

Western Water is a member of the savewater!™ alliance, established to promote water conservation and increase community awareness of water saving products. Visit the savewater!™ website at www.savewater.com.au for information on water efficient products and suppliers or some new ideas to save water at home or work.

savewater!™ competitions have also helped thousands of households to reduce their water usage. Online competitions are held continuously throughout the year, with thousands of water saving products waiting to be won. Visit www.savewater.com.au for full terms and conditions of entry.

Have you been a water saver this year?

If you're proud of the water savings you have made this year, savewater!™ want to hear about it!

With nominations for the 4th annual savewater! awards® open from 22 March 2005, here is a great opportunity for you to celebrate your water conservation achievements and inspire others to save more water too.

With awards in nine categories and an overall Award for Excellence, there is an opportunity for everyone to enter and be rewarded for their contributions to water conservation. A panel of independent experts from across the water industry will judge the entries, led by Chief Judge Rob Gell.

Nomination forms, category information and entry criteria are available from www.savewater.com.au – just click on the 2005 savewater! awards® link. Nominations close on 22 August 2005.



savewater!™ awards Chief Judge and Comper Rob Gell at the 2004 awards ceremony. Photo courtesy of savewater!™.

A waterwise start to the school year

Western Water welcomed Grade Preps to school earlier this year with school visits and waterwise presentations as part of a new pilot program.

The Primary School Starter's program is aimed at educating younger members of the community about the importance of drinking water for health and wellbeing, as well as providing information on how to be waterwise. As part of the program, each Prep student received a School Starter's Kit, full of fun and educational waterwise items.

The main item in each kit was a drinking water bottle that Western Water has encouraged teachers to use in class to keep students hydrated. Drinking water while learning helps students to maintain energy and improves concentration and reaction times.

The kits also contained an activity booklet to introduce students to waterwise behaviour through fun games and puzzles.

Melton West Primary School was one of the first schools to register their interest in participating in the pilot program. Principal Cheryl Jackson said the students and staff thoroughly enjoyed the experience and welcomed the activity as an ongoing program for local schools.

"The program was both fun and proactive in communicating to students the need to be conscious about how much water their bodies require as well as how we can all learn to be waterwise citizens," Ms Jackson said.

During the pilot program, Western Water staff visited ten primary schools across the region, reaching almost 400 Grade Prep students. The program will now be evaluated to determine its value to local schools and how it might be improved for the future.



Grade Prep students at Melton West Primary School with their waterwise School Starter's Kits.

School's in for environmental issues

Western Water has launched an educational CD-Rom, designed especially for secondary school students as a reference on a range of water related environmental activities and issues.

The *Environmental Report* provides practical information about the environmental impacts of the water industry's activities and describes how Western Water is working in partnership with the community to protect our natural assets. Topics covered include catchment management, water conservation, biodiversity, recycled water, biosolids reuse and wastewater management.

Local examples are used to illustrate issues, such as the construction of the Lancefield Sewerage Scheme to eliminate the environmental and public health risks associated with septic tanks and the development of a policy to protect water quality in the Moorabool Shire.

The CD-Rom will assist students undertaking social and environmental studies to learn more about water issues in the local area, as well as providing a useful source of information for community groups and individuals with an interest in regional water issues.

To request a copy of the *Environmental Report*, please contact Western Water on 1300 650 425.

Your water

With your current account, you have received a copy of *Your water*, a guide to Western Water's water quality. This brochure explains where your water comes from, how we treat your water and our water quality testing program. It also includes a summary of key water quality test results for your town and answers to questions frequently asked by our customers about the quality of the water supply.

Rising block tariff reminder

Your latest water account has been calculated using a new pricing system. Water consumption for residential customers is now charged via a 'rising block' tariff structure and non-residential customers pay an increased flat rate for water consumption. Fixed water and sewerage service charges have increased, as have concessions for eligible customers. These changes have been introduced in accordance with the Victorian Government's *Our Water Our Future* action plan. If you would like more information on our prices, please visit www.westernwater.com.au or call 1300 650 425.

Tap into greywater



Greywater use is becoming increasingly popular with local residents to keep their gardens green.

'Greywater' is all non-toilet household water, produced from baths, showers, basins, the kitchen, washing machine and laundry. Provided it is handled responsibly, greywater can be safely reused around the garden to save watering with our precious drinking water supplies.

While greywater can be a good water resource in dry periods, it is also important to remember that its reuse can carry health and environmental risks. To assist customers wanting to temporarily divert greywater to the garden, Western Water has developed a handy guide called *Tap into Greywater*. This 12-page booklet provides information on safe use and the do's and don'ts of diverting untreated greywater.

