



# WATER EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RETAIL SECTOR

## Why improve water efficiency?

An increased focus on water efficiency is important for many reasons. With South East Queensland experiencing a climate of extremes, there is the important sustainability consideration of ensuring enough water to meet future demand. For a retail centre there are also the associated financial benefits. Water efficient retail centres can save money through:

- Reduced water use charges
- Reduced trade waste charges
- Reduced energy costs associated with heating and pumping water around a site

## Where to start? – Create a benchmark

Establishing a water use benchmark is the best place to start for any retail centre looking to improve its water efficiency. The industry recognised benchmark for water use performance in retail centres is kilolitres per gross lettable area (kL/m<sup>2</sup>GLA) and is generally represented on an annual basis. Rather than total water used, this benchmark is the figure recommended to be tracked over time as a measure of water use performance as it accounts for any changes in business activity.





## Water efficiency actions for retail centres

The water management actions shown below are good areas of focus for retail centres wanting to achieve best practice in water efficiency:

- **Constantly monitor your water use.** Establishing a regular monitoring program will provide you with a better understanding of overall water use patterns, therefore ongoing monitoring by reading your main meter and any internal sub-meters is vital. Any noticeable change in usage trends can be quickly investigated. Data loggers can also be useful to provide more immediate and granular data.
- **Sub-metering.** Knowing exactly how much water different areas of the retail centre use will allow you to focus your efficiency efforts on the areas with the most potential. It's recommended all tenancies be sub-metered along with other major water using areas like cooling towers, all bathroom areas and grounds irrigation systems.
- **Tenancy charging.** Consider taking a look at your tenancy agreements and the way costs for water are apportioned. By sub-metering all tenancies you are able to charge accordingly for actual water use. This will in turn create an incentive for tenants to seek out more water efficient behaviours within their business.
- **Education and awareness.** Employees provided with suitable training, e.g. less water intensive cleaning practices and responsibility for reporting leaks in taps/toilets with clear processes for follow up actions, can save water. Spread the word and let your customers know about your water saving efforts to help communicate the water sustainability message to the broader community.
- **Garden design and efficient irrigation.** Any onsite landscaping or internal gardens planted with local native species or other species that are drought tolerant are able to survive on low volumes of water. Carry out regular maintenance on the irrigation system used to ensure it operates at a maximum level of water efficiency and any leaks are identified and fixed early.
- **Rain or stormwater harvesting.** Many retail centres have considerable roof spaces and/or large car park areas that can be suitable for capturing large amounts of rainwater or stormwater runoff. Rainwater or stormwater can make a suitable fit for purpose replacement for potable water for several potential end uses including toilet flushing, cooling tower water or grounds irrigation.
- **Install efficient fixtures.** For all bathroom areas consider installing water efficient appliances including 6 star WELS rated basin tapware (push button or sensor activated if possible), waterless or low flow urinals, 5 star or better WELS rated dual flush toilets and 3 star or better WELS rated showerheads. For suitable products visit [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)
- **Other opportunities.** Reviewing cooling tower maintenance procedures and conducting full and part site water audits are other actions worth consideration.

For more information visit  
[urbanutilities.com.au](http://urbanutilities.com.au)  
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