

# WATER WISE

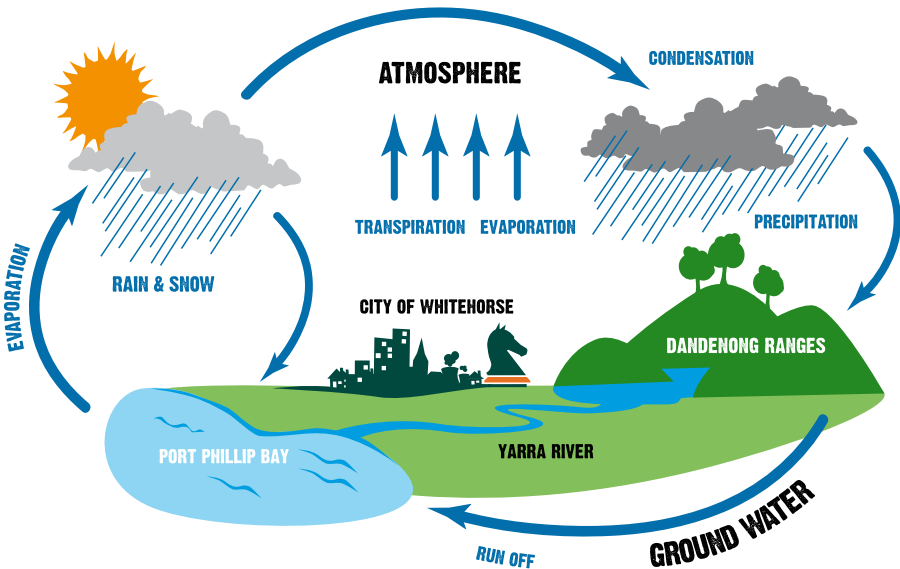
Most (99%) of the world's water is salty or located in ice caps and glaciers. This means that just 1% of the world's water supply is available for human use. We need to take care in how we use it.

The natural cycle acts as a natural water filter but there is a limit to its effectiveness. Much of the clean water that falls as rain becomes polluted after it hits the ground, i.e. roads and gutters contribute oil, grease, litter, sediment and heavy metals to urban run-off that can spoil the environment.

*A dripping tap can waste 20,000 litres of water in a year!*

By reducing and reusing water and ensuring we do not pollute the water that flows into our creeks and waterways, we can look after the 1% of water on which we rely so heavily.

## THE WATER CYCLE



WATER

## SAVING WATER IN THE HOME

| INEFFICIENT USE   | WHAT YOU CAN DO   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Long showers can waste three or four buckets of clean drinking water every minute.</li> <li>✗ Baths use nearly two and half times as much water as showers.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Install low flow, water efficient AAA showerheads and taps.</li> <li>✓ Buy a shower timer and shorten shower times to 3-4 minutes.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ A running tap can use between 5 - 15 litres of water a minute.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Only turn taps to a slow flow when washing hands and use a cup to rinse when brushing your teeth.</li> <li>✓ Repair leaky taps immediately.</li> <li>✓ Rinse plates and vegetables in a shallow sink of water rather than under the tap.</li> <li>✓ Turn taps off completely when finished.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ A full toilet flush can use up to 15 litres of water for every flush, whereas half flush uses less than 6 litres.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Install a dual flush toilet system and always use the half flush.</li> <li>✓ Put a brick in your cistern to reduce the amount of water used to flush.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ A leaking toilet may not be seen or heard but can waste more than 16,000 litres of water in a year.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To check for leaks, put a little food colouring in the toilet tank. If, without flushing, the colouring begins to appear in the bowl it should be repaired immediately.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Turning on a part filled dishwasher or washing machine.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Only switch on your dishwasher or use your washing machine when full.</li> </ul>   |



