

News

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IMAGE SUPPLIED COURTESY OF THE BORDER MAIL

Adam Yze and Cameron Bruce of Melbourne Football Club help launch the Kicking Goals for the Environment project.

Ovens Murray Football League kicks goals for the environment

One of the biggest threats to local Australian rules football leagues across Victoria in 2007 is not availability of talent or support for the game, but the drought.

From country Victoria to local suburban football clubs, leagues are revising their fixtures and altering their seasons due to the unsuitability of parched grounds. Some areas have been so badly affected by the drought that the leagues have had to put the start of their season back by up to six weeks.

Sporting clubs play an important role in maintaining the health and vibrancy of regional communities. Hence it is crucial to ensure sporting seasons can proceed through good resource management.

With this objective in mind, the Ovens Murray Football League initiated the Kicking Goals for the Environment project which is designed to address water and energy savings for the league's clubs. The project has been supported with a Round 4 Smart Water Fund grant and another from the Australian Greenhouse Office.

As part of the project, all clubs in the league have had their facilities audited for water and energy use to help them identify areas where savings and recycling could be implemented. Based on the audit findings, the league will allocate funds to each club to help them address the recommendations of the audit. This will include the installation of low flow shower heads in change rooms, installing water tanks to capture rain water and store greywater for reuse on grounds as well as the installation of dual flush toilets and diversion of plumbing for grey water reuse.

The Ovens Murray Football League includes 10 clubs, each with three levels of football and netball teams. The league's season spans 22 weeks and involves more than 1000 direct participants and tens of thousands of supporters. On average, the league's grand final attracts a capacity crowd of more than 15,000 people.

As a hub of social activity, it is broadly recognised that football clubs have an important part to play in social marketing and awareness around environmental issues. The third phase of the project is an education campaign designed to share the lessons with the league's significant community of participants and supporters.

The education campaign includes signage around each club's ground explaining the initiatives they have implemented in order to build a culture of water and energy conservation.

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Further educational activities include a local TV advertisement promoting the program and the inclusion of a weekly water and energy saving tip in the football record for each round. More than 60,000 records are distributed throughout the season.

"The water saving tips are pretty popular because they're practical and easy to implement. The round seven tip recommended shaving over the basin instead of the shower, making showers shorter and saving water," said Ovens Murray Football League General Manager Steve Harrison.

"We're also looking to measure the effectiveness of the campaign by surveying supporters of the clubs about their water usage at the beginning and end of the project. We hope the campaign will encourage people to be more conscious about the way they use energy and water and inspire them to take up some of the tips."

Harrison says the project will also have a positive impact on each club's bottom line through utility bill savings. "We estimate clubs will save between 10 and 15 per cent a month on their utility bills. That's money that can be reinvested into the club and further savings initiatives.

"We're also setting up a water savings competition between the clubs so once everything has been installed, we're looking at how we can rank the clubs each week on a ladder to show their savings and usage. With the changes we've seen already in behaviour, we expect the competition will be as hotly contested as the game on the field."



Ian Clark, CEO Tennis Victoria, Ian Kidston, President of the Port Melbourne Tennis Club and Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change, John Thwaites.



John Thwaites serves an ace for water savings.

Serving up smart tennis courts

Tennis Victoria has begun 'drought proofing' tennis in the state after the first of two water saving trials was launched at the Port Melbourne Tennis Club by Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change, John Thwaites.

The Club is trialing a sub-surface watering system featuring a unique reservoir underneath each court. The system will keep the red porous courts damp by drawing stored water to the surface through capillary action.

The compacted red porous courts must remain damp to prevent them from becoming brittle and damaged. They would normally be watered before and after each set is played.

The courts now require 70 per cent less water to maintain. The Club has taken a further step to reducing their reliance on mains water by installing a bore and water storage tank to supply the reservoir system.

Using a grant from the Smart Water Fund, Tennis Victoria will monitor and evaluate this and another project at the Dendy Park Tennis Club in Brighton.

The Dendy Park trial will use water minimising chemicals throughout the clay surface to reduce the amount of water needed to upkeep the court.

"We will use the results from these trials and an earlier Smart Water Fund project

at the Heatherdale Tennis Club to develop policies and guidelines aimed at enhancing the environmental sustainability of all clubs across the state," said Melanie Orr, Club Development Manager for Tennis Victoria.

"With the take-up of this guide, there is potential to save up to 600 million litres a year across the state's 1000 clubs and 100,000 club members."

For further information about this project contact Melanie Orr, Tennis Victoria on 03 8420 8420

Waterless toilets a lesson in composting

The newly opened Maryborough Education Centre is helping the local community save water by trialing an innovative water saving technique in student toilet blocks.

Using technical expertise and in-kind support from GHD Consulting, Australian-made RotaLoo dry composting toilets, and \$170,000 in funding from the Smart Water Fund, the project includes the installation of six urine-separating composting toilets and two waterless urinals.

"It may not sound too appealing to some, but using dry composting toilets instead of conventional water-flushed toilets is safe and odourless. We anticipate the project will save half a million litres of water a year," said GHD Project Director Jonathan Crockett.

