards (WELS) Scheme provides water efficiency info to consumers on products.

## CHECKLIST

**DETERMINE HOW WELL YOUR CURRENT SYSTEM IS PERFORMING** What are the reasons for upgrading and what are you wanting to achieve? Get staff involved.

**AUDIT CURRENT WATER USAGE** Determine age, capacity and efficiency of current system. Determine usage patterns. Identify what components need to be upgraded.

**DETERMINE UPGRADE OPTIONS** Rank them based on payback periods. Prepare a business case for upgrading. Speak to a professional for the best advice.

**GET QUOTES FOR UPGRADES** Check installer credentials, legal compliance (see Water and Sewerage Act 2000, Water and Sewerage Regulations 2001, www.actpla.act.gov.au) and product warranty. Cheapest may not necessarily be best. Check old items are being disposed of properly. Check product warranties.

**COMPLETE AND CHECK THE OF QUALITY WORK** implement any behavioural change strategies.

**ASSESS EFFECTIVENESS OF UPGRADES** Check your water bills pre and post retrofit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [ACTSMART.ACT.GOV.AU](http://ACTSMART.ACT.GOV.AU)