



# Water Efficient Showerheads

Australians are among the world's highest producers of greenhouse gases per household. Most of the energy we use every day puts greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels. Australia is also the world's driest inhabited continent, and our water is now more precious than ever.

All Australians can make a real difference by taking a few simple actions to reduce their home energy and water use. Installing a 3 or 4 star Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Scheme (WELS) showerhead is an easy way for you to help the environment, as well as reduce your energy and water bills.

## What are Water Efficient Showerheads?

Water efficient showerheads are rated using a system of stars, similar to that used to rate the energy efficiency of appliances such as fridges. The WELS scheme replaces the former AAA (triple "A") rating and is designed to give consumers clearer information on just how much water a showerhead uses. Conventional showerheads can use more than 20 litres of water – about three buckets – every minute. The best rated WELS showerheads can use as little as 6 or 7 litres – less than one bucket – per minute. That's a saving of 57,000 litres each year for a family of four, the same as over 200 bathtubs full of water. Because showers use hot water, 3 and 4 stars WELS showerheads save on energy bills as well.

## What are the benefits of Water Efficient Showerheads?

Installing a WELS showerhead can help you to save water, energy, reduce the risk of running out of hot water and help protect the environment. Standard electric and gas water heating systems produce greenhouse gases, which contribute to the greenhouse effect. Using less hot water means you'll reduce greenhouse gas pollution. By using a highly rated WELS showerhead, an average household with an electric hot water system can cut greenhouse gases by one to two tonnes each year.



Gives flow rate for shower-head

**What sort of savings can I expect from a WELS showerhead?** A recent ACT Government study showed that by installing a low flow showerhead, the average ACT household can save over \$100 on their yearly energy and water bills. Households with electric storage hot water can save over \$200 per year.

If you have a solar hot water system, you may save less money on your energy bill but you'll still be saving water.

## Where can I buy WELS Showerheads?

You can pick up low flow showerhead at hardware, plumbing supplies, or bathroom specialty stores.



## How much do WELS Showerheads Cost?

WELS rated showerheads cost no more than most conventional showerheads – you can buy one for as little as \$20. With savings on your water and energy bills, it will pay for itself in less than a year.

## How do I install a WELS rated Showerhead?

Installation is generally easy for the householder. Most showerheads include clear instructions on the packaging. If in doubt, a plumber or handyman will be able to fit the showerhead in a few minutes.

Note: Some low flow showerheads are not suitable for all models of hot water service. If you have an instantaneous water-heating unit, check with the manufacturer – the reduced flow rate of some showerheads may be too low for some heater models. If you have a gravity-fed hot water unit, check with the showerhead manufacturer – not all showerheads will deliver enough water if your water pressure is low.

## Will a Water Efficient Showerhead give me a satisfying shower?

Low flow showerheads today are much better than the original water saving showerheads. Because of their high quality design, low flow showerheads can give you a shower as good or better than one from a conventional showerhead.

### Test it yourself...

To get an idea of the amount of water a low flow showerhead will save you, try the following:

Before you take off your old, conventional showerhead, turn the water on full and measure how long it takes to fill one bucket. Do the same once you've installed your new, low flow showerhead and compare the difference – you'll be surprised at how much water you're saving.

## Recycling old showerheads

Don't just throw your old showerhead away – you can recycle it instead. Return your old showerhead to the

shop where you bought your new low flow showerhead, or drop it off at a metal recycling yard.

## More information

This fact sheet is produced by the Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) to provide you with some quick tips on how to save water. If after reading it you'd like more free information about this or any other topic to do with saving energy in your home, don't hesitate to contact us:

Thanks to Cool Communities for assistance with the production of this fact sheet.

**Sources:** Efficient Showerhead Study by Energy Partners; Global Warming Cool it! (Australian Greenhouse Office); Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA); Sydney Water; Water Efficiency and Labelling Standards [www.waterrating.gov.au/products/index.html](http://www.waterrating.gov.au/products/index.html)

