

MEDIA STATEMENT



Monday, 11 April 2016

Smart changes result in significant water savings

The City of Bunbury has been able to slash its water use on public open space by more than 200,000 kilolitres thanks to clever changes to watering practices.

In 2014-15 the City's water consumption from its five bore licences was 206,714KL below the estimated requirement after the Landscape and Open Space Department made simple changes to the use of irrigation; improved top-dressing and mulching; scheduled inspection of infrastructure; and the use of water sensitive urban design principles.

Director Works and Services Gavin Harris said one of the keys to achieving the reduction in water use was actively identifying inefficient irrigation systems and modifying them to improve efficiency and distribution.

"A great example of this is Hands Oval where water sensors provide soil moisture content readings, which are used to adjust the programming of irrigation to ensure the turf receives the ideal amount of water," Mr Harris said.

"We have also carried out scheduled irrigation inspections at all of our public open space to ensure repairs are actioned in a timely manner to avoid wasting water.

"High profile and high use areas of public open space are being prioritised for irrigation upgrades to ensure that these areas are being irrigated more efficiently."

Mr Harris said the use of organic top-dressing and wetting agents on many sporting grounds also had a big impact.

"This has improved moisture retention and penetration in the root zone, which in turn has increased the resilience of the turf through the heat of summer and reduced the watering requirements," he said.

The use of water sensitive urban design principles are also playing a part to achieve water savings.

"The City has begun hydrozoning when designing new public open space and gardens, which involves grouping plants with similar watering requirements together so that irrigation can be effectively designed," Mr Harris said.

"This includes planting low water use plants where appropriate."

City staff are also carrying out soil improvements prior to new plantings, which increases plant health and vigour without using excessive water.

ENDS

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