

PART THREE

becoming **super-efficient** *water users*

Everyone can do something to bring about significant improvements in water efficiency, and, ultimately, reach super efficiency. Some will want to do more than others. So much the better. We need to aim for major advances across the whole community over the next few years. These are the steps we recommend to achieve these vital aims.

STEP 1: RECOGNISE OUR POWER

We have more power than we realise. This is played out on several different levels.

Our power as individuals

Word of mouth. Word and deed. Remember that word of mouth is possibly the most potent source of information in our society! Try talking with everyone you know to raise community consciousness about water, and show the way by your own actions.

Our power in a small group

When we join forces with others, we share wisdom as well as the load. As individuals we usually wear different hats: as family members, parents, friends, employees, employers, small business people, volunteers or neighbours. There is enormous scope for change in coming together in small clusters of people to do important work. We know this already through such hugely successful initiatives as the Landcare groups, now dotted all over Australia.

All it might take is for a couple of parents to urge their school council to apply for a Community Water Grant to do a water audit, install rainwater tanks or other water-efficiency measures. It might involve patrons urging the manager of the local gym to start a similar process, or ratepayers talking with their local council, or staff in their workplace taking action, or volunteers in a not-for profit agency.

Our power in a community

Most of us connect in some way with organisations and networks that can help spread information, take initiatives and broadcast achievements. These could be employer groups, unions, sports clubs and associations, shareholders, faith communities, arts and recreation bodies, and so on.

Our power as voters

When we elect people to represent us in local councils or in state and federal governments we effectively give them our power as citizens to use responsibly on our behalf. We trust them to use this power wisely.

We need to talk with our representatives about water, water efficiency and super efficiency, making suggestions and requests, commending them on important achievements and holding them to account for inadequate responses or non-responses.

Our power as global citizens

We need to look after water in our own patch as well as do what we can to help manage freshwater resources around the world. There are plenty of established forums for taking action on water outside the political arena. Start by supporting an international not-for-profit organisation such as WaterAid, which is dedicated to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest.

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STEP 2: APPRECIATE THE SCOPE FOR ACTION

There are no limits to what can be attempted or achieved when it comes to improving our water efficiency. Many of you are already doing great things in this regard. You now need to look at what you can do to assist with moves towards super efficiency!

The following sections outline the many things we can all do to kick-start the move to super-efficient water use in four major areas: in business and organisations; on the land; in households; and in government.

WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO:



IN BUSINESS & ORGANISATIONS



ON THE LAND



IN HOUSEHOLDS



IN GOVERNMENT

Each of these parts addresses three interrelated tasks:

- to measure and monitor the water we use
- reduce the amount of water we use
- and reuse water as many times as possible.

There is no way we can do justice here to all the many things that are already being done and can still be done. Our aim is to provide enough detail and direction for people to at least appreciate the scope for action, and to start the ball rolling wherever they can.

We have come to the realisation that the water issue is an extremely complex one, and one that can only be progressed by using many different water-saving methods and ideas. Some of these strategies require us to change our attitudes to water use, some can be achieved via legislation and by the use of new technology, but probably the most effective measures (and the most challenging) will involve changing people's basic attitudes to water.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us ... And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

M. Williamson, A return to love: reflections on the principles of a course in miracles, HarperCollins, 1996, pp. 190-91