



Media statement

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Being waterwise a key to making a sustainable house

Sunday 20 September 2020 is Sustainable House Day, which gives visitors a chance to inspect firsthand houses that have been designed, built, or renovated with sustainability in mind.

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (DWER) Waterwise Cities Program Manager Winsome MacLaurin said it is also an opportunity for homeowners to reflect on how they can be more sustainable in their own water use.

"A sustainable house is a waterwise house," Ms MacLaurin said.

"And with climate change meaning less rainfall and increased temperatures it also means our water supply is impacted.

"That is where a sustainable house can help householders to reduce their water use."

Australians are the greatest per capita consumers of water, using an average of 100,000L of freshwater per person each year.

This figure increases tenfold if the water involved in the food and products we consume is included.

Reducing water consumption in the home is a simple and easy way to decrease water bills and something anyone can do to reduce the impacts of climate change.

"The shower is typically the biggest water user, followed by the toilet and laundry," Ms MacLaurin said.

"Effective strategies include choosing water efficient showerheads, toilets, appliances and taps.

"Outside the home, strategies include choosing local indigenous plants that are adapted for local growing conditions, mulching, and using water efficient irrigation systems.

"New homes can be designed to be water efficient and in existing homes water demand can be reduced with renovations and minor upgrades."

The national Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme requires certain products sold in Australia to be registered, rated, and labelled for their water efficiency.

"Look for the WELS label as a guide for choosing showerheads, toilets, washing machines, dishwashers and taps. The higher the star rating the more water efficient the product."

Tips to make your house more sustainable in its water use include:

- Use Australian plant varieties that are built to withstand dry conditions;



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- Consider planting a rain-garden to capture storm-water or overflow from a rainwater tank;
- Use grey-water or rainwater to water your garden;
- Water before 9am or after 6pm to reduce the water wasted through evaporation;
- Be aware of your local water restrictions and follow them;
- Install the correct sprinklers to meet your garden requirements;
- Wash your car or boat at a car wash that recycles water and detergents;
- Turn off your reticulation if there's been a recent rainfall event; and
- Check and repair any leaks in your hoses and pipes.

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