Smart Water Fund

News

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Smart Water Fund Round 5 funding now open

The State Government is urging Victorians to apply for the latest round of funding from the Smart Water Fund.

In total, $5 million worth of grants is available for innovative water conservation, water recycling and biosolids management projects.

"With Victoria facing unprecedented and ongoing dry weather conditions, we encourage individuals, community groups, business and the research and development community to apply for a share in the $5 million now available for water saving ideas," said Dennis Cavagna, Managing Director South East Water and spokesperson for the Smart Water Fund.

Speaking at the launch of Round 5, Dr Ian McPhail, Commissioner for Environmental sustainability, said it was encouraging to see the water retailers, Melbourne Water and DSE being proactive and working to fund research and project development through the Smart Water Fund.

In his address, the Commissioner outlined some of the challenges of securing sustainable water supplies, encouraging applicants to think creatively about projects that conserve and recycle water.

Dr Ian McPhail highlighted the challenges of a sustainable water future.

In Round 5, two funding streams are available for sustainable water use projects:

- Up to $3 million for Victoria-wide urban community and business innovations;
- Up to $2 million for Melbourne research and development into some of the key challenges facing the water industry.

Targeted project descriptions that address these challenges are available on the Smart Water Fund website: www.smartwater.com.au

Since its inception in 2002, the Smart Water Fund has provided close to $20 million in grants to over 120 projects.

"Projects previously funded by the Smart Water Fund have the potential for combined water savings of more than 1.5 billion litres annually," said Mr Cavagna.

Inside

City West Water
Melbourne Water
South East Water
Yarra Valley Water
Department of Sustainability and Environment

Smart Water Fund Round 5 funding now open

from page 1

Successful Smart Water Fund projects include the Melbourne Aquarium which aims to save up to 10,000 litres of water a week by treating and reusing water from display tanks as well as reducing salt discharge to sewerage by up to two tonnes per week, making the water easier to treat for reuse such as watering Melbourne's parks.

Tennis Victoria, the peak governing body in Victoria for the development of tennis, developed the "Drought Proofing Tennis in Victoria Initiative" with funding from the Smart Water Fund. The project is trialing two new water conservation technologies for new and existing red porous clay ('en tout cas') courts, that aim to significantly reduce water consumption required for maintenance and player comfort purposes.

The Smart Water Fund offers an Advisory Service for community groups and individuals who require guidance and advice in completing their funding application. To access this service contact the Fund on 1800 882 432 or via email advisory@smartwater.com.au

For further information or to request an application pack, freecall 1800 882 432, visit www.smartwater.com.au or email info@smartwater.com.au

Applications close 9 November 2007.

New resource helps hotels save water

Sheridan Blunt, Savings in the City project manager with Jason Burnett, Managing Director, Holiday Inn on Flinders at the information session.

Both leisure and business travellers increasingly expect hotels to be environmentally conscious. In response, Melbourne's hotels are demonstrating that with just a few simple steps, they can save money and resources without sacrificing high standards of service.

Taking their lead from a toolkit developed through the City of Melbourne's Savings in the City program, Melbourne hoteliers and staff are working hard to reduce water, energy and waste in the city's hotels.

The Water Wise Toolkit is targeted at hotel managers, chief engineers, food and beverage managers, house keeping and those responsible for staff training and work practices. The toolkit offers practical information on how to successfully integrate water conservation programs in the management of hotels, motels, serviced apartments and hostels.

With 30 hotels and serviced apartments, of varying sizes now participating in the pilot program, Savings in the City is already demonstrating significant savings.

In the first year of the trial, the Jasper Hotel in Elizabeth Street, has been the most successful in the program, reducing water use by 41 per cent, followed by the Saville City Suites in Jolimont with a 26 per cent reduction.

Jason Burnett is the Managing Director of the Holiday Inn on Flinders – one of thirty hotels signed up for the program. He praised the kit for its easy-to-use format and encouraged all hotels to download, review and implement the water audit and various tips in the guide.

Hoteliers may also consider engaging a specialist service provider to assist with implementing the savings.

The online version is available through the City of Melbourne and Smart Water Fund websites.

Telephone **03 9658 9658** or visit **www.melbourne.vic.gov.au**

Sawmill takes axe to water consumption

Myrtleford Sawmill operator Carter Holt Harvey (CHH) has dramatically reduced the amount of fresh water it uses to cool hot ash waste from its boilers – slashing its potable water use by 90 percent.

The mill's boiler ash water recycling project, funded through the Smart Water Fund, has reduced potable water consumption from 38 million litres a year to just 4 million litres.

"We had been using town water to quench the ash in our boilers, but this project put in a settling system that gets the ash out of the water and we found we can reuse the water up to 10 times," says Sawmill and Forest Manager John Browne.

"We're on stage four water restrictions here so, as the town's main industry, the fact that we can go from using five percent of our town's water supply to about half a percent is a really rewarding result."

