

Residential Water Saving Program Survey

Summary Report

Introduction

Council's Water Saving (Demand Management) Strategy has a range of community education programs on offer, to achieve a permanent reduction in water use. A community survey was conducted to gain feedback on Council's current water saving rebate and get potential input for the design of future demand management programs.

The survey was designed for residents of Tweed Shire and ran for 4 weeks between 7 May 2012 and 4 June 2012. People who completed the survey and provided their name and phone number went in the draw for a water saving prize and a \$50 Farmers Market voucher.

Sample size and methodology

The target population was Tweed Shire residents and the sample size was based on factors such as: time available, budget, necessary degree of precision and potential sources of bias (eg participants who may be excluded from doing the survey due to work, those not connected to a computer etc). A total of 302 surveys were completed. *

A pre-test questionnaire was trialled using personal interviews at a number of locations. Minor changes were made and then the survey proceeded with two or three staff conducting personal interviews over two or three hour periods at: weekend markets, weekly farmers markets, Seniors expo event and intercepts on streets during the week. In addition to this the survey was also conducted as: an online/internet survey - Survey Monkey, emails, school newsletters and the Tweedlink.

Choice of survey method was dependent upon the factors of: speed and ease of completing the survey, cost, time and budget. Question types included: multiple choice, numeric open end and text open end.

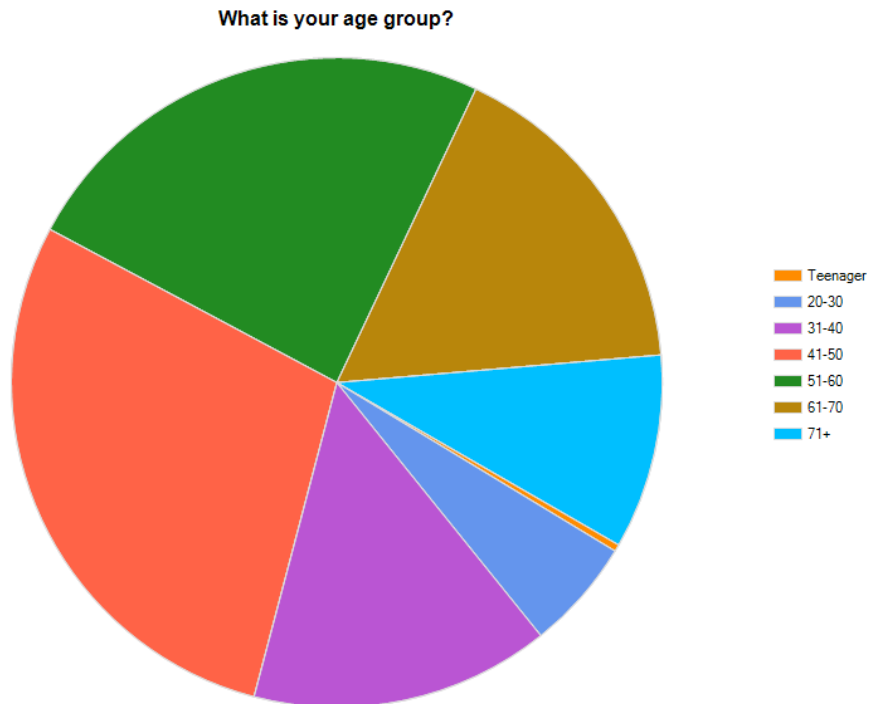
Results (Summary)

Demographics

Of those who completed the surveys

- 92% were on town water
- The highest participation rate came from residents in Murwillumbah, Banora Point, Kingscliff, Tweed heads and Pottsville
- 80 % owned their own property, 18% rented, 2% lived with a family member
- 43.5% were male 56.5% female

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Water Saving Rebate

10. Have you heard about the water saving rebate (or refund) available from Council, offering up to \$70 towards the price of showerheads, aerators and spouts/mixers?

