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Industry body invokes “Millennium drought”

Master Plumbers ACT is calling on an incoming ACT Government to provide free water audits for all Canberran households and businesses to help future-proof the Territory’s water supply – and save energy at the same time.

Executive Officer, Leigh Watson, said the purpose of the audits is to carry out leak detection checks and review existing fixtures.

“A leaking tap can waste as much as 20,000 litres of water a year – enough to fill a pool. And these are just the leaks we can see – many more leaks go undetected as they occur out of sight.

“The audit will also review the existing plumbing fixtures, especially toilets, and provide advice to the customer on where they can save further water. Rebates provided by ACT Government would provide incentives to householders and businesses to replace outdated and inefficient fixtures, resulting in further significant water saving.

“While the Millennium drought may seem a long way in the past, the reality is that Canberra can be plunged into those severe drought conditions again as has been acknowledged by the ACT’s water utilities operator, Icon Water.

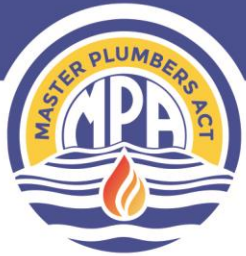
“Anyone who lived in Canberra during the late nineties-2000s has never been the same about water wastage - parents still nervously watch the clock at the seemingly endless time their teenagers can spend in the shower!

“As with COVID, Canberra became a shining example of the positive outcomes that can be achieved when Government and the community work together. As well as considerable behavioral changes by Canberrans, there were also extensive measures undertaken by ACT Government and other agencies in the shared crusade to save water and reduce wastage. These measures ranged from strict mandatory water restrictions by the water agency, through to broader education of the community which responded well to the ACT Government’s inclusive approach and message of ‘we’re all in this together’.

“These measures collectively resulted in a per capita consumption decrease by 35-40%.

“A key initiative was an incentive program, administered in conjunction with Master Plumbers ACT, to upgrade Canberran’s toilets to water saving models – saving around 36,600 per litres annually for each household” she said.

Ms Watson, said that while the impact of drought conditions on water may be evident, an often, little-known fact is the impact on energy.



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“It is true that any water saving initiatives will also deliver significant savings on energy use. It has been estimated that more energy can actually be saved through reducing water use than by concerted energy efficiency programs – at rates as high as 25%. This includes at a macro level as energy is used to pump water to deliver it where it needs to be used and in disposing of wastewater. At a micro level, in our homes, when we cut the time, we take to shower we are also immediately reducing our energy use in the gas or electricity required to heat the water. This saves energy (and money!) and also reduces the amount of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere,” explained Ms Watson.

“It can be clear then that the reduction of long-term water usage across the board will also assist the ACT Government to reach the objectives of its Climate Change Strategy through related reduction in emissions.”

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