

## **The bottom-up approach to water conservation**

World-renowned chewing gum manufacturer, The Wrigley Company at Asquith is an exemplar of the positive impact of behavioural change on water conservation. In less than 12 months since joining the **every drop counts program** in early 2003, overall water consumption has fallen by nearly 50 per cent.

In fact, the company approached Sydney Water first to join the EDC program and this proactive attitude has continued. Very early in the relationship, following an initial management diagnostic, Wrigley's took the initiative to make a detailed presentation on what they intended to do to cut water consumption.

A subsequent water audit, using a series of on-line meters, provided an accurate picture of water usage throughout the plant. "We had assumed that 80 per cent of our water was used in one area but the audit revealed a much wider distribution and opportunities for its conservation," says Kushan Fernando, Environmental Supervisor at Wrigley's Asquith who, in conjunction with, Tom Potter, QA, Environmental and Development Manager – Wrigley Pacific Region is managing the **every drop counts** program.

One of the early significant benefits of this relationship with Sydney Water has been the identification and rectification of the excess discharge of wastewater. The company has saved over \$50,000, in avoiding discharge penalties, by now knowing the location of all wastewater streams.

Wrigley's again displayed initiative in designing and conducting a TAFE-based environmental awareness training program for its 216 staff, that included a water conservation element delivered by Sydney Water. In conjunction with an in-house promotion and a competition for ideas on water conservation, there has been highly positive feedback throughout the workplace. "Wrigley's proactive approach has made the partnership a very enjoyable experience," says Steven Meleca, EDC Program Co-ordinator for Wrigley.

"Our people have become very involved in water conservation because they can relate it to their daily lives, says Kushan Fernando.

As a direct result of this grass roots awareness, Wrigley's reduced water consumption in 2003 by nearly 20 per cent, prior to the introduction of any specific water saving projects, through everyday activities like reporting leaking taps and generally being aware of water as a precious resource.

A series of projects is now underway to further reduce water consumption. These include the use of water guns on all washing hoses, recycling the water used in the heat exchanger, recycling process water for garden irrigation, installing automatic flow controls on staff amenities and the automation of clean-in-place systems.