The settling concept was copied from the water treatment industry. It was adapted for the sawmill by a CHH engineer and constructed by local firm Nicoll Engineering.

Installed in October 2006, the process has completed a six-month trial, which also shows the sawmill is on track to reduce its trade waste discharge by 90 percent, saving the business up to $60,000 in yearly charges.

Browne says the filtration process uses a series of settling tanks, pumps and valves to clean ash out of the water for reuse. The sawmill sells the remaining sediment, cold ash (carbon), as a soil conditioner.

"The system cost about $40,000 to create and install and, through reduced water and waste bills, it has already paid for itself.

"We're delighted that something with such obvious benefits to our community and local environment is not only paying for itself, but bringing bottom line benefits to our business, too."

With results confirming the efficiency of the process, CHH will examine using the technology across its sawmills in Australia and New Zealand.

"The sawmill is on track to reduce its trade waste discharge by 90 percent, saving the business up to $60,000 in yearly charges."

Smart water seedlings a spur for nursery industry

When ERA Nurseries directors Ted Allender and Peter Sandow planned their new nursery site in rainy 2003, they couldn't have predicted the drought's severity or the impact of water shortages in their area.

"But we did think there was long-term likelihood of drought," explained Ted, "and it seemed prudent to build a water collection, treatment and storage system into the design of our new nursery."

Ted and Peter's foresight has paid off. A niche market supplier of seedlings for the forestry industry, ERA Nurseries has witnessed the crippling effect of water shortages on many of their nursery industry colleagues.

A SWF grant has helped ERA Nurseries directors Peter Sandow (left) and Ted Allender secure their water supply and expand seedling production.

Unlike similar sites forced to retro-fit water saving and recycling technologies, ERA's design was 'water wise' from the outset.

"Our site has a comprehensive network of interception drains that divert rainfall and irrigation run-off to a primary holding dam. In a year with average rainfall, we estimate the system will supply at least half our water needs," said Ted.

The dam's gravel and cumbungi-planted reed bed system prevents formation and development of algal growth. The reed bed is designed to remove more than 90 per cent of nutrients and all pathogens from water flowing through it. The water then travels to a storage dam that holds up to six megalitres of water. Prior to reuse, the water is treated with iodine.

"We estimate annual water saving costs at $34,000, but our decision wasn't driven by dollars alone, as water costs are only a small part of operating expenses," said Ted.

"To achieve the new site's capacity for increased production, we needed to secure our water supply. Now we can grow our business with confidence, and be assured of water quality and quantity. Our recycled water is actually more suitable than mains water for growing small seedlings in hot weather, due to its lower salt content."

ERA estimate the recognition and credibility its partnership with Smart Water Fund provides has far exceeded the dollar value of their grant.

"We've really benefited from project reviews by the Smart Water Fund's expert panel, and have gained valuable peer recognition."

ERA will present the Fund with final water quality reports, water savings and a cost benefit analysis in late 2008. "We hope other nurseries will learn from our experience and undertake their own water conservation projects," Ted said.

For more information contact Ted Allender on 03 5572 2123 or eranurs@bigpond.net.au

ERA Nurseries uses a liquid anti-evaporation film on their six megalitre storage dam (foreground). If evaporation is reduced by 50 per cent, 1.8 megalitres will be saved in seven months.

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

Do you know someone who could benefit from receiving the Smart Water Fund Newsletter? Contact 1800 882 432 or subscribe on-line at our website

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Rooftop rainwater project a cool move for Nestlé

In a first for the food industry, Nestlé's Pakenham site has found an innovative way to save millions of litres of water a year by simply re-directing rainwater from the factory roof.

The Smart Water Fund project captures rainwater from the rooftops of three buildings for use in the factory's refrigeration plant cooling towers. The cooling towers use approximately 12 million litres of potable water a year.

Project manager Graham Ellis says the project aims to save five million litres by collecting rainwater and storing it in three onsite water tanks, which can hold about 1.2 million litres, before pumping it to the cooling towers as it is needed.

"Although capturing water from the roof is not very innovative, finding an effective use for it is. Because of hygiene reasons it's impossible to use recycled water in food processing. But the idea of using water in the cooling towers will not only make good use of the water but also reduce the levels of minerals entering these critical systems," Ellis says.

The project is the brainchild of Ellis and fellow Nestlé engineers Andrew Koedyk, Geoff Young and Bruce Warburton. Commissioned in August 2007, the system will be monitored for the next three months.

From left, Nestle's Geoff Young (Project Coordinator), Kris Matlock (Electrical Engineer) and Bruce Warburton (Services Engineer) with their Smart Water Fund rooftop rainwater project equipment. The small transfer water tank is used to feed two larger tanks with a total of 1.2 million litres capacity.

Securing Our Water Future Together

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