

## How we use our water

**Alice Springs residents are among the highest water users anywhere in Australia. An average Alice Springs household (house, flat or unit) uses around 535,000 litres of water per year. That's around 1,500 litres or 170 buckets of water per day. This high water use is mainly because our hot dry summers encourage high garden watering and air-conditioner use; however, there are many ways to reduce water use without affecting lifestyle.**

### How we use water in Central Australia

How we use water depends in part on where we live. On average houses use more water than units and flats because they have more occupants and bigger gardens.

The average water consumption for a house in Alice Springs is 700kL/a, while the average water demand for a flat, unit, duplex or townhouse is around half that at 370kL/a.

### Garden use (65%)

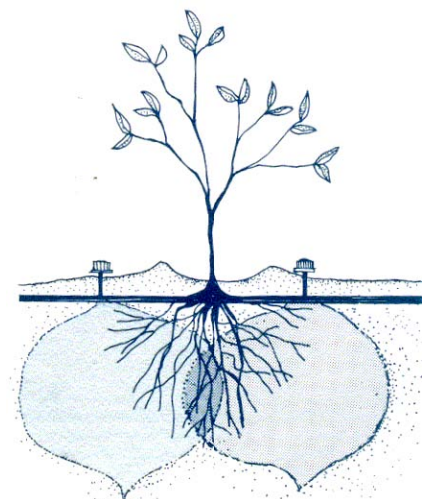
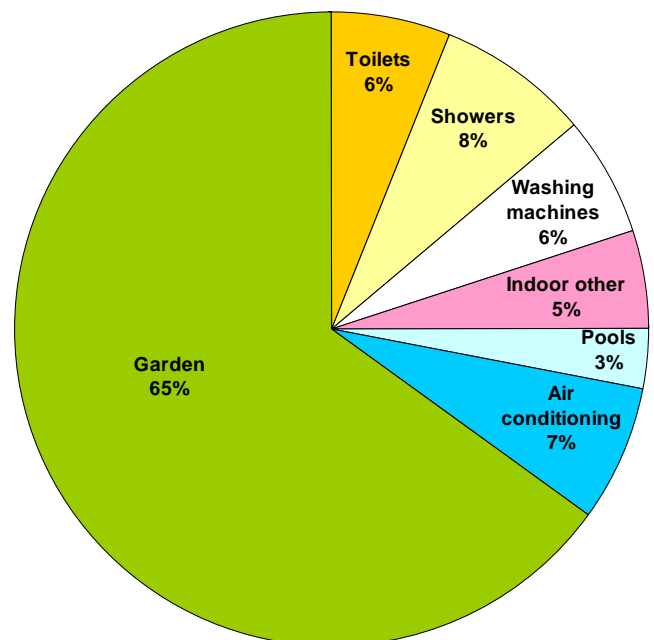
In Alice Springs, about two thirds of our annual household water demand goes on the garden with most of this on the lawn.

- Plant natives or drought tolerant species
- Replace sprinklers with sub-surface dripper systems that water plant roots directly
- Use a tap timer to ensure sprinklers or drippers are not accidentally left running
- Mulch your plants
- Group plants with similar water requirements
- Harvest rainwater and stormwater for garden use
- Look into reusing greywater

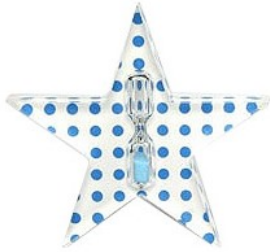
### Lawns

- Reduce lawn area – replace unused lawn with water efficient plants, mulch, paving, sand or gravel
- Lawns can be weaned off high water use – experiment with lower water use. Try watering for 20-30 minutes twice a week in summer and once a week in winter
- Have a small patch (eg. 2m by 2m) of kikuyu as couch easily becomes an environmental weed. Try watering your lawn with shower water caught in a bucket, but ensure you use organic, chemical free soaps and shampoos

Average Household Water Demand  
700kL/household/year



*Drippers can deliver water exactly where it is needed – to the roots*



### Showers (8%)

Because showers also use hot water, saving water also means saving energy which can equal good dollar savings.

- Fit a 3-star rated (or higher) water efficient showerhead (9L/minute)
- Have a shorter shower – keep an eye on shower length with a four minute egg timer

### Evaporative air conditioners (7%)

- Improve summer shading of windows and walls to keep your home cool
- Close curtains during the day to keep out light and heat
- Use ceiling or pedestal fans first – compared to air conditioners fans use less energy and no water
- Use evaporative units correctly – open some windows and make sure bleed rate is right (see box on right)
- Only run air conditioners when needed

#### Air conditioner bleed rates

It is important to bleed evaporative air-conditioners to reduce mineral build-up in the system. Bleed rates that are set too low will increase system maintenance requirements. In Central Australia bleed rates of 10L to 15L per hour are a good guide, with larger units requiring a higher bleed. Refer to the manufacturers guide for advice.

### Washing machines (6%)

- Only wash when you have a full load
- Use the water-saver wash option if available
- Upgrade to a 4-star or higher rated water efficient machine. Water efficient washing machines can use as little as 36L per wash compared to 120L in a less efficient machine

### Toilets (6%)

- Replace old single flush toilets with new 4.5/3L dual flush models
- Use half flush where possible
- Fit a flush arrester or water-filled 2L soft drink bottle in your old single flush toilet cistern to reduce flush volumes

### Pools (18%)

On average, pools represent 3% of Alice Springs household water use, however, those with a pool use an average of 18% of their household water use in the pool.

- Shade pools and protect from wind to reduce evaporation
- Minimise backwash times. Try collecting backwash water in a tank, allow dirt to settle and siphon clear water back into the swimming pool



#### For more information, contact:

Water Management Branch

Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts

#### Palmerston

4th Floor Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Tce  
PO Box 496, PALMERSTON NT 0831

Phone 08 8999 3678

#### Katherine

Randazzo Arcade, 16 Katherine Terrace  
KATHERINE NT 0850

Phone 08 8973 8100

#### Alice Springs

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Alice Plaza, Todd Mall  
PO Box 1120, ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

Phone 08 8951 9254

[www.nt.gov.au/waterwise](http://www.nt.gov.au/waterwise)