"In addition, natural nutrients from the composting and separation of urine can then be used as fertiliser. As part of the trial, the compost and collected urine will be used as fertiliser on a farm in the region."

Crockett is part of GHD's team of engineers who provided design advice to Oaten Stainstreet, the architects of the new education centre catering for 1,500 primary and secondary students and staff.

Water and sewage flow metering has been installed throughout all toilet blocks to allow comparisons from the whole campus with those of the waterless toilet block. Recovered rainwater is being used to flush all other toilets.

"With Maryborough on stage four water restrictions and much of the country dealing with drought, this composting technology has great water saving potential."

GHD plans to release interim composting and agricultural reuse trial results throughout 2007 and early 2008, with a completion date set for late 2008.

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"We anticipate the project will save half a million litres of water a year."

Sovereign Hill to recycle liquid gold

'As there is a fear that the waters of the creek will have dried up before the termination of the summer, a meeting was held the other day, when it was unanimously agreed that the miners should pay one shilling per head for the erection of a dam, so that if carried out, the miners' greatest dread – a scarcity of water – will be obviated.'

— The Argus 30th October 1851.

Today, as it was in the 1850's, water is at the forefront of the national psyche. With Stage 4 water restrictions in place, Ballarat's world famous Sovereign Hill museum is linking the lessons of the past with opportunities for a more sustainable future.

Water is integral to the historic displays at the museum, including the gardens and steam operations which comprise an authentic reconstruction of a late-nineteenth century quartz mine's surface operations. Steam operated machinery was widely used in mining operations on Victoria's gold fields during the gold rushes of the 1800's.

Sovereign Hill's steam displays include a boiler house, battery, winding house and beam pump. Two Cornish boilers consume up to 5,500 litres of mains water a day to generate approximately 140 horse power needed to power the museum's displays.

With funding from the Smart Water Fund, Sovereign Hill has invested in a reverse osmosis system that allows alternate water sources to be used for the boilers, potentially saving around 2,500 litres of reticulated urban water a day.

Reverse osmosis extracts total dissolved solids (TDS) from water by forcing dirty water through a semi permeable membrane, leaving purified water that is suitable for reuse in the boiler.

Treating the water in this way reduces the need for chemical treatment as well as reducing the amount of energy required to operate the boilers.



Preserving water in the Steam Operations area is part of a wider integrated water saving strategy that Sovereign Hill is embracing with funding from the Smart Water Fund as well as Federal Government Community Water Grants.

The strategy includes development of a system for collecting and storing rainwater into tanks, which will then be used to maintain the heritage gardens. Sovereign Hill will also introduce gross pollutant traps to filter recycled water for reuse in the gardens, and use storm water in place of mains water to assist in dust suppression throughout the grounds.



Above: One of two wood fired, manually operated Cornish boilers which provide the steam to power mining displays.

Below: Water treatment plant located directly behind the boilers.

Tap into a wealth of information with the Smart Water Fund

The Smart Water Fund has supported over 120 projects. All of them will provide unique learnings on innovative water conservation, recycling and biosolid management solutions.

Newsletters, case studies and comprehensive project information on a wide range of innovative sustainable water use projects are available from the Smart Water Fund Knowledge bank at www.smartwater.com.au

Case studies are available for:

- Sporting Facilities
- Waste Water Treatment
- Building and Renovating
- Educational Programs
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing

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Vegie washing machine puts greener greens on table

Heatherton based vegetable grower, Butler Market Gardens, has received a \$32,000 Smart Water Fund grant for an innovative water saving project.

Specialising in soft vegetables such as bok choy, herbs and several lettuce varieties, Butler Market Gardens, will trial a new system of treating and recycling water used in washing these soft vegetables. The project aims to save up to 80,000 litres of fresh water per day.

The new washing machine will collect the water used to wash the vegetables and treat it with an approved antibacterial solution that ensures the produce exceeds food sanitation requirements. The treated water can then be used again with the process repeated several times each day.

Since system testing began in May, farm manager Rick Butler is pleased with the results seen thus far.

"At this early stage of the project, results have been very encouraging with our trials showing that we have the potential to save thousands of litres of water a day," Rick said.

As the new washing system enters full time service, Rick hopes to show the potential of this system for application across the soft vegetable growing industry.

At the National Vegetable Expo held in May, Rick demonstrated the vegetable washing machine to fellow growers, generating positive interest amongst his industry colleagues.

"To me, the key part of this project is demonstrating to the soft vegetable industry that we, as growers, can play a significant part in conserving our fresh water," he said.

Stay tuned for details of the Smart Water Fund Round 5 launch

The Smart Water Fund will soon invite applications for Round 5 funding.

The Fund is open to everyone – individuals, community groups, business, research and development organisations and industry.

The Smart Water Fund will invest in projects that deliver broad environmental, community and commercial benefits across urban Victoria.

Visit the Smart Water Fund website to register for email updates on the launch of Round 5 funding by subscribing to this newsletter at www.smartwater.com.au

Securing Our
Water
Future
Together

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