BATHROOMS

In accommodation properties, energy and water consumption in bathrooms can be a major component of the total operating costs.

The experience of guests in the bathroom is an important factor in determining their overall level of satisfaction, and there are a number of measures which can be taken to minimise costs and environmental impact **without** reducing the quality of your guests' experience.

Reducing Water Use

The key actions for reducing water use include:

- Choosing water efficient appliances (including toilets, showers and taps)
- Educating guests to encourage responsible use of water

Water Ratings

When purchasing appliances that use water, look for the WELS Water Rating sticker and choose those with more stars over those with less.

The Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme
Common water-using appliances are registered and labelled under the WELS Scheme, which awards stars for water efficiency – the more stars, the more water-efficient the appliance. The following products are rated under this scheme:

- clothes washing machines
- dishwashers
- toilets & urinals
- showers
- indoor taps & flow controllers

A searchable database of all products can be found at www.waterrating.gov.au

Showers

The single greatest water savings in bathrooms can be achieved by controlling the volume of water delivered by showers. Water flow rates are affected by the type of showerhead, the water pressure, and the degree to which the taps are turned.

In general, conventional showers use 20-40 litres of water per minute - far in excess of the flow required for a good quality shower. A flow of 9-12 litres per minute will still produce a quality shower, and will save around $130 per shower, per year in water and energy costs.

- *Test the existing flow rate*

Your existing shower flow rates can be measured easily by a simple do-it-yourself test. A typical bucket holds 20 litres of water. Hold a bucket under your shower for 60 seconds and you will be able to measure the flow rate. If your bucket is overflowing, the flow is over 20 litres per minute, so a ten minute shower will use over 200 litres of water. If you consider that the average person drinks around 2 litres of water a day, that's a lot of water down the drain. The following devices will assist in reducing the amount of water by around 50%, as well as reducing your energy bill from hot water.

- *Flow control valves*

Flow control valves regulate water flow through showers and taps and can be installed in virtually all types of existing fixtures. They cost around $4 each, and come in a variety of sizes to restrict the water flow to 6, 9 or 12 litres per minute.

- *Water efficient showerheads*

The new water efficient showerheads are greatly improved from the days of the small, needle-stick showerheads. If you are concerned about the quality of shower which would be delivered, consider trialing several different products in your own bathroom or ask staff to trial them at home. You could also install the water efficient models in only a few showers at your property to begin with and seek feedback from guests.

Water efficient showerheads are available at plumbing supply shops and hardware stores and vary in cost from $20 - $200. A list of products, including those below, is available at www.waterrating.gov.au

Novelli – Mondo

Interbath - In Touch Rainmaker

Grohe – Tempesta

Methven - Satinjet

Note: Gas instantaneous hot water systems require a minimum flow rate to ignite the heating element. If water flow is restricted beyond this point, no hot water will be delivered by the unit.

Basins

Although guests may only use bathroom hand-basins for a few minutes a day, water use can be significant, particularly if taps are left running when not being used. Most conventional taps will deliver in excess of 20 litres per minute, but 8 to 10 litres per minute is more than adequate for hand basins. High flow rates also contribute to reduced amenity due to water splashing around the basin area. The following devices can be effective in reducing water consumption:

- *Flow control valves* (as described above)

- *Tap aerators*

Tap aerators improve the coverage or 'wetting ability' of water by mixing it with air as it comes out of the tap. This enables less water to be used for the same result – saving up to 50% of water by reducing the flow rate to around 8 litres per minute. Aerators are easily fitted by screwing into the spout, and cost around $7 each.

- *Sensor-activated taps*

Taps containing automatic movement sensors make good hygienic sense as well as being water wise. They operate on an infrared beam, only turning on when the beam is interrupted.

- *Plugs*

Plugs are often absent from bathroom basins, defeating the best intentions of water-saving guests. Consider securing plugs to taps or sinks to stop them going missing.

Toilets

Conventional toilet cisterns commonly deliver 12-15 litres per flush. This can be reduced by altering the toilet cistern to reduce flush volume, or by installing dual flush toilets when upgrading facilities.

- *Reduce the flush volume*

The flush volume from conventional flush toilets can be reduced in a number of ways:

- place a space occupying object such as plastic bottle or brick inside the cistern
- adjust the cistern float valve down to reduce the fill volume
- fit a device to the cistern which requires the flush button to be held down. These are available from plumbing suppliers for around $.

- *Dual flush toilets*

The most efficient dual flush toilets use 4.5 litres per flush. In a 25 bed accommodation property, the annual water saving from fitting dual flush toilets can exceed 50,000 litres. A list of products is available at www.waterrating.gov.au

Urinals

- *Waterless urinals*

These look identical to conventional urinals but they do not require any flushing water. Organic microbes are used to breakdown the waste product and eliminate smell. Waterless urinals are now widely available in Australia and have been installed in a range of businesses.

- *Sensor-activated urinals*

Flushing is activated by an infrared beam. A list of products is available at www.waterrating.gov.au

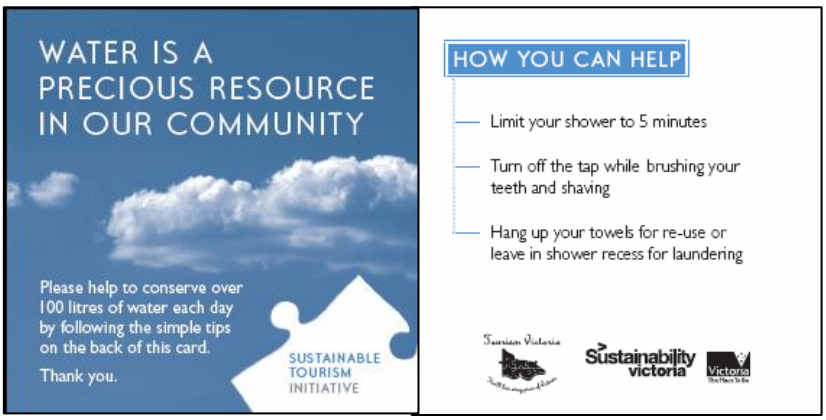
Educating Guests

Guest behaviour can have a significant impact on the amount of water used in your business.

- *Provide information on your water-saving efforts in Guest Information Folders*

- *Install signage in bathrooms encouraging guests to be 'water wise'*

FREE 'bathroom cards' are available for operators of serviced accommodation – contact Tourism Victoria to place an order.



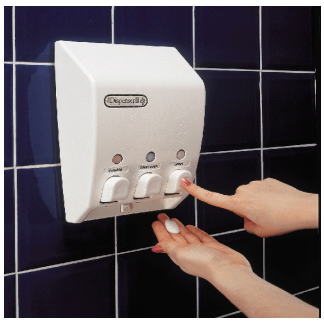
- *Implement a policy of on-demand towel exchange*

Ask guests to hang up towels unless they would like them laundered. Accommodation operators implementing this type of policy can significantly reduce water use, but also the time, money and energy required to wash towels every day.

Reducing Waste

Guest Amenities

Guest amenities such as shampoo, soaps and shaving kits are an important purchasing decision due to their contribution to non-recyclable waste and their importance to guests and the public image of your business. Where possible, consider purchasing environmentally friendly options.



- *Install refillable dispensers*

Rather than providing individually packaged items, consider purchasing refillable dispensers for soaps and shampoos.

- *Minimise packaging*

If individual serve portions are provided, choose products with minimal packaging in recycled material.