



## MEDIA RELEASE

### National Water Week 2012 – Water Efficiency is the Answer

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The Australian Water Association today released a new position paper on water efficiency. The release has been timed to coincide with National Water Week, which commences this weekend.

AWA CEO, Mr Tom Mollenkopf, said that it is important to remember that although we have had a recent abundance of rain on the east coast, our climate is variable and volatile and this is why the theme for National Water Week this year is *valuing water*.

“The Water Efficiency Position Paper highlights how paramount water efficiency is in how we use our most valuable resource. This is particularly so as climate change and population growth will mean that in future more will need to be done with less.

“The position paper has been developed by some of Australia’s leading water sector experts under the auspices of the AWA Water Efficiency Specialist Network. The paper has been published to ensure that those that make decisions on how water is delivered, used and managed do so on the basis of sound data, and specifically understand that water efficiency is an effective measure to achieve water security”, Mr Mollenkopf said.

The key points from the position paper include:

- Water efficiency is an economically viable way to enhance water security in many circumstances. Saving water can reduce capital costs as well as operational expenditure.
- Saving water is also a viable way of saving energy. Through saving water there is less need to pump as much water, heat as much water, as well as using energy to build new, and maintain existing, infrastructure.
- Water efficiency also makes sense in its own right and is worthwhile even when water security is not a goal; water efficiency can increase the availability of water for environmental, economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic purposes.
- Australia’s climate is highly variable and emerging pressures such as population growth will affect the security of water supplies in ways that are difficult to predict. A changing climate will exacerbate these pressures. Flexibility is required to deliver effective solutions, and opportunities to achieve greater water efficiency must always be part of these solutions.
- Water efficiency must be considered equally with supply-side options in the development of any strategy to improve long term water supply security.
- In line with the 1994 *COAG Water Reform Framework* and the *National Water Initiative*, **all** costs associated with water supply should be internalised. This would facilitate comparison of demand and supply-side water security options.

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- Calculation of the benefits of water efficiency and of options to improve supply should not just include those items that are easily monetarised. The community holds strong views about other values that can be realised through water efficiency. Such values must always be taken into account in any comparison of alternatives.
- Greater consistency in approaches taken to water efficiency across the country would facilitate the sharing of experiences and would minimise the risk of research being duplicated.
- Skills, knowledge and practices in delivering water efficiency need to be maintained during times of plentiful rainfall.

To read the full position paper, visit [www.awa.asn.au/positionpapers](http://www.awa.asn.au/positionpapers)