

WATER SAVING INITIATIVES

Water Savings Fund

The Water Savings Fund was established in 2005 to provide \$30 million per year over four years to deliver significant water savings across Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Illawarra through recycling and water conservation measures.

The NSW Government's 2006 Progress Report for the *Metropolitan Water Plan* announced an additional \$10 million for the Fund in 2006, leading to further water savings of around 3.4 billion litres per year by 2015.

Funding is directly allocated to several initiatives, including WaterFix for households, a \$22 offer to householders to install water saving devices and check for minor leaks, and rainwater tank rebates for households and schools. Money has also been put aside to increase public awareness of the importance of saving water.

It also has a contestable component where businesses, councils and NSW Government agencies can apply for funding to invest in innovative recycling and water saving initiatives.

Water Saving Action Plans

Large water-using businesses, councils and NSW Government agencies in Sydney are now required to prepare Water Savings Action Plans.

Preparing the Plans will encourage managers of high water using organisations in business and government to gain better knowledge of how much water is being used in their operations, and the real financial savings that can be made through water savings. This initiative is the first of its kind in Australia.

A total of 237 business and 39 government sites using more than 50 million litres of water per year, as well as all 44 councils in Sydney were required to prepare Water Savings Action Plans by the end of March 2006.

Every Drop Counts Business Program

The Every Drop Counts (EDC) Business Program has been running since 2001 and targets high water users in the manufacturing, commercial, hospitality, education and government sectors.

Through this program, individual organisations are assisted and encouraged to systematically manage their water use as part of normal operational activities. The program helps businesses to get the most out of the water they buy and achieve demand reductions that can be sustained over the long term.

The innovative EDC approach aims to integrate water management with existing operational and environmental management systems. By the end of 2005, 304 organisations were EDC partners, and water savings attributable to the Program were estimated to be approximately 7.3 billion litres per year.

Sydney Water's Leak Reduction Program

Sydney has nearly 21,000 kilometres of pipes that carry water to households, businesses and government across Sydney, Illawarra and the Blue Mountains. In 2004-05, estimated leakage was 10% of the total water supplied. This figure compares favourably to international leakage rates, with only a few countries such as Singapore and Germany achieving lower rates.

Sydney Water has the largest and most comprehensive program in Australia to reduce leakage from its system. Even so, detection and repair work is being increased to reduce leakage still further. It is estimated that nearly 17 billion litres of water per year is currently saved, and as the program continues, it has been predicted that this figure will increase to around 33.5 billion litres per year by 2015.

Building Sustainability Index (BASIX)

Introduced by the NSW Government as a world-first sustainability tool in July 2004, the Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) is a major initiative to reduce the amount of drinking water consumed and greenhouse gas emitted by new homes across NSW.

In Sydney, the BASIX policy includes a requirement that new dwellings must be built to use 40% less drinking water than the NSW average.

In addition to saving drinking water, the BASIX Scheme helps to decrease household water and energy bills. It is almost always more cost effective to install water and energy saving measures at the point when a building is being planned, rather than retrofitting those measures subsequently.

Independent expert analysis undertaken for the 2006 Metropolitan Water Plan indicates that, by 2015, water savings in Sydney attributable to the BASIX Scheme is expected to be 23 billion litres per year.

For more information visit waterforlife.nsw.gov.au