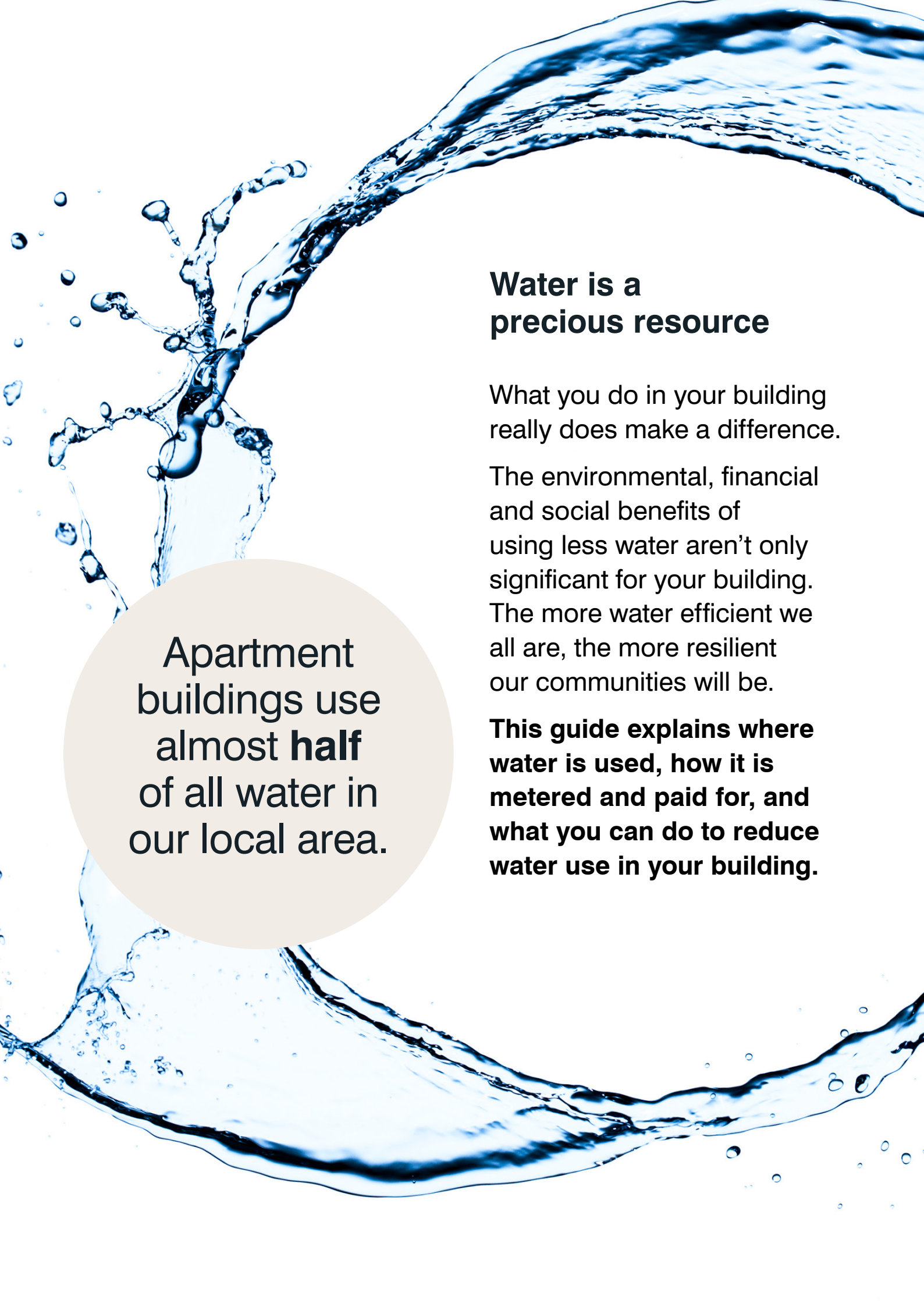


Water guide for apartment buildings





Apartment buildings use almost **half** of all water in our local area.

Water is a precious resource

What you do in your building really does make a difference.

The environmental, financial and social benefits of using less water aren't only significant for your building. The more water efficient we all are, the more resilient our communities will be.

This guide explains where water is used, how it is metered and paid for, and what you can do to reduce water use in your building.

Become **water wise**

This guide covers:



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Where is it used and who pays for it 4

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Measure, track and compare

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Help your building prepare for a water wise future

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See what other buildings are doing to reduce water use

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- Windsor Plaza 11

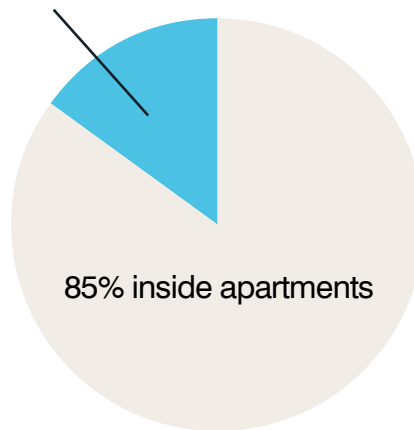
How to save water and money in your building

All water use in your building affects your common property electricity cost

Most high-rise apartment buildings have a single water meter. This meter measures use in common areas and individual apartments.

Total water use is paid for by the owners corporation. Owners pay based on lot entitlement, as opposed to individual consumption. Owners need to work collectively to reduce total water use because it's not easy to tell which apartments are using more than others.

15% in common areas



Share of water use in apartment blocks

All water use within an apartment building affects common property electricity costs paid for by the owners corporation, as significant energy is used to pump water around the building.