Tap into Greywater can be downloaded from www.westernwater.com.au or you can request a copy in the mail by contacting us on 1300 650 425.

If you use greywater in the garden during periods of water restrictions, you may wish to alert your neighbours to this by placing a sign at the front of your property that reads 'Greywater in Use'.

WaterAid Australia – water for life

Did you know that worldwide:

1.1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water
2.4 billion people do not have access to adequate sanitation

It is hard to imagine life without clean water or somewhere safe to go to the toilet, yet this is the reality for billions of people around the world.

WaterAid Australia is an international aid agency dedicated to providing poor communities with safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education. Established in 2003, WaterAid Australia's inspiration is the British water industry's charity WaterAid UK.

WaterAid Australia works in partnership with disadvantaged communities in regions around Australia, in Asia and the Pacific. Initial fundraising projects are based in Papua New Guinea, Vietnam and India.

Western Water is a foundation member of WaterAid and will take part in community awareness and fundraising activities to help deliver clean water and basic sanitation to communities less fortunate than ourselves and provide us all with an appreciation of the quality of our own water supplies.

If you would like to find out more about WaterAid Australia, please visit www.wateraid.org.au



Village members work to construct a well to provide safe water for their community in Vietnam.
Photo courtesy of Caritas

Permanent water saving rules

On 1 March 2005, adequate water storage levels saw the introduction of Permanent Water Saving Rules to most towns serviced by Western Water. The rules replaced years of water restrictions, put in place to help manage our water supplies during drought.

A long-term water conservation initiative, Permanent Water Saving Rules are part of the State Government's action plan *Our Water Our Future*, which details over 100 proposals to secure Victoria's water supply for the next 50 years and beyond.

The common sense rules target discretionary water use, which mostly occurs outside the home, to help ensure we have enough water now and for the future. For example:

- A hand-held hose fitted with a trigger nozzle may be used at any time to water a garden or lawn
- Fountains which do not recirculate water must not be operated
- A hose used to clean a vehicle must be fitted with a trigger nozzle
- Paved areas can only be cleaned with water from a hose under special circumstances



Here, we answer your frequently asked questions about Permanent Water Saving Rules.

Why do we need Permanent Water Saving Rules?

Restrictions mean that we've all been saving water for some time now and, in some ways, our water conservation habits have become a way of life. Simple actions, like using a hose fitted with a trigger nozzle to water our gardens, have become normal practice. Everyone has a role to play in saving water. Permanent Water Saving Rules stop needless water wastage around the home and in the community such as watering during the heat of the day and hosing down paved areas, to help us achieve long-term water savings.



How do Permanent Water Saving Rules differ from staged restrictions?

Permanent Water Saving Rules provide long-term water savings to help ensure the sustainability of our water supplies. They are permanent rules that will be in place unless water restrictions are required. Water restrictions are introduced when water storage levels fall below specified levels, generally as the result of drought. They are designed to achieve significant water savings during severe water shortages, to ensure an adequate water supply for all customers.



Can water restrictions be re-introduced if necessary?

Yes, water restrictions (from stage one to stage four) can be introduced at any time if water storages fall below specified levels.

What savings are expected as a result of Permanent Water Saving Rules?

Overall, it is estimated that Permanent Water Saving Rules will achieve annual savings of around 2-3% of average annual water consumption.



How will the new rules be enforced?

Permanent Water Saving Rules are enforceable under provisions of the *Water Act 1989*.

Comprehensive information about Permanent Water Saving Rules has been mailed to all affected customers. Information is also available from www.westernwater.com.au or by calling 1300 650 425.

More information on State Government water initiatives can be found on the *Our Water Our Future* website at www.ourwater.vic.gov.au

Tsunami relief

Everyone was touched by the recent Asian tsunami disaster, with all Australians combining to donate money, materials and time to help rebuild devastated communities. Western Water has pledged to match staff donations to the tsunami appeal, via Oxfam Community Aid Abroad and WaterAid Australia, with almost \$2000 donated so far. Should they be required, Western Water has also compiled lists of possible equipment donations and volunteers to assist with water supply and reconstruction projects.

Donations can still be made to Oxfam's earthquake tsunami emergency appeal via www.oxfam.org.au at any Westpac branch or by calling 1800 034 034.

Myrning water supply update

Myrning customers remain on modified stage four restrictions, as drinking water continues to be carted into the township. Community information sessions held at the end of February 2005 detailed two options to improve Myrning's water supply for the long-term; continued supply from Pykes Creek Reservoir and construction of an improved water filtration facility; or construction of a new water pipeline to supply treated water from Lal Lal Reservoir, which also supplies water to the Ballarat region. At the time of print, a final decision had not been made. Updated information on Myrning's water supply situation is available from www.westernwater.com.au