

# Water efficiency program

## Waterwise Business Information Sheet

The commitment of management, allocation of sufficient technical staff and financial resources, employee awareness and participation, and well publicised results are crucial to the development and use of any business' effective water efficiency plan.

Water efficiency management may be just one aspect of an integrated energy management program, environmental management system or other cost reduction program. Savings in water may lead to related savings in energy costs, chemicals or other areas.

The four steps to a successful water efficiency program are:

### 1 Background investigations

- Determine how your facility's water use compares to that of other like industries, and calculate the 'true' cost of water.
- Develop a Water and Environment Team (WET) consisting of management and operational staff to lead the process.
- Broadly identify where water is used in your business. Busselton Water's Waterwise checklists and information sheets can help.



- Gather all water consumption information on your site - particularly historic consumption data from previous accounts and internal sub meter data (if fitted). Busselton Water can assist in providing historic main meter information.
- Investigate the trends shown in this data - are they increasing, decreasing or steady? Correlate them with periods of high production, peak periods or with maintenance operations to explain periods of high and low consumption.
- Establish benchmarks based on your business's water use, for example kL per unit of production, kL per student per year, kL/bed-day, kL per person etc.
- Investigate industry benchmarks for comparable businesses over the Internet.
- Determine the current costs of your water, (sewer and industrial waste services optional).
- Set goals for your business – to either match or better the relevant industry benchmark or a blanket reduction (e.g. 10%)

### 2 Publicise the process

Gaining employee support and 'ownership' of the process is important to achieving sustained water use reduction.

- Arrange a presentation for employees. The presentation should convey the current drought situation; how your water consumption compares with similar facilities; reasons for undertaking the program; program goals, and any incentives for employees to save water.
- Gather information on water saving ideas from employees. Consider implementing suggestion boxes or a standard agenda item in regular employee meetings.
- Continue to promote the program and report on water saving ideas, implementation plans and the savings realised.



### 3 Determine actions

This step requires the commitment of the WET to undertake the following actions:

- Conduct a detailed assessment of where water is used in the business, using Busselton Water's checklists and information sheets for further details. Gather details from operational staff. (Don't forget contractors and after hours work such as cleaning.)
- Undertake a self-directed water audit. Guidelines are provided in our water audit information sheet.
- Establish benchmarks for high water use processes. For example, sub meters may be fitted to sub-processes and individually benchmarked; cooling towers can be separately metered; consider metering swimming pools etc.
- Identify how water efficiency can be implemented in each of the areas of your business. There may be more than one option - employee input and feedback is helpful in this step.
- Tabulate water saving options for each area for financial evaluation.

- Obtain costing information for each option, determine a payback period and present a case to management. Don't forget other savings such as reduced sewer or industrial water charges, reduced power or chemical costs etc.

### 4 Prepare a plan and implementation schedule

The WET should then:

- Evaluate and rank the water efficiency measures based on the results of the financial and/or other evaluations.
- Outline an implementation schedule for a water efficiency program in employee newsletter or other communications.
- Engage subcontractors/plumbers etc to undertake the works.
- Publicise progress against targets and report on water savings realised.

**References** DPPEA FY04-08 (August 2002) - North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. Water Corporation, Perth WA.