

Plumbing Regulation News Updates are issued as and when necessary, to keep the Tasmanian Plumbing Industry informed of developments occurring in the industry, Tasmanian Plumbing Code and its referenced documents and legislation.

Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme

Purpose

The purpose of this news update is to inform industry and consumers on the progress of developing the Water Efficiency Labelling Standards Scheme (WELS).

Background

The Water Efficiency Labelling Standards Scheme (WELS), the first of its kind in the world, has passed through the Australian Parliament. The scheme will require a range of water-using appliances or products such as dishwashers, washing machines and toilets to carry an efficiency-rating label.

Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme Facts and Figures

- Australia is showing leadership on water efficiency labelling with the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme being the first national scheme of its kind in the world.
- Water efficient appliances are one way of conserving water - a precious resource while saving money.
- The WELS scheme will introduce mandatory water efficiency labels on all showerheads, washing machines, toilets, dishwashers, urinals and some types of taps, as well as minimum water efficiency standards for toilets.
- The scheme will introduce voluntary water efficiency labels on flow control devices.
- Labels are likely to appear on fixtures and appliances in late 2005, and the scheme will extend to further products where appropriate.
- By simply choosing more efficient appliances, by 2021 the community stands to save more than \$600 million through reduced water and energy bills.
- By 2021, domestic water use is projected to be reduced by 87 200 megalitres per year (or five per cent), totalling a water saving of 610 000 megalitres more water than in Sydney Harbour.
- Nearly half of these savings will come from clothes washing machines, about 25 per cent from showers and 22 per cent from toilets.
- The scheme will also help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change. By 2020 the amount of energy saved each year will be the equivalent of taking around 150 000 cars off Australia's roads.
- The need to reduce urban water consumption across Australia will only continue to grow as populations increase and climate change results in more frequent extreme dry weather conditions.

In the Bathroom

Showerheads

- A standard showerhead uses about 15 to 25 litres of water per minute but a water efficient showerhead can use as little as 6 or 7 litres per minute.
- A regular showerhead uses at least 120 litres of water per eight-minute shower. A water efficient showerhead uses less than 72 litres - 40 per cent less water.
- Installing a water-efficient showerhead saves about 14 500 litres per household per year.
- Operating a standard showerhead with gas hot water costs around \$1 500 over ten years, compared to only \$790 for a water-efficient shower head - a 47 percent reduction.

Toilets

- A minimum water efficiency standard will apply to all toilets sold in Australia.
- An old-style single flush toilet can use up to 12 litres of water in one flush but more water efficient dual flush toilets average less than four litres.
- Operating a single flush toilet costs around \$760 over ten years, compared to only \$250 for a water-efficient dual flush cistern - an impressive 67 percent reduction.
- Replacing a traditional single flush toilet with a water efficient dual flush toilet saves about 51 litres per person per day.
- Using a water efficient dual flush toilet reduces household water use by approximately 1000 litres per household per year.

Urinals

- About 60,000 new urinal stalls are installed in Australia each year.
- The average urinal uses about 2.2 litres per flush.
- The most efficient urinals reduce flush volumes to 1.5 litres per flush a reduction of more than 30 percent.
- The scheme will encourage more urinals with 'smart controls' that reduce the incidence of unnecessary flushing.
- The potential water savings from using the most efficient urinals combined with smart controls could approach 40-50 percent.

In the Laundry

Washing Machines

- A water efficient washing machine uses one-third the water of a water guzzler.
- By using water efficient washing machines, WELS could bring about a saving of about 25 600 megalitres of water per year by 2016 - enough water to fill 12,500 Olympic swimming pools per year.
- This represents a reduction of about 8.8 percent in the water consumption of the clothes washers that will be sold between 2003 and 2016.

In the Kitchen

Dishwashers

- The most efficient dishwashers use half the water of present average models.

- WELS could bring about a reduction in national dishwasher water consumption of nearly 1200 megalitres per annum by 2016, which is enough water to fill 600 Olympic swimming pool each year.
- This represents a reduction of about 6.5 percent in the water consumption of the dishwashers that will be sold between 2003 and 2016.

Taps

- Typical taps discharge 15 to 18 litres per minute but low-flow and aerating models may use as little as 2 litres per minute, depending on the intended application.
- Taps with an aerator or flow restrictor may reduce the flow to less than a third of that of standard taps.

Flow Regulators

- A flow regulator is a device designed to produce a constant flow of water over a range of pressures. It may be 'end of the line' - e.g. screwed to a tap outlet - or 'in-line' - e.g. installed in a tap supplying an outlet.

Across Australia

- Australia is the driest inhabited continent in the world and yet Australians are amongst the highest water users in the world.
- The average daily domestic water use is 350 litres per person.
- Water use in Australia has grown dramatically in the past 20 years. In 1997 we used 65 percent more than we did in 1985.
- Consumption of water for urban, rural and irrigation purposes has jumped to 24 060 gigitalitres a year in 1996-7 from 14 600 gigitalitres in 1985.

For more information contact:

Department of Environment and Heritage
on 1800 803 772 or visit:

www.deh.gov.au/water/urban/scheme.html

The information was sourced from the Department of Environment and Heritage.



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