

MEDIA RELEASE

South East Water summer trial a reminder to watch water use at home and Target 155

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Households are reminded to be aware of water use and Target 155 as a new study reveals that outdoor watering has nearly doubled since the start of summer, with almost a third of watering taking place during the warmest part of the day.

Data from a South East Water trial, which enables customers to track different water uses within and outside the home, shows that many households in its service region are watering their garden between 10am and 4pm, when evaporation rates are at their highest.

The project also showed that since the start of summer, watering the garden had overtaken showering as the number-one use of water in the home, accounting for around 27 per cent of water used. It also found that the average shower duration since December is six and a half minutes, compared with the suggested four minutes during the millennium drought.

Within the trial, the day with the highest water use so far was 4 February, when Melbourne's 35.9 degree temperature saw daily customer use jump by 73 per cent compared with average use since the start of summer.

The project uses data logging technology, attached to the existing water meters of 169 customers from inner Melbourne to the south-eastern suburbs. Consumption data is then analysed using flow algorithms to determine which appliances are using water and when.

The trial follows the reactivation of Target 155, a voluntary water efficiency program to encourage Melbourne householders to limit their consumption to 155 litres per person per day. Last week Melbourne's water averaged 188 litres per person per day.

"It's no surprise that customers are using more water in the summer months, but there are some simple steps we can take to reduce water consumption and keep bills down," said Sharon Robinson, Acting Customer General Manager at South East Water.

"With a garden hose or sprinkler using as much as 900 litres per hour, watering the garden for 45 minutes each day can double the average domestic bill. An efficient watering system, used at the start or end of the day, can pay big dividends when bills arrive.

"Showering also provides opportunities for greater water efficiency. By keeping showers to four minutes each a day instead of six, a four-person household can save \$150 a year on their bill."

The trial also found that evaporative cooler use, which has increased by around 31 per cent since the start of summer, can also significantly impact water bills. An older system using 25 litres per hour running for 12 hours, three days a week can add \$60 to a bill over the summer period.

The trial continues until August.