- 61% had heard of Council's water saving rebate and 39% had not

11. Did you apply for the rebate?

Of those who had heard about the rebate:

- 91.2% did not apply for the rebate, 8.8% did apply for the rebate
- reasons for why they didn't apply for the rebate include: 36% already had them installed (previous schemes, new house), 14% had no time, too busy or hadn't got around to it, 10% were renting, had only just heard about it, not sure they were eligible (renters, multi units etc) , 6% didn't like them, restrictions in retirement villages and renting
- poor knowledge –(didn't know if eligible, how it works, costs, jargon (aerator, efficient? no idea what this means!) etc 16%

12. Where did you hear about the rebate?

- 65% gained knowledge about the rebate from Tweedlink and 35 % gained the info from other sources (council, newspaper, web, friend)

13. Do you already have water efficient or water saving devices installed at your house (eg showerheads, aerators and spouts/mixers)?

- 73% already have devices installed - of these, 46% have some not all of the devices installed

14. If you don't have a water saving showerhead, aerator or spouts/mixers, are you interested in installing some and getting a rebate of up to \$70 towards them?

- 68% were interested in installing a water saving showerhead, aerator or spouts/mixers and getting a rebate of up to \$70 towards them

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- 16% weren't interested due to cost involved in initial outlay or not having enough money/costs to afford
- don't like water efficient showers – 7%
- Rent – 8%

15 Would you prefer to apply through Council for discounts to get water-saving products? Or get the discount at the store when I buy the product?

- 52% prefer to get discounts through the store direct :easier, convenient, quicker, good for businesses, no paperwork
- 27%prefer to apply through Council: safer, trust, political, through rates
- 21% don't care either way

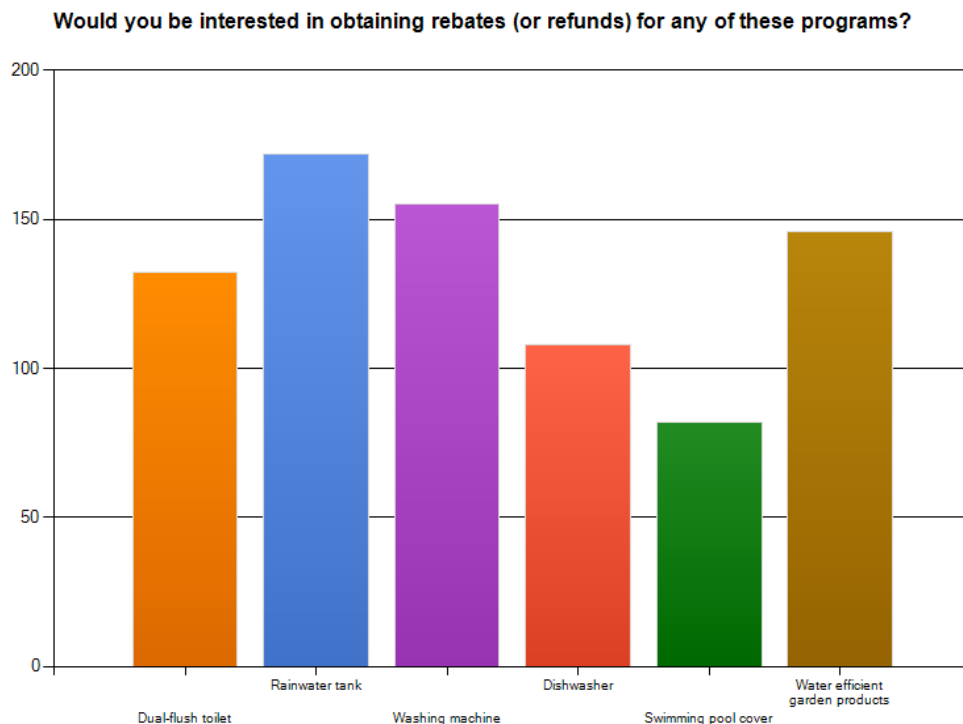
Other ideas for programs

16. Are you interested in being a part of a street or community program that looks at sustainable water use (ie like Sustainability Street)?