## SAVING WATER OUTDOORS

- Adhere to water restrictions when in place.
- Install a water tank and/or a grey water system.
- Use a trigger hose – you will have control of the amount of water used and water will not be wasted when moving the hose around.
- If water restrictions permit, wash your car on the lawn and only use a bucket. Look for water efficient car wash products.
- Plant 'drought tolerant' plants in your garden. Check at your local nursery for details.
- Save cold water from the shower and sink while you wait for warm water to come through and use it to water plants and pots.
- Cover swimming pools overnight and on hot days to reduce evaporation. Use rainwater to fill the balance. Loss from a typical pool can be up to 200 litres each day.
- Concrete does not need watering. Use a broom, brush or rake to sweep and clean outdoor paths and paving instead of hosing them down. Don't use water to clean out your gutters as this wastes a lot of water. Install gutter guards to help keep guttering clean.



- Install a drip system for watering your plants. This is one of the most beneficial and efficient methods of watering your plants. It places the water right where it is needed and at a rate the soil can absorb. It is a cheap and easy system to install. For details ask your nursery or hardware store for advice.

For more information about water and water restrictions contact Yarra Valley Water. Phone: 13 17 21 or go to [www.yarravalleywater.com.au](http://www.yarravalleywater.com.au)

## WATER TANKS

Water tanks are a simple, cost effective approach to water conservation. Rainwater falling on your roof goes into the storm water drains and into our creeks, rivers and oceans. You can collect some of this water and store it in a tank. Rainwater can be used for watering your garden or in your house to flush toilets as an alternative to using mains water. Check with your water authority before using water inside the house.

For garden use, try locating your water tank on the high point of your property and use gravity instead of a pump. You will need to use a pump if using tank water in your house.

### INFORMATION FOR INSTALLING A WATER TANK

- Find out if rebates are available that can help with the cost of a tank – go to [www.ourwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.ourwater.vic.gov.au) or contact your local water provider.
- Tanks now come in a variety of colours and sizes to blend in with the residential environment.
- Consider your neighbours when planning to install a water tank, especially if close to the fence and in built up areas.
- Planning approval is not required for domestic tanks. However there are a few exceptions, for example if you have a Heritage Overlay on your property. Contact Council if you are unsure about your property.
- Water tanks must be connected to stormwater drainage to catch any overflow.
- Prices vary for water tanks, installation and connection to other devices such as pumps, stormwater or existing plumbing. For a better idea of what a tank will cost you, get a quote from your local plumber and tank supplier.



## GREY WATER

Grey water is wastewater generated from domestic water uses such as the shower and laundry. Around 50 – 80% of wastewater from households is grey water.

Why use clean drinking water if grey water can do the same job.

Using grey water from your house can keep your garden thriving during periods of low rainfall, but you need to know how this affects your home, garden and environment. If you do not get it right it is possible to damage your soil, plants and even put your family and pets at risk.

Contact your local plumber or water authority for advice.

| OK FOR GREY...   | DON'T...  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Irrigate straight to plant roots by burying or mulching over the irrigation pipe ensuring water is not wasted.</li><li>✓ Use garden friendly detergents: low salt, low phosphorous and biodegradable.</li><li>✓ Install a diverter to switch off automatic watering when needed.</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Water with grey water if it is going to rain.</li><li>✗ Use heavily soiled grey water such as from nappies or the kitchen.</li><li>✗ Store grey water for more than 24hrs – harmful bacteria can grow quickly and it becomes classified as a septic tank and requires a permit.</li><li>✗ Eat vegetables raw if irrigated with grey water.</li><li>✗ Spray or hose grey water due to the potential presence of pathogens.</li><li>✗ Allow your grey water to run onto other properties.</li></ul> |

# YOUR CHALLENGE TO BE WATERWISE

I / We...

- Will take four minute showers .
- While waiting for the warm water I/we will place a bucket under the tap and shower every day even if there are no water restrictions.
- Will install a drip system for watering the garden.
- Will connect a greywater pipe to the washing machine.

## MY/OUR LONG-TERM CHALLENGE IS TO...

- Work towards installing a rainwater tank, and reducing my water consumption permanently by 30%.

