

Water in Our Home

**Water Audit
Workbook**



Much of our water usage is around the home, and with Hunter households using 10 per cent more water than we could be, it's time to reassess how we use this precious resource. Whether it's for cooking, showering, washing clothes, cleaning the car or filling up the swimming pool, there are simple ways we can conserve water and make a big difference to our supply.

Complete the Home Water Use checklist and find out how your home measures up.

Date audit conducted:

Next audit due:

Let's go!

1. Set your benchmark

How much water does your house consume per year?

Check your last 3 water bills and add your usage together. This is the total consumption for the year. **The Lower Hunter's average use is 140KL (Kilolitres) for a 2 person household.**

If you don't have your last 3 water bills check your water meter and write down the amount shown. Check it again in 7 days at the same time of day. Work out the difference (the second reading minus the first reading). This will give you an approximate weekly usage. Then multiply by 52 to get a yearly approximate usage.

<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	=	<input type="text"/>	:	<input type="text"/>	x	52	=	<input type="text"/>
Day 7 reading		Day 1 reading		Weekly usage		Weekly usage				Annual household consumption

Use the above average to work out the average annual use per person for the number of people in your house.

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Household Use		No. of people in your house		Annual consumption per person

Quick Fact: The average use for a 4 person household in the Lower Hunter is 240kL per year. Why do you think that this is only 100kL more than a 2 person household and not twice as much?

2. Work out an achievable reduction in consumption for your household:

Compare the Lower Hunter's average usage with your house's use.

Lower Hunter's usage:

kL Per year

Our household usage:

kL Per year

How did you do?

If you did well...GREAT!!! It is still a great idea to perform a water audit yearly to assure that you are being as water efficient as possible, or to find ways that you can make further savings and improvements to your water use.

Action Time! Set an achievable yearly reduction target that your household can work towards.

Benchmark to achieve:

kL Per year

Possible saving of:









kL Per year

Now perform the home water audit to identify areas where your savings can come from.
As you go through the checklist give yourself 5 points every time you answer 'Yes'.

Amenities	YES	NO	Recommended action
Check for leaks Did we detect any leaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Reading your water meter is a great way to check for leaks within the pipe work on your property. Simply follow these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn off all taps and water-using devices at your property 2. Check your meter reading. Learn how to read your water meter 3. If the dial is not visibly moving, wait for at least fifteen minutes (the longer the better as small leaks may take longer to show. Overnight is a good time to do it too.) 4. Write down the black and the red numbers again – have they changed? 5. If the red numbers have changed, the test confirms there is a leak and further investigation is needed. <p>If you are concerned or have identified a leak in your water service, you should contact a licensed plumber to fix the problem as soon as possible.</p>
Do we have rainwater tanks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, then consider installing a rainwater tank, depending on your size of your house and demand needs. These can be set up to feed into your toilets and irrigation systems and reduce consumption of potable* water through rainwater harvesting.</p> <p>If yes, regularly perform a rainwater tank tune up to ensure your system, tank and pumps are performing at their most efficient levels. Clearing leaf debris and cleaning the filters regularly is a must to ensure great water quality.</p> <p>Tip: Hunter Water has a great checklist and time line to help maintain your rainwater tanks.</p>

* Potable water is treated water that is supplied to your home through the Hunter Water network. It is also referred to as 'town water' or 'mains water'.

Bathrooms	YES	NO	Recommended action
<p>Check your hot water systems.</p> <p>Check for any damage or corrosion that may cause leaks that may go unnoticed for some time.</p> <p>Are all pipes water tight and the area around the system clean and dry?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If yes, great!</p> <p>If no, then get a licenced plumber to repair any leaks or seepage that may be occurring.</p> <p>Make sure you regularly check them for leaks or wear. Some old systems can begin to rust out and may need repairing or replacing.</p>
<p>Do you have water efficient shower heads?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, install flow regulators to reduce flow to at least 9L/min or install a WELS 3 star rated showerheads. Also, consider shower timers or automatic cut off valves to reduce shower time.</p>
<p>Do you have water efficient taps?</p> <p>Tip: Place a measuring jug under the tap and turn on. Time for 1min. How many litres did you collect? This is your flow rate/min.*</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, install flow regulators to reduce flow to at least 4.5L/min and have an automatic shut off or install WELS 6 star rated tapware.</p> <p>Tip: If taps are used for only hand washing, consider a flow rate as low as 1.7L/min for super efficiency.</p>
<p>Do you have dual flush toilets?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, consider replacing the toilets with a 4 star WELS rating 6/3L or 4.5/3L dual flush models.</p> <p>If yes, check the flushing capacity. Older models may use 11/5.5L or 9/4.5L per flush. Consider replacing the toilets with 6/3L or 4.5/3L dual flush models.</p>

