

Be Water Wise



Mareeba
SHIRE COUNCIL

Water is a precious resource and we need to conserve it now and in the future. By changing some of your habits, you can save water, money and the environment.

Being water wise is easy. Make a difference today!

Bathroom

We use more water in our bathrooms than in any other internal part of the house. It's a great place to start when looking for ways to save water. Here are some water-saving ideas:

- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth or shaving - this can save up to 15 litres a minute.
- Take a shorter shower - this will save both water and electricity/gas.
- Install a water-efficient showerhead.
- Install a 4-star dual-flush toilet - you can save up to eight litres of water with every flush.
- Insert a plug when using a bath or basin and only fill the bath to one third full.

Tip: A leaking toilet can waste more than 60, 000 litres of water each year. Check for leaks by putting a little food colouring in the tank. If the colouring begins appearing in the bowl without flushing, have the cistern rubber repaired immediately. (Flush the toilet clean as soon as you have completed the test).

Kitchen

Water use in the kitchen contributes to 13 per cent of total water consumption on average. There are many ways to save water in the kitchen.

- Use the dishwasher. Running a full load in a water-efficient dishwasher uses less water than washing dishes by hand.
- Scrape and soak your dishes to remove food - avoid rinsing them under running water.
- Rinse vegetables in a bowl and then use the water on your garden.
- Store drinking water in the fridge - running the tap until the water is cool wastes up to 15 litres per minute.

Laundry

The best way to save water in the laundry is to use a 4-star WELS Scheme rated washing machine. There are a number of other ways to save water in the laundry too.

- Pre-treat stains to limit the amount of rewashing.
- Try not to use your washing machine every day. Instead, sort clothes and wash bigger loads less frequently.
- When adjusting the warm water flow, always turn the hot water down rather than the cold water up.
- Use small amounts of water to hand wash clothes and reuse that water on the garden.
- Divert greywater from your washing machine so you can use it immediately on the garden (but non on any edible plants).

Meter is damaged or reading inaccurately

If you believe that your meter could have been damaged or might be reading inaccurately, you should contact Council immediately on 1300 308 461 and ask to speak to the Water and Waste Group.

Garden

Careful planning and good gardening habits can make a big difference to your watering needs.

- Avoid watering in the middle of the day when evaporation is high.
- Identify your soil type - this will determine the amount of water you need to use.
- Don't overwater, as waterlogged soil encourages the growth of bacteria and fungi which cause disease in plants.
- Mulch generously - it reduces water loss by up to 70 per cent, improves your soil and discourages weeds.
- Compost food scraps - compost enriches the soil by helping it absorb and hold more water.

Tip: Investigate ways of redirecting water from downpipes for use on your garden.

Pools

- A properly fitted pool blanket can stop up to 97 per cent of evaporation. Reduced evaporation also decreases the amount of chemicals required to treat the water.
- Check your pool for leaks - a tiny leak could result in a large amount of water loss.
- Build your pool in an area that is shaded during the hottest part of the day. This will reduce evaporation and help you avoid the sun's harsh rays while you swim.

Tip: Mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later. Your pool should lose no more than 3 centimetres per day.

Leaks

A large amount of water around can be lost due to leaking pipes and dripping taps. One slowly dripping tap can waste 9,000 litres of water a year. Make sure you turn all your taps off properly; check for leaks and repair taps, and keep all water fittings and equipment in good condition.

To check if your pipes leak, turn off all taps and make sure that nobody will be using any water. Check your water meter and make a note of the reading. Do not use any water for a number of hours or overnight. If the reading has changed, you may have a leak. If you detect a leak make sure you repair it quickly!

Meter location and reading your meter

Generally water meters are located just inside the front boundary line. Water meters are usually located above ground or in certain circumstances it may be below ground in a special box. All householders should ensure that their meter is accessible and free of obstruction. The **black** numbers, on the left, show the reading in kilolitres. These are the numbers used for billing purposes. The **red** numbers, on the right, show litres used. This dial will continue to move if you have a leak.

