



Cover that pool this summer (5 December 2006)

Backyard swimming pool owners can save the equivalent of at least a full pool of water each year by investing in a pool cover, Water Resources Minister John Kobelke said today.

Mr Kobelke was speaking at the presentation of a cheque to the Royal Life Saving Society for a Premier's Water Foundation research project.

The society's \$60,000 project, which is the first to be completed from the first round of the funding program, was conducted in conjunction with the Leisure Institute of Western Australia and it looked at ways public swimming pools could maximise the reuse of water.

"This first week of summer is a good time to remind all householders of the need to be 'waterwise' and being smart about swimming pool management is one way to make a difference," Mr Kobelke said.

"There are currently about 93,000 backyard pools in Perth and only one-third have a pool cover to reduce evaporation.

"Swimming pools lose more than their entire volume of water through evaporation every year and it is estimated that some 42kilolitres of water per pool can be saved by using a cover.

"Since pool covers were added to the Waterwise Rebate Program in July last year almost 7,000 rebate applications have been received – with estimated backyard pool water savings of nearly 300,000 kilolitres.

"With a rebate of up to \$100 and a saving on the household water bill, pool covers just make common sense."

The Minister said the Royal Life Saving Society research project would enable the society to include a new training component on water savings in its water awareness training programs for pool managers.

However the research found a general lack of knowledge in the aquatic recreation industry about the level of water it used.

Research into 26 aquatic centres found that although a number of water saving strategies were in place, the lack of accurate data made it difficult to estimate water consumption and cost savings.

“With over 250 aquatic centres in the State, the volume of water used is substantial,” Mr Kobelke said.

“Centres need to find ways to be smarter about water saving and re-use.

“I hope the Royal Life Saving Society research project will see more local government authorities become part of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Water Campaign, which is supported by the State Government and helps councils reduce water consumption and improve water quality.”

The Minister also congratulated the CSIRO and The University of Western Australia on being awarded grants from the second round of funding from the Premier’s Water Foundation.

Four CSIRO projects and one UWA project would receive more than \$3.1million to further their research and development into innovative ways to conserve water and maximise the use of wastewater.

The newly funded projects addressed matters such as the impacts of wastewater purification, the risks to Perth’s coastal water sources from seawater intrusion and involved investigations into health and environmental impacts from recycled water use.

“If we are to overcome the challenges of increasing water demands from population growth and a drying climate, we need to secure our future with innovative, scientifically based and practical solutions,” Mr Kobelke said.

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