<p>Check for drips and leaks.</p> <p>Do you have any dripping or leaking taps, handles, and cisterns in your bathroom?</p>			<p>Check all taps, handles, and cisterns for drips or leaks.</p> <p>A good way to do this in the toilet is put a few drops of blue food colouring in the cistern at the beginning of the night and don't flush it until the morning. Check the colour in the bowl. If the colour in the bowl is blue then you have a leak in your toilet that will need to be repaired by a licenced plumber.</p>
<p>Do your family members have on average 4 minute showers each per day?</p>			<p>Did you know that for every 1 minute you reduce your shower by, you could save 1 bucket of water? Aim for 4 minutes or the length of your favourite song!</p> <p>Tip: For inspiration check out the Four minute shower hits playlist on Spotify</p> <p>Install timers in all your showers to time your showers. Make it a family competition to see who can have the shortest shower.</p>
<p>Does your family regularly have baths?</p>			<p>When running a bath keep it shallow and you can save up to 75 - 150 litres each time.</p> <p>Tip: Only filling the bath to your navel is a great measurement of how deep a bath should be.</p>
<p>Does your family leave the tap on when brushing their teeth?</p>			<p>Turn the tap off when brushing your teeth and you could save up to 2 buckets of water a day!</p>



Kitchens	YES	NO	Recommended action
Are the taps in the kitchens water efficient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, install 7.5L/min aerator on the kitchen sink or install WELS 4 star rated tapware.</p> <p>Tip: Pre-rinse spray nozzles in the kitchen can use less than 6L/min and make it easier to wash and rinse dishes.</p>
Is the dishwasher in the kitchen water efficient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, replace your existing model with a water efficient model. You will save money through water and energy savings. There is also less need to pre-rinse with more water efficient models. A 5-star WELS rated water efficient dishwasher uses as little as 7 litres of water.</p> <p>If yes, check seals and maintain regularly to ensure it is performing efficiently.</p> <p>Tip: You can save water by scraping your plates instead of rinsing them beforehand.</p>
Does your family wait until there is a full load of dishes before running the dishwasher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use the dishwasher with a full load. Running a full load in a water-efficient dishwasher uses less water than washing dishes by hand.
Is food defrosted under running water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes , then consider preplanning and allowing for defrost time, or fill up a basin and soak the item in the water rather than having a tap constantly running.

WELS 6 star rated





Front loaders use up to 70% less water when compared to a top loader? A front loader could save the average household over 60 buckets of water per week!

Did you know

Laundry	YES	NO	Recommended action
Is the washing machine water efficient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you are in the market for a new washing machine, look out for a water efficient model. 4 Star WELS rating or higher is a good benchmark.
Does your family wait until there is a full load of washing before running the washing machine?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simple things like waiting for a full load to do your laundry could save your home up to 30 buckets of water every week.
Are the taps in the laundry water efficient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If no , install 7.5L/min flow restrictors on the laundry taps or install WELS 4 star rated tapware.

Outdoor areas	YES	NO	Recommended action
Do you use potable water (water from the main town supply) to irrigate gardens and other outdoor areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If yes, continue with the questions below in this section.</p> <p>If no, continue onto the next section.</p> <p>Tip: Sweeping hard surfaces rather than hosing them can save you bucket loads!</p>
Has your irrigation system been well maintained and checked for efficiency and leaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, contact a licensed urban irrigation plumber to perform a maintenance and efficiency check on your irrigation system.</p>
Do you improve your soils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, improving soil quality can improve plant growth and water retention. Refer to Hunter Water's website for information on Saving Water in the Garden and Outdoors.</p>
Have you considered an alternate water source to irrigate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, consider investing in rainwater tanks that you could use to harvest rainwater and use this to irrigate when needed.</p>
Do you have drought resistant plants in your garden?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, consider replanting your garden with drought resistant plants.</p> <p>Tip: Hunter Water has a Plant Finder on our website that can assist with choosing the right plant for your home and garden needs. There are over 700 plants to choose from on the list that are considered the most water efficient and the search can be tailored to your garden's micro-climate, soil type, maintenance level and flowering season.</p>
Do you use mulch on your garden beds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, use a high grade mulch to reduce evaporation and save water. Apply mulch 5-10cm thick.</p>
Have you considered transforming some of your turfed areas into water efficient gardens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, consider replacing some of your home's turfed areas with water efficient gardens and play gardens to explore. Rock gardens and mud kitchens are a great idea to have in these areas.</p>