- 26% interested in being a part of a street or community program that looks at sustainable water use (ie like Sustainability Street which brings neighbours together) with 31% maybe being interested and 43% not interested

17. Would you be interested in obtaining rebates (or refunds) for any of these programs?

Dual-flush toilet, Rainwater tank, Washing machine, Dishwasher, Swimming pool cover, Water efficient garden products



18. What percentage of the cost should Council offer to pay to make rebate (or refund) programs more appealing?

- 22% would like Council to pay for 50% of the rebate, 11% would like Council to pay for 25%, 12% were unsure or didn't care, 6% wanted up to 15% of the bill, 6% up to 20, 6% up to 30 , 4% thought greater than 50% was fair

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19. What would stop you from claiming a rebate?

- 31% said complexity of forms and red tape/paperwork 13% said cost , 8% said time

20. Other ideas for programs

A wide range of ideas were suggested. Main areas:

- 20% felt education and information was important eg what does the WELS rating mean, water jargon? what is best to buy?, Make it easier to see how much water we're using on a regular basis, talking to people more regularly, more info for the younger ones - online, facebook, small stickers provided by council to all public facilities such as toilets, showers hand basins and also to hotels and resorts so that they could be displayed above taps, basic brochure switch to water savings in all rates notices
- Community based projects eg A handyman service to check for leaking taps, rather than calling in a plumber. Could do whole areas, free assessment at home to tell people what they need to do , How your household compares with similar households, sms / email notifications when coming close to allowable amounts. Attend community gardens (small parks like the new one at Tumbulgum) good for socialising and sharing tips
- Incentives programs eg reward those that do the right thing and save water, Car Wash vouchers Pet Wash vouchers, If residents reduce their water usage by 10-20 % then a \$20-50 credit on their next bill and more for commercial users
- Schools programs eg Introduce the Kenyan Safe Water project into local schools

Key Findings

Community feedback about Council's existing water saving rebate:

- 61% had heard of Council's water saving rebate and 39% had not. Of those who had heard about the rebate: 92% did not apply for the rebate, 8% did apply for the rebate
- Reasons for why they didn't apply for the rebate include: 36% already had them installed (previous schemes, new house), 14% had no time, too busy or hadn't got around to it, 10% were renting, had only just heard about it, not sure they were eligible (renters, multi units etc)
- 73% already have devices installed - of these, 46% have some not all of the devices installed
- 68% were interested in installing a water saving showerhead, aerator or spouts/mixers and getting a rebate of up to \$70 towards them
- 16% weren't interested due to cost involved in initial outlay or not having enough money/costs to afford
- 52% prefer to get discounts through the store direct :easier, convenient, quicker, good for businesses, no paperwork
- 27%prefer to apply through Council: safer, trust, political, through rates
- 31% said complexity of forms and red tape/paperwork stopped them from claiming a rebate 13% said cost, 8% said time

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Recommendations

To increase uptake of existing rebate program and to encourage those who have partially retrofitted their houses to complete the whole house

- Extend existing rebate program. Give results so far of uptake and benefits made.
- Extend existing rebate program with info about benefits from having the whole house done a 'Tune Up", with products available at a range of stores as well as at Council. Advertise in paper for businesses to tender.
- For a short time offer it to those who have already taken advantage of this rebate as well. Offer them as house package: spout, showerhead, aerators.
- Explore other state's program eg South Australia - Retrofit rebate - for \$30 (free for concession card holders) a licensed plumber will come to your home and check your plumbing fixtures and fittings, retrofit water saving devices (including up to two showerheads) and provide water saving advice. Separate terms, conditions and eligibility criteria apply.
- Offer increased info about water product terminology (eg what is Wels 3 star? Give comparisons of old and new devices.
- Use Tweedlink, but find additional promotional avenues - community newsletters eg tweed weekly, Bowling club/ golf club news, sporting networks, church newsletters, garden clubs, farmers markets, stalls at events, schools
- Find a community representative who is well respected to be the ambassador - someone connected to water? Surfer?
- Offer a special deal for the first 20 or 50? to take up the house package.(farmers market voucher) Follow up with this group of people and do promo stories on them- pictures of changes made
- Repeat tenancy act ads (simply put) for renters. Look for other places/ other people to promote - eg real estate agents, plumbers, doctors surgeries

