

Waterwise Council Program LGA Briefing Note



The [Waterwise Council Program](#) began in 2009 through a joint partnership between Water Corporation and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. The program builds a cooperative relationship with local governments to improve water efficiency, climate resilience and create liveable communities.

There are three levels of achievement within the Waterwise Council Program including Endorsed, Gold and Platinum Waterwise Council of the Year.

Benefits of being a Waterwise Council

As a Waterwise Council, local governments have access to:

- Co-funding of up to \$10,000 each year as part of the [Waterwise Greening Scheme](#)
- Free online [waterwise training](#) for staff members
- Workshops, networking and industry events
- Water use data and key industry contacts
- Promotional and educational materials for your community and staff
- [Data loggers](#) to assist with leak detection
- And more as they are made available!

How to Become a Waterwise Council

Waterwise Councils can join a community of other local governments striving for better water management. To be a part of the [Waterwise Council Program](#), local governments must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and create a Waterwise Council Action Plan (WCAP). To retain Waterwise Council endorsement, a report needs to be completed annually. Steps include:

Step 1 – Council commitment

- Nominate a program champion or team
- Sign a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) and email it to wepartnerships@watercorporation.com.au

Step 2 – Create an action plan

- Create a [Waterwise Council Action Plan \(WCAP\)](#) to track water use, set waterwise goals and opportunities for your council facilities and within your community to improve water management.

Step 3 – Complete free waterwise training

- Encourage your team members to complete our free [waterwise training modules](#), which includes helpful topics such as landscaping and irrigation, water auditing and cooling towers.

Step 4 – Be a waterwise leader

- Our water is precious so make sure your council leads by example by sticking to your watering days and following water restrictions such as the winter sprinkler ban.



- Water Corporation and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and Water Corporation will verify each council has received no license or water use breaches as part of the ongoing endorsement assessment process.

Step 5 - Apply for a recognition award (optional)

- The Waterwise Recognition Awards celebrates councils who have done valuable work in creating waterwise communities and is part of your Waterwise Council reporting process. If you're newly Endorsed into the program, have achieved Gold Endorsement or, have applied to be Platinum Waterwise Council of the year, you will be invited to the recognition awards event.

Level 1 - Becoming an Endorsed Waterwise Council

Endorsement requirements

After the MoU is signed and the local government submits its first WCAP, to retain Waterwise Council endorsement, an [annual report](#) must be completed each year (~ end of October). The report for your annual re-endorsement requires:

- Updates on corporate and community water use (scheme/groundwater/alternative)
- Updates on groundwater allocation and licences as reported to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (where applicable)
- Updates on WCAP goals/actions
- No breaches of scheme or groundwater watering throughout the reporting year
- Ability to apply for recognition (optional)

Level 2 - Becoming a Gold Waterwise Council

In addition to the annual re-endorsement reporting requirements LGA's can be endorsed as a Gold Waterwise Council by demonstrating initiatives that meet minimum criteria across the [seven Water Sensitive City \(WSC\) Index goal areas](#). This recognises the efforts of councils to create sustainable and liveable communities contributing to a more balanced water cycle, rather than focussing on just water savings. Applying for Gold is undertaken at the time of submitting the annual Waterwise Action Plan/Report

For **Gold Endorsement**, the following actions must be **completed**:

1. Have all **Aquatic Centres** endorsed as a [Waterwise Aquatic Centre](#)
2. Have a Waterwise **Verge Policy or Guideline** in line with Water Corporation's [Waterwise Verge Best Practice Guidelines](#)
3. Have an established cross-functional **Water Management Team**
4. Set **10** Gold standard waterwise actions (including 5 mandatory actions already provided) in your WCAP across the seven WSC goal areas, which must include at least one action in each of the following goal areas:
 - Ensure quality urban space
 - Improve ecological health
 - Increase community capital



Level 3 - Becoming Platinum Waterwise Council of the Year (optional)

Once a year, Gold Waterwise Councils can apply to be recognised as Platinum Waterwise Council of the Year where extraordinary waterwise leadership has been demonstrated with a long-term impact on the community. Applying for Platinum recognition is undertaken at the time of submitting the annual Waterwise Council re-endorsement report by completing an additional application form, and shortlisted councils are invited to the annual Waterwise Recognition event hosted by the Minister for Water.

Platinum Council of the year also receives a trophy of acknowledgement, up to \$20,000 in co-funding under the Waterwise Greening Scheme, promotion as a leader in water efficiency in publications, social media, forums, and other mediums and, Waterwise Platinum branding to promote water saving achievements which can be used on your website, publications, marketing materials and email signatures.

For **Platinum Endorsement**, eligible Gold Waterwise Councils must provide the following:

- A **Waterwise Council Action Plan** and/or **Annual Re-endorsement report**.
- Provide updates on all **Waterwise Gold actions**.

And the following in the additional application form:

- Write a **500-word justification** about why your local government should be recognised as the Platinum Waterwise Council of the Year.
- Provide **your top 3 new actions** from the year that goes **above and beyond 'business as usual'** and demonstrates innovation and contribution to creating waterwise communities.

Waterwise events

1. Waterwise Recognition Event

A breakfast event is held each year hosted by the Minister for Water to recognise newly Endorsed, Gold and Platinum Waterwise Councils. This is where the Platinum Waterwise Council of the Year is announced, and it is a joint event with other non-residential Waterwise Programs.

The Minister for Water issues a media release after the event to promote and highlight the efforts of these local governments which generates great local media coverage. We also encourage our Waterwise Councils to promote their achievements on their own media platforms.

2. Waterwise Forum

The Waterwise Forum is held in National Water Week (October) each year and provides Waterwise Program participants with the opportunity to network with peers and industry and learn about the latest Waterwise case studies, initiatives and innovative projects.



Waterwise Council schemes and offers

Waterwise Greening Scheme

Through the [Waterwise Greening Scheme](#), Waterwise Councils with an approved Waterwise Verge Policy in line with [best practice](#) have access of up to \$10,000 of co-funding each year for waterwise greening initiatives, such as waterwise verge subsidies, waterwise trees, waterwise garden competitions, waterwise plant sale subsidies, waterwise garden workshops and waterwise demonstration gardens. The Platinum Waterwise Council of the year receives up to up to \$20,000 in co-funding for the year.

Funding is limited and Waterwise Councils must meet eligibility criteria in order to apply.

Data Logging Program

All Waterwise Councils can apply for a temporary data logger for a site that meets the program's criteria. If a site is suspected to have a leak or uses over 5,000kL per year, then a data logger can be installed for up to 6 months to assist staff to track water use at that site to improve water efficiency, track new device installation impacts or monitor a leak during investigations. Contact the water.efficiency@watercorporation.com.au team for more information.

Other related programs

We have many other [Waterwise Programs](#) we encourage local governments to participate in. Being a Waterwise Council also allows you to have a better opportunity to be involved and claim initiatives when they become available as some initiatives and schemes may only last for a limited time.

Contact

For more information, please contact:

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