Pool and Spas	YES	NO	Recommended action
Does your home have a pool or spa?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If yes, continue with the questions below in this section.</p> <p>If no, continue onto the next session.</p>
Do you use pool covers if your pool is outdoors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If no, consider using a Smart Approved Water Mark or SPASA approved pool cover. This can greatly reduce evaporation and the need to top up.</p> <p>Tip: A pool specialist or pool retail centre can assist to organise a pool audit to be completed by an approved water efficiency consultant for a small fee. While they are there get them to check your pool for any leaks. A leaking pool could result in large damage and significant water loss.</p>
Do you use a hose to clean around the pool?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If yes, use a broom, a blower vac or a high pressure cleaner instead.</p> <p>If a hose is required, make sure that it has a trigger nozzle attachment and use it sparingly.</p>
Is your pool backwashed on an as needs basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If no, review backwashing scheduling to reduce to a minimum without compromising health and safety.
Is your water filter energy and water efficient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When purchasing a new pool filter, look for a water efficient model. An energy efficient pump can also significantly save on energy costs.



If a hose is required to top up your pool, make sure that it has a trigger nozzle attachment and use it sparingly.

How water efficient is your home?

Add up your scores and see how you measured up.

0-40	Think about improving your water efficiency behaviours and appliances in your home.
45-75	Doing well! There are still improvements but you are conscious of your water use and try to implement some water saving behaviours around your home.
80+	You're a water warrior!

Review

Review your results and choose 5 areas that can realistically be targeted and behaviours altered or systems replaced. This can help you save bucket loads each year!

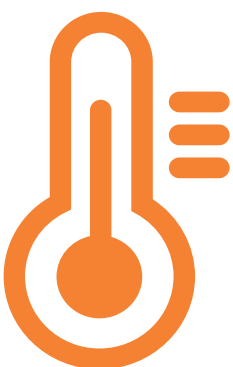
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Examples may include:



Fixing a leaking toilet can save you between 10 to 260 litres a day.

Toilets



Hot water system

Check your thermostat and check you are not over heating water. Save money on energy.

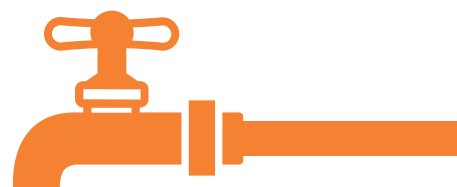


Water bottles

Store drinking-water in the fridge — running the tap until it's cool can waste up to 15 litres a minute. Also, encourage children to empty water bottles onto the garden or pot plants instead of down the sink.

Turn off taps. Set up and encourage good behaviours.

Daily use



Taps and sinks

Replace taps with aerators. Catch excess water in a container while waiting for hot water and use on the garden.



Scrape your dishes and soak your pots and pans to remove food rather than rinsing them under running water.

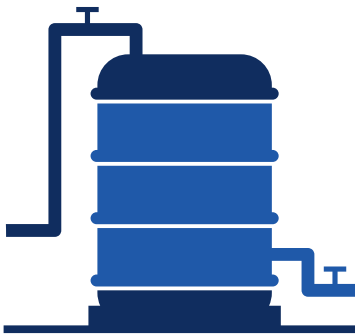


Cleaning dishes



Rinse vegetables in a bowl and then use the water on your garden.

Washing fruit and vegetables



Rainwater tanks

Install rainwater tanks to use for flushing toilets and irrigating gardens. Perform regular checks and tune-ups to ensure they are working at an optimal level.

Use a Smart Approved Water Mark or SPASA approved pool cover to reduce evaporation.



Swimming pools

Build your pool in an area that is shaded during the hottest parts of the day. This will reduce evaporation and help avoid the sun's harsh rays while you swim. Maintain the correct chemical balance in your pool and clean it regularly. Top up your pool with rainwater runoff.



Cleaning

Use a broom, high pressure cleaners, mops/buckets and bowers to clean.

Install weather or moisture sensors that turn on only when the garden needs it.



Irrigation system

Gardens

Use native drought resistant plants and mulch to reduce evaporation.



For more water saving tips go to hunterwater.com.au/savewater

