

THE AUSTRALIAN WATER ASSOCIATION'S OPINION ON CUTS TO WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS BY UTILITIES

Mr Tom Mollenkopf, Chief Executive

“The easing of drought conditions across much of Australia has allowed many of the harsh water use restrictions to be lifted. While it may also have reduced the sense of urgency regarding water efficiency programs, the water industry believes efficiency must remain on the national agenda.

“Maintaining a water saving ethos in the Australian community is vital if we are going to be protected against shortages when dry times return, as they inevitably will. We have built a community that is conservative with its water use, and this shouldn't be lost just because our dams are currently full.

“Water efficiency makes economic sense in its own right and can be employed even when water security is not the goal. Householders and businesses may reduce their costs if they continue to be water efficient – whether this is through direct savings in reduced consumption, saving of energy resulting in cost saving, or the delay of the construction of major water supply and treatment infrastructure in the future from increased use.

“For this reason, provision of information by utilities about ways in which customers can be ‘water smart’ is justified, as is investment in programs to promote water efficiency in the non-residential sector. By engaging and supporting householders and businesses to make water efficient choices such as Sydney Water's ‘Water Wise Rules’ which are still currently in place, utilities can develop closer, more collaborative relationships with customers. This is good business practice that we encourage all to continue.

“As consumers, just because subsidies or financial incentives have been removed, this doesn't mean we can't continue to exercise wise water use”, said Mr Mollenkopf.