



Australian Government

## Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme

*A joint government and industry program*

# Water efficiency

If you're about to buy a water-using product find out first how WELS water efficiency ratings can save you money and help the environment. It's simple — the more stars on the WELS label, the less water that product will use, and the more money you will save.

This page provides an overview of the water efficiency of WELS products and some comparisons to 'standard' water-using products.

## Plumbing products

### Showers

Showers generate about 25 per cent of water savings under the WELS scheme because:

- a standard showerhead uses about 15 to 25 litres of water per minute - a three star rated water efficient showerhead uses as little as 6 or 7 litres per minute.
- a standard showerhead uses at least 120 litres of water per eight-minute shower whereas a water efficient model uses less than 72 litres or 40 per cent less water
- installing a water-efficient showerhead saves about 14,500 litres per household each year, and
- gas hot water costs for a standard showerhead are around \$1,500 over ten years whereas gas hot water costs for a water-efficient shower head are only \$790 over ten years or a 47 per cent reduction.

To find out the water consumption of showers by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Showers](#) option.

### Taps

WELS taps save water because:

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

To find out the water consumption of tap-equipment by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Tap equipment](#) option.

### Flow controllers

To find out the water consumption of flow-controllers by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Flow controllers](#) option.

## Sanitary ware

### Toilets

The performance requirements for toilets include a minimum water efficiency requirement. The average water consumption must not exceed 5.5 litres per flush. The average water consumption of a dual flush cistern is taken to be the average of one full flush and four half flushes. This means dual flush cisterns of 9 litre full flush/4.5 litre half flush are the least efficient products that can be sold.

About 22 per cent of water savings under the WELS scheme comes from toilets (lavatory equipment) because:

- an old-style single flush toilet can use up to 12 litres of water in one flush, whereas more water efficient dual flush toilets average less than four litres
- a single flush toilet costs around \$760 over ten years to operate compared with a water-efficient dual flush cistern which costs around \$250 over ten years to operate or a 67 per cent reduction
- replacing a traditional single flush toilet with a water efficient dual flush toilet saves about 51 litres per person per day and
- using a water efficient dual flush toilet reduces household water use by around 30,000 to 40,000 litres per household per year.

To find out the water consumption of toilets by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Lavatory equipment](#) option.

### Urinals

WELS urinals save water because:

- the average urinal uses about 2.2 litres per flush compared with the most efficient urinals which use 1.5 litres per flush, a reduction of more than 30 per cent
- an increasing number of urinals have 'smart controls' to reduce unnecessary flushing and
- the most efficient urinals combined with smart controls reduce water use by 40-50 per cent.

To find out the water consumption of urinals by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Urinal Equipment](#) option.

## White goods

### Washing machines

About 50 per cent of the water savings under the WELS scheme come from clothes washers because:

- a water efficient clothes washer uses one-third the water of an older model and
- by 2016 WELS clothes washer could save about 25,600 megalitres of water per year-enough to fill 12,500 Olympic swimming pools every 12 months (this is a reduction of about 8.8 per cent in the water consumption of the clothes washers sold between 2003 and 2016).

### Minimum WES for washing machines

The minimum Water Efficiency Standard (WES) for washing machines came into effect on 1 November 2011 with a 12 month grandfathering period that allowed for the continued supply of machines that did not meet the new minimum WES requirements. This grandfathering period ended on 1 November 2012. It is now an offence to offer for supply a washing machine that does not meet the minimum WES for washing machines.

The minimum WES specifies that:

- Machines with a capacity of 5 or more kilos must have a rating of at least three stars, and
- Machines with a capacity of less than 5 kilos must have a rating of at least two and a half stars.

Combination washer/dryer machines may use water to dry loads. Since 1 November 2011 it has been mandatory for combination washer/dryers registered after that date to carry a WELS label stating the water usage of the dryer function.

To find out the water consumption of clothes washers by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Clothes washing machine](#) option.

## Dishwashers

WELS dishwashers save water because:

- the most efficient dishwashers use half the water of average models and
- by 2016 WELS could save nearly 1,200 megalitres a year in national dishwasher water consumption- enough water to fill 600 Olympic swimming pools each year. This represents a reduction of about 6.5 per cent in the water consumption of the dishwashers sold between 2003 and 2016.

To find out the water consumption of dishwashers by star-rating and brand, use the WELS Product search [Dishwashers](#) option.



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