

*Northern Health*

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HEALTH SERVICE SETS PRECEDENT FOR WATER CONSERVATION

The Northern Metropolitan Health Service (Northern Health) is comprised of Broadmeadows Health Service, Bundoora Extended Care Centre (BECC), The Northern Hospital, and Panch Health Service (PHS). Together, Northern Health represents one of the busiest health services in Victoria; one that is rapidly increasing throughput and patient numbers serviced in various departments within each constituent service each year. In 2000 Northern's combined services saw 163,000 patients. By 2004 this number had increased to over 210,000.

The inherent manpower, maintenance, facility and equipment provision overheads of large organisations, is magnified in a health environment where the ability to care for large numbers of people in an environment that must be scrupulously clean 24/7, on an ongoing basis, comes at a high cost. That is, until you meet the Green Team!

Meet the Green Team from Northern Health!

This environmental steering committee, appropriately named the 'Green Team', is the social and environmental conscience of Northern Health. However, this team isn't any old team! Rather than be a nominal entity with a 'you beaut' name the Green Team, when it was first formed, raised its 'duty of care' benchmark to the highest level that could be determined. They saw in their franchise the capability to add real value to Northern Health that would not only benefit the Service's constituent parts but would result in benefits for the wider community.

When Northern Health's water retailer Yarra Valley Water approached the Green Team and introduced the team to the **savewater! efficiency service*** they immediately became water conservation champions instigating a pilot program at Broadmeadows Health Service, as the control environment, with plans for progressive audits and roll outs for The Northern Hospital, followed by BECC and then PANCH Health Service once results were available.

With funding always on the agenda in a public health service Northern Health's water retailer Yarra Valley Water introduced the concept of self-funding, i.e. the water efficiencies gained would ultimately fund the cost of implementation. This meant that there was no need to take from, or place undue stress on, the greater system that needs to put patient care first.

The initial **savewater! efficiency service*** audit at Broadmeadows Health Service estimated that by introducing control valves to all taps, showers and sinks, and replacing some existing equipment, water usage could be reduced by up to 15 % and that ROI would be in the vicinity of 2 years. The 2004/5 post implementation results showed total water usage had been reduced by 19%. This reduced the payback period to 18/19 months.



Everyone is a winner!

Implementing the full **savewater! efficiency service*** proved to be an economic, environmental and social win-win for Broadmeadows Health Service, the Green Team, Northern Health, the patients, and the sustainability of the wider community's water resources. Also, because the water retailer is in the business of saving water as opposed to the generally misconstrued view that water authorities make money when water usage increases, it too benefited.

Health Service	Water usage - pre savewater! efficiency service	Estimated potential savings	Audit recommendations for Implementation	Actual Health Service savings	Actual Water savings	Variable & mitigating factors
Broadmeadows Health Service (control environment)	Average annual water usage for 3.5 years prior – 27,497 kL Directly preceding implementation of service water usage was 24,625 kilolitres	ROI- 15.6% saving – 3,900 kL of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install pressure valves • Replace existing equipment 	Water saving reduced to just under 20,000 kilolitres	19% saving – 5,000 kL of water Real savings exceeded estimated ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased bed numbers • Increased patient throughput (approx 50% in 5 year period) • Increased procedures
The Northern Hospital	Average annual water usage for 7 years prior 61,000 kL pa	ROI- 15% –9000 kL of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install pressure valves • Replace existing equipment 	*In progress	*In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased bed numbers • Increased patient throughput (over 60% in 5 year period) • Increased procedures
Bundoora Extended Care Centre	Average annual water usage 23,000 k	ROI- 16%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install pressure valves • Replace existing equipment • Install water saving showers 	*In progress	*In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old site • Equipment obsolete
PANCH Health Service	New facility using 4,000 kL per annum	ROI-12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install pressure valves • Replace existing equipment 	Preliminary results suggest new annual usage of 3200 kL	*In progress	New site Opened in April 2003

* At time of publishing

Your organisation too can benefit by requesting and implementing the **savewater! efficiency service***.

Take on the challenge

It's worthwhile. The process is easy and the end results, like this case study, speak for themselves. A guide is enclosed.

***savewater! efficiency service** is a turnkey operation from audit to implementation of equipment by contracted professionals. That means absolutely no disruption to services or people, requires no manpower from the organisation on the receiving end and there is no noticeable difference to the flow or amount of water dispensed when equipment is turned on.

Abbreviations:

BECC- Bundoora Extended Care Centre
 BHS – Broadmeadows Health Service
 PHS – Panch Health Service
 kL- kilolitres
 pa- per annum, yearly
 ROI- return on investment

Further information

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