



**Axis thematic:** Water and Society

**Title:** Water for Life: training the water trainer in Sydney, Australia

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**Summary:**

Water for Life is the NSW Government's (Australia) flagship community water education program which has driven significant increases in water savings and understanding of water issues across greater Sydney. This paper outlines the 'train the trainer' strategies employed as part of the Program, key lessons learnt and key evaluation to date.

Water saving has become second nature to business and residents across greater Sydney. During this time Water for Life has collaboratively delivered community campaigns, innovative on-the-ground water education projects and training and resources for local government. Over 3.3 million people now regularly take action to save water and 85% of residents are aware of how we are all working together to secure Sydney's water supplies.

**Key words:** water, education, training, capacity building

## Abstract

This paper outlines the key lessons learnt from the Water for Life program in Sydney, Australia, in particular the emphasis on ‘training the trainer’ as part of an integrated approach to engaging the community of greater Sydney to use water wisely.

Water for Life is the NSW Government's flagship community water education program which has driven significant increases in water savings and understanding of water issues across greater Sydney (for more information see [www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au)). Water for Life delivers communications, capacity building and community education as an integral component of the NSW Government's *Metropolitan Water Plan*.

There are four key elements to the Water for Life Program: Communications; Targeted education projects; Capacity building; and Coordination.

The capacity building strategy focuses on a ‘train the trainer’ model and includes: an online Water Education Resource Hub; resources and grant funding for local government; professional learning and targeted training programs and events; pilot projects seeking innovation and new ways of engaging communities that are not educated through traditional educational strategies; and brokering of partnerships and networks to facilitate sharing of resources and ideas.

Findings of the independent evaluation program are outlined in the paper, including increased capacity of water education professionals, an increased number of water education projects being delivered by councils and NGOs and significant increases in community awareness and action.

Tracking of water usage data has also shown a large decrease in per capita water consumption, with greater Sydney now using the same amount of water as the early 1970s, despite a population increase of around 1.3million.

## Introduction

This paper outlines the key lessons learnt from the Water for Life program in Sydney, Australia, in particular the emphasis on ‘training the trainer’ as part of an integrated approach to engaging the community of greater Sydney to use water wisely. Water for Life is a key part of the NSW Government's *Metropolitan Water Plan*.

### *Metropolitan Water Plan*

There are four major parts that make this plan to secure Sydney's water for life: Dams, Recycling, Desalination and Water Efficiency.

These measures, together with the plan's adaptive approach, ensure that greater Sydney has enough water for people and the environment, preparing it for drought, a changing climate and a growing population.

1. **Dams:** Most of Sydney's water comes from a network of 21 dams to the west and south of the metropolitan area – one of the largest storages per person in the world. These dams rely on rainfall. However, Sydney's rainfall pattern is highly variable. It includes long, dry spells like the current drought. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) predict the climate will be warmer and rainfall may be even more variable in the future. As well, Greater Sydney's population is expected to grow by 1.7 million by 2036.

These factors mean relying on rainfall is not enough to secure Sydney's future water supply. That's why the NSW Government's plan includes:

2. **Recycling:** providing 12% of Sydney's water needs for use by industry, irrigation and gardens by 2015.
3. **Desalination:** providing up to 15% of Sydney's water needs from the summer of 2009/10, with the desalination plant effectively powered by 100% accredited renewable energy sources.
4. **Water efficiency:** saving 24% of Sydney's water needs by 2015 through wise water use.

## Materials and methods

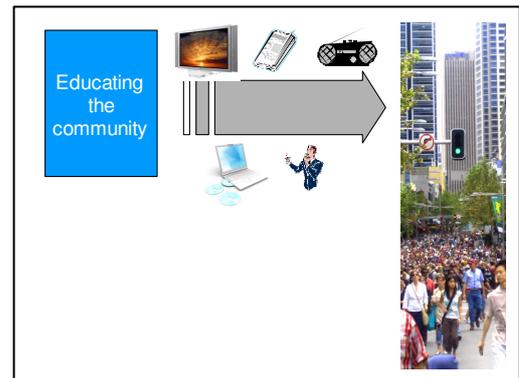
### *Water for Life*

Water for Life is the NSW Government's flagship community water education program which has driven significant increases in water savings and understanding of water issues across greater Sydney (for more information see [www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au)). Water for Life delivers the communications and education component as an integral component of the Metropolitan Water Plan.