Key findings

Opportunities for other rebates within the Demand Management program:

- Other rebates like: Dual-flush toilet 56%, Rainwater tank 74%, Washing machine 66%, Dishwasher 46%, Swimming pool cover 35%, Water efficient garden products 62% were well supported
- 22% would like Council to pay for 50% of the rebate, 11% would like Council to pay for 25%, 12% were unsure or didn't care, 6% wanted up to 15% of the bill, 6% up to 20, 6% up to 30,
- 31% said complexity of forms and red tape/paperwork 13% said cost, 8% said time

Recommendations

Other rebate programs and opportunities to increase community uptake of water reduction.

- Explore/ investigate other states programs currently operating for dual toilet rebates examples include: Melbourne water, ACT, Victoria, South Australia

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- Budget pending offer a 25 - 50% % rebate (see Melbourne Toilet Replacement Program - Call 1300 2 FLUSH <http://www.dualflush.com.au/>)
- Have a trial period to pilot uptake. Eg **Special offer:** Get a \$30 rebate when you spend just \$50 on water saving products between 26 March and 30 June 2012 Living Victoria Water Rebate Program <http://www.water.vic.gov.au/saving/home/rebates>
- Investigate ACT **ToiletSmart program** http://www.thinkwater.act.gov.au/tune-ups_rebates/ToiletSmart.shtml
- Water Corporation http://www.watercorporation.com.au/T/toilets_to_go.cfm
- Offer availability of staff to give small talk to interested people in apartments, housing complexes, retirement villages, van parks etc to explain offer
- Business breakfasts - develop water partnerships with business chambers to promote programs
- Offer products through a number of stores and at Council

Key findings

Other ideas for education programs that support and value-add rebate programs.

- 26% were interested in being a part of a street or community program that looks at sustainable water use (ie like Sustainability Street which brings neighbours together) with 31% maybe being interested and 43% not interested
- 20% felt education and information was important
- Community based projects, Incentives programs and Schools programs are viewed as important.

Recommendations

- Create a 'water column' in the Tweedlink that gives ongoing suggestions/tips/facts about water use/ demystify terminology
- Trial an interested street/ complex/ community that will monitor and report water usage using Councils Sustainable Streets model. (similar to Tweed/ Byron initiative)
- Promote results and visually signpost positive behaviours and results on that street/ complex eg "This street currently uses less than 180 l per person per day" and reward positive behaviours and changes. (Incentive prizes) Use this street to further extend the idea into other communities.(How your household compares with similar households)
- Explore Melbourne / Sydney Water Trial a 'handyman service' to check for leaking taps, rather than calling in a plumber. Could do whole areas, free assessment at home to tell people what they need to do.
- Incentives programs eg reward those that do the right thing and save water, Car Wash vouchers Pet Wash vouchers, If residents reduce their water usage by 10-20 % then a \$20-50 credit on their next bill
- Basic water brochure with giveaway water timer and tap stickers mailed out in water bills 2013

* The mathematics of probability proves the size of the population is irrelevant unless the size of the sample exceeds a few percent of the total population you are examining. This means that a sample of 500 people is equally useful in examining the opinions of a state of 15,000,000 as it would a city of 100,000. For this reason, The Survey System ignores the population size when it is "large" or unknown. Population size is only likely to be a factor when you work with a relatively small and known group of people (e.g., the members of an association). (Australian Marketing Association 2012) Accuracy of survey results of population 90,000 and 300 surveys completed using a 90%confidence level has an error level of 4.8% (Online calculator for determining sample size: <http://www.custominsight.com/articles/random-sample-calculator.asp>)