



WATER WISE: Watsons Bay Hotel general manager Nat Baker and council project officer Rob Brewster.  
Photo: JOHN APPELYARD

## ■ Woollahra residents rated the worst in the state for water wastage

Jennifer Bennett

WOOLLAHRA has a water wastage problem. The municipality has come last in the NSW Office of Water's latest water report card, with each household using an average of 326,000 litres of water a year.

Contrast this with the region that came first on the list, Kiama (159,000 litres per household), or even the second worst, Hunters Hill (294,000 litres), and it becomes clear that this is one area in which being No.1 is not desirable.

Is it our green rolling lawns? Our swimming pools? Do we like long, hot showers too much?

"Our local area is dominated by larger blocks, single dwellings and high density compared to many other metropolitan areas, so the figures are not surprising," Woollahra Mayor Isabelle Shapiro said.

NSW Water Minister Phil Costa agreed with her, and said the residents of the municipality had made some strides in recent years.

"Like the rest of Sydney, the people of Woollahra have made impressive reductions to their water use over the last eight years and they should be congratulated for that," he said.

"Since 2002-03, Woollahra's average annual water use has fallen by 74,000 litres per household. One reason Woollahra uses more water than other areas could be that there are many large and well established private gardens in the Woollahra local government area."

In the same list, Sydney Council ranked fifth overall, while Waverley rated midfield in terms of water consumption.

Woollahra Council has been working with Randwick and Waverley councils and Sydney Water in an effort to reduce the water usage of residents in their three jurisdictions, Cr Shapiro said.

"I see no point in a 'name and blame' campaign," she said. "The State Government needs to continue to promote the benefits of water savings and rebate initiatives with all Sydney householders."

"The majority of the residents I talk to are increasingly conscious of their individual impact on the environment."

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## Every drop of water counts

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One business taking part in the water saving initiative is the Watsons Bay Hotel, which has introduced a range of measures to conserve water.

They have installed low-flow aerators on taps, watch carefully for leaks, and make sure staff and customers are aware of the need to conserve water.

The result has been a significant reduction in water bills.

"I think based on what we've done, it's a noticeable difference," said the

hotel's general manager, Nat Baker.

"I'd say (there's been a bill reduction of) anywhere up to 40 per cent. I'd imagine that a lot of big old buildings in Woollahra have a lot of issues with leaks and pipes. We had a few of those; we've rectified them and I imagine that makes a massive difference.

"Obviously it's going to benefit us in the first place and if we can save so much water it might show other people they can do it too," he said.

Another Woollahra resident who lives a water-frugal life is Cr Chris Howe, whose Vacluse home is car-

bon neutral, running off solar power and recycled water.

"We have a very extensive water conservation design which means that, even at times of severe drought, we are only using water for kitchen and drinking purposes. Everything else - the garden, laundry, pool - is on recycled water," he said.

"I think at the end of the day, every individual has a responsibility for their ecological footprint and, certainly in this area, the three biggest factors are transport, energy and water use," he said.