Showers use about **50%** of overall water use



Fixing leaks in individual apartments can reduce water use by up to **30%**



On average **10%** of your building's common area electricity costs are from water use

Take control of water use

Rate your building's performance

Measuring your building's performance can help you take control of your water use and costs.

Get your whole building's water use measured yearly with a National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) rating.

This will show how your building's water use compares to other similar buildings. It provides a benchmark and will help you monitor progress over time.

The 6-star scale helps you understand and communicate your building's water use.



Ratings are in demand. Studies show 80% of people want information about a building's environmental performance at the point of sale or lease.

The rating is completed by an accredited NABERS assessor.

If you get a below average rating, it isn't the end of the world. It simply signals you can improve and save money.

If you have a good rating, you can promote this as part of your building's environmental performance and inspire your residents and prospective owners.

nabers.gov.au/apartment-buildings

Take control of water use

Monitor your water use

Monitoring your building's water use allows you to stay efficient, respond quickly and avoid unnecessary costs.

As well as a NABERS rating, your owners corporation could consider installing submeters at strategic locations on your common property and subscribing to an online data monitoring portal.

This will allow you to:

- understand your building's water use, including weekday and weekend use patterns
- track this over time to see how it changes
- set alerts to get notified of unusual changes in water use
- help you identify and rapidly respond to leaks in apartments and common areas.

Regis Towers, Haymarket

Monitors water use in 3 towers, 646 apartments

A leaking fire sprinkler concealed behind a wall wouldn't have been detected and fixed so quickly without monitoring water use. This graph illustrates the high water use caused by the hidden leak and the subsequent drop in water use after the problem was fixed.



How to set your building up for success

Work with your residents

Most apartment buildings only have one water meter for the whole building. This means you need a collective effort to reduce water use.

Visit **sydney water** for some great water wise tips



Encourage your residents to **report leaks** in their apartments so they can be repaired quickly. One leaking tap can waste up to 2,000 litres a month.



Share water saving tips through your building's communications channels to help your residents understand water use and promote water efficient behaviours.



Promote water efficient products and labels for bathrooms, kitchens, and laundries, where possible.

How to set your building up for success

Use Sydney Water's WaterFix Strata program

Reduce water use and utility costs in your apartment building with Sydney Water's WaterFix Strata program.

Sydney Water has worked with 17 apartment buildings in the City of Sydney's area, retrofitting over 3,696 apartments.

WaterFix Strata offers free desktop assessments, more detailed reports, obligation-free quotes and flexible payment options for eligible apartment buildings.



WaterFix® process:

- 1** Sydney Water gathers data on your building's current water use.
- 2** A presentation is given to your strata committee or owners corporation.
- 3** The strata committee approves Sydney Water's proposed works, and a project manager is appointed.
- 4** Communications are provided in multiple languages to inform residents of the program and its benefits.
- 5** Sydney Water manages the works, including access to apartments, so there's no additional work for your building manager.
- 6** Plumbers retrofit efficient fixtures and fix leaks in every apartment.
- 7** Sydney Water provides summary reporting to communicate water and financial savings.

Be inspired

Century Towers

From leaky taps and toilets
to **leading water saver**

Century Towers is a 52-storey residential building in the city centre with 292 apartments. It had extremely high-water use. This prompted the strata committee to join Sydney Water's WaterFix program.





What was done

- 602 toilet and tap leaks were repaired.
- 687 domestic water fixtures were replaced with efficient alternatives.

Results

- Slashed water use by **28 million litres** a year
- Reduced water bills by **\$64,000** a year. This has kept strata levies from going up and allowed money to be spent on other essential building projects.

By accepting the performance agreement option, no upfront costs were incurred.

Andrew, the building manager, was also able to encourage many residences to upgrade their ageing hot water tanks.

Role of strata committee members

Century Towers' strata committee is a highly engaged group.

- Resource use is monitored monthly with the treasurer.
- It's directly involved in efficiency projects.
- It produces a report for the annual general meeting that highlights sustainability initiatives and achievements.



“There was a lot of debate as to whether we should DIY the WaterFix project rather than outsource it to Sydney Water. It would have been difficult to DIY – particularly with gaining access to apartments,”

Andrew Croucher, Century Towers

Be inspired

Windsor Plaza

The **cooperative effort** that converted this former water guzzler

Windsor Plaza is a 18-storey residential building in the city centre with 154 apartments. It found **28%** of all water use was attributed to minor water leaks within apartments.





What was done

- WaterFix Strata service accessed 153 of the 154 mostly rented residential apartments. It fixed and replaced inefficient water devices, like a tap that leaked 7 litres a minute!

Results

- Slashed water bills in **half**
- Reduced energy costs by **\$40,000** per year by reducing the amount of water heated and/or pumped around the building

Role of building members

The water efficiency project was an overwhelming success because the managers engaged owners and renters from the start and right through the process. Activities included:

- Newsletters, building notices, contact with estate agents, and updates via the building management system
- Invitations to residents to attend strata committee meetings
- Communications in English, Mandarin, and Thai
- Inspiring messaging about this shared opportunity



“The committee understands the cost/benefit of looking after the building. Being a key part of the machinery that manages and develops the building and its community can be very satisfying”

Andrew Whittaker, committee chair

Get extra help

- Sign up to our Sustainable Apartments newsletter
city.sydney/apartments-newsletter
- To get a WaterFix Strata assessment visit
[sydneywater.com.au/your-home/
helping-you-save-water/waterfix-strata.html](https://sydneywater.com.au/your-home/helping-you-save-water/waterfix-strata.html)
- To get a NABERS rating visit
[nabers.gov.au/ratings/spaces-we-rate/
apartment-buildings#section-target-3](https://nabers.gov.au/ratings/spaces-we-rate/apartment-buildings#section-target-3)