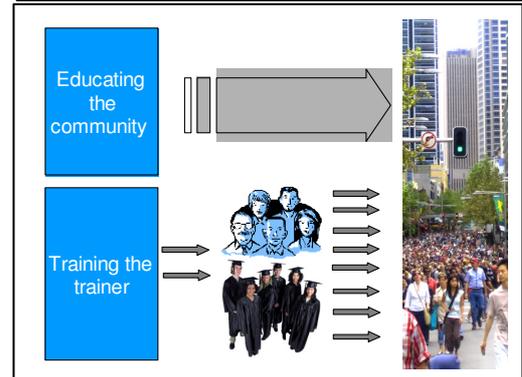
Water saving has become second nature to business and residents across greater Sydney. During this time Water for Life has collaboratively delivered community campaigns, innovative on-the-ground water education projects and training and resources for local government. Over 3.3 million people now regularly take action to save water and 85% of residents are aware of how we are all working together to secure Sydney's water supplies.

Water for Life is an integral part of the Metropolitan Water Plan and includes four key elements:

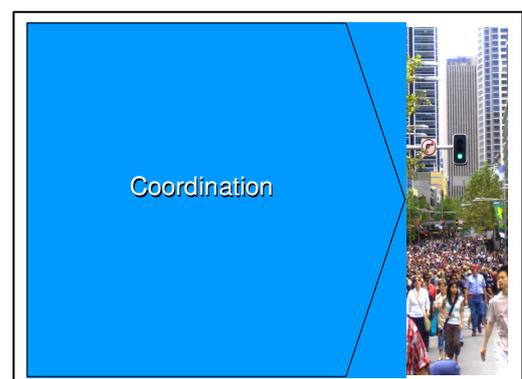
1. Communications, including public information and education campaigns using mass media, public relations, events, information materials and the web to reach the wider Sydney community, encouraging them to keep up their water saving efforts and informing them about progress on the range of measures under the Metropolitan Water Plan.



2. A capacity building program which provides training, networking opportunities, resources & tools to increase the quality and number of leading practice water education projects across greater Sydney.
3. Targeted on-the-ground education projects to engage priority sectors of the community and those that are hard to reach to use water wisely, such as non-English speaking communities, teachers and schools, the property sector and 18-35 year old householders.



4. A coordination framework and overarching Water Education Plan for greater Sydney which sets the priorities and maximises effectiveness and efficiency across the NSW Government, as well as for the local



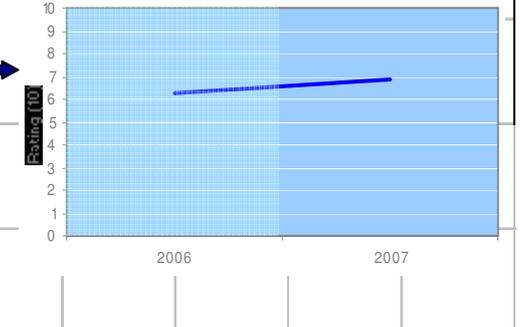
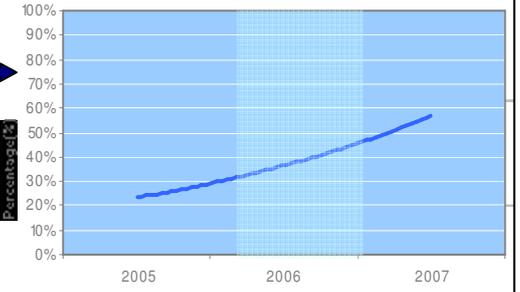
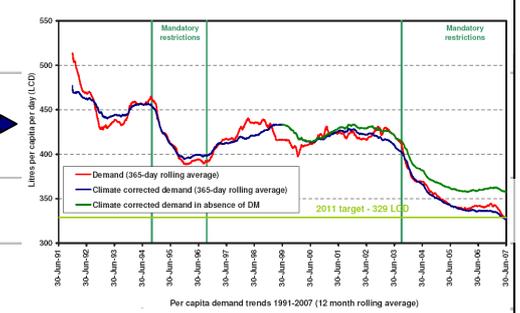
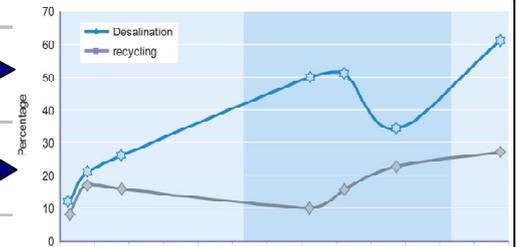
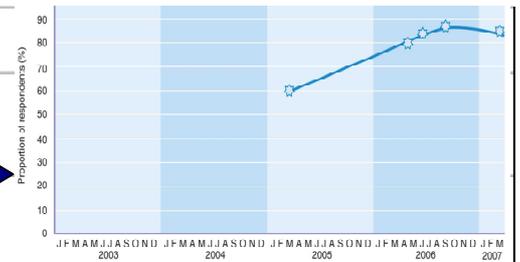
government, formal and community education sectors.

## Results and discussion

Water for Life includes a significant evaluation component. Independent evaluators have been contracted to assess its impact against a range of indicators. Some of the key results to date are outlined below.

Table 1. Key evaluation indicators

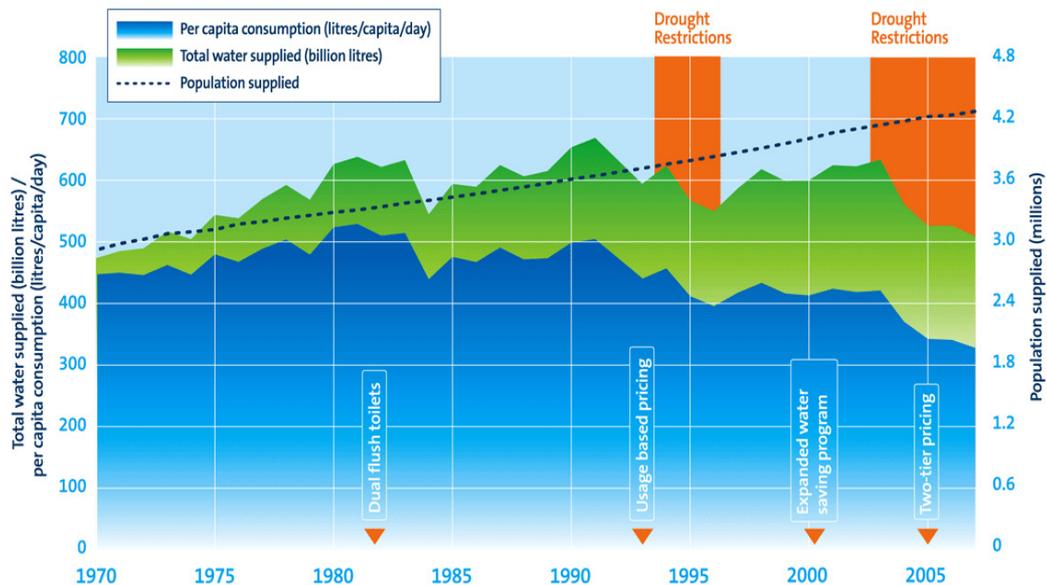
Community indicators	Baseline (2005)	Current (2007)	Target (2009)
Awareness of NSW Government action in securing Sydney's water supply (unprompted)	68%	85%	90%
Awareness of water saving programs (unprompted)	60%	72%	75%
Awareness of Desalination (unprompted)	12%	61%	75%
Awareness of Recycling initiatives (unprompted)	8%	27%	75%
Number of people taking action <b>often</b> to reduce water consumption in past year	65%	79%	85%
Demand for water per capita/day (climate corrected)	342L	315L	329L (2011)
Local government and non-government indicators	Baseline (2005-6)	Current (2007)	Target (2009)
Percentage of local government organisations running water efficiency education projects	23%	57%	75%
Coordination of water education across all organisations (rating out of 10)	4.9/10	5.6/10	7/10
Number of eligible organisations participating in Water for Life partnership by branding projects and resources	0	8	30
Capacity of education practitioners to deliver leading practice (index rating out of 10 based on knowledge, skills, collaboration, organisational support)	6.3/10	6.9/10	8/10





Tracking of water usage data has shown a large decrease in per capita water consumption, with greater Sydney now using the same amount of water as the early 1970s, despite a population increase of around 1.3 million.

### Sydney's population growth and water consumption



The capacity building element of this program plays a significant part in its ongoing longevity and sustainability. Key program elements include:

- The online Water Education Resource Hub ([www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au/education](http://www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au/education))
- resources and grant funding for local government
- Professional learning and targeted training programs and events
- pilot projects seeking innovation and new ways of engaging communities that are not educated through traditional educational strategies
- brokering of partnerships and networks to facilitate sharing of resources and ideas.

### Conclusions

There are a huge range of factors that can lead to the successful delivery of education and ‘train the trainer’ type programs. In this case, the key lessons that can be drawn are that such programs should:

- Use targeted qualitative and quantitative research to better understand the community & stakeholder needs
- Use the most appropriate technology available for efficiency gains and advances in educational techniques
- Focus efforts to making trainers job easier rather than creating another layer of work
- Target training to the particular priority group – for example training developed for school teachers will need to have significantly different content and priorities to that for local government community education staff
- Partner and coordinate to make the most of limited resources
- Incorporate an appropriate evaluation framework to demonstrate impact & enable ongoing review and refinement of efforts.

