



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What's the aim of the program?

The Schools Water Efficiency Program will allow every Victorian school connected to a reticulated water supply system to identify and implement low cost solutions to achieve indoor water savings.

The program has been designed to give low cost water savings – if the audit reveals that water savings can't be made, there will be no investment in works.

### How can schools save water?

A trial of 26 schools' internal water use has shown there are many opportunities for water efficiency improvements, such as flow control valves on hand basins and water fountains, and targeting water leaks.

Measures such as these can result in most schools achieving between 5 and 30 per cent in water savings.

### Why is the program targeted at indoor water use?

A previous pilot program identified indoor water use as an easy way to achieve significant savings for a relatively small investment.

Schools may choose to follow up this program by arranging for their outdoor water use to be audited at a later date at their own cost.

### Why doesn't the program do an external audit at the same time?

The auditors that will be visiting schools are specialists with indoor water systems. Extending the program to external water use significantly increases the cost of the program, and cannot guarantee increased savings.

### Where were the trial schools?

Schools trialling the audits and water efficiency upgrades have included both metropolitan and regional schools. Case studies are available at [www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/swep](http://www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/swep)

### **Will small schools be able to identify real savings?**

The pilot program included some smaller schools (less than 250 students) which identified real savings. Works will only be undertaken on schools that can achieve significant savings.

### **What about schools that have already done the audits and made water efficiency upgrades?**

Schools that have already undergone internal upgrades will not be disadvantaged. All schools that undertake the audit process will receive recognition for their efforts. Schools that have completed water efficiency works outside this program will also qualify for official recognition as Water Saver Schools.

### **How will the Program be rolled out?**

The program will be rolled out on a school cluster or network basis across the State. The program will operate simultaneously in metropolitan and country regions and all eligible schools will be offered the program within the first two years.

When all participating schools in a network are completed, the Program team will move on to the next area.

### **How will schools find out about the Program?**

Schools will be sent SWEP information pack. This will include an invitation to an Information Seminar, held approximately 2 weeks later. An agreement form will also be included in the pack.

Seminars will provide detailed information about the Program and should help to inform decision making. Schools are able to join the Program at the conclusion of the seminar.

Audits will commence within a month of the school joining the Program. Plumbers will commence the work within two to three weeks of the school receiving the audit report.

### **How do schools sign up to the Program, and who will be responsible for this?**

In most cases the Principal will sign up to the program, however in some schools it could be the business manager or school council. Ultimately it will rest with whoever has the ability to make decisions about the school's expenditure. If it is the school council, a council representative can attend the Information Seminar.

### **If we are unable to join the Program at this stage do we miss out?**

No. Once all schools have been approached and first round applications have been processed, we will offer a second opportunity, but this may not occur for two years.

### **How will shutting off the water affect students and staff during school hours?**

Plumbers will work with schools to ensure minimal disruption to supplies. The assistance of schools is required to minimise the time taken to do the required works. Students may be required to bring water bottles for use during class time, water could be turned on at recess and lunch for toilet breaks. Each school will be approached by the plumber to determine the best process for school in question.

### **What happens if we need additional water efficiency measures (flow control valves, leak repairs or cistern adjustments) to the number nominated and offered in the program package?**

You will receive a quotation for the supply and installation of the extra number of water efficiency measures. If you agree to the extra number of water efficiency services, they can be installed at the same time as the nominated number. This extra cost can be added to the payment by savings option or to your direct payment invoice.

### **What happens if we need fewer water efficiency measures (flow control valves, leak repairs or cistern adjustments) than the number nominated and offered in the program package?**

Your water services efficiency fee will be adjusted to reflect the reduced number of measures implemented.

### **What happens if the auditor identifies measures which could be undertaken to save water but are not included in the program?**

The school may choose to implement these measures by engaging a plumber of their choice at their own expense.

### **What if we do not fully realise the potential savings?**

The audit process is for internal water use only (ie. taps, toilets, urinals and leak repairs). The savings estimated are achievable for student and staff numbers at the time of the audit. Future growth in student and/or staff numbers will reflect proportionally in water consumption and subsequent savings.

Changes in water volume used in irrigation, other external uses or undetected leaks which are outside the control of the auditor may also affect the full realisation of potential savings.

### **What if the audit indicates that there are no potential water savings?**

The school will be provided with the auditors report and receive immediate accreditation as a “Water Saver School” at no cost. Schools will not be charged for the audit if significant water savings are not identified.

### **Can my school do a Water Conservation Assessment of outdoor water usage with a view to installing rainwater tanks and tank to toilet systems?**

There are no provisions for an outdoor water conservation assessment under this program; however the school may undertake this audit with an auditor of their choice at their own expense.

### **Why do schools have to pay for the services provided?**

Through using the payment by savings system, we are able to offer the program to all eligible Victorian schools over the next two years. It is important that all Victorian schools are offered the opportunity to participate and save water and hot water energy. The cost savings generated from these water and energy savings will generally pay for the program over 2 to 3 years (or 8 to 12 quarterly instalments) and provide long term cost savings for your school.

### **If schools save money on water bills, does that mean they will receive less funding in the long run from the Government?**

No – any savings from future water and energy bills are returned to the school. DET have advised that the school’s funding will not be reduced because of this program

### **Where can I find out more information?**

For more information go to [www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/swep](http://www.ourwater.vic.gov.au/swep) or call 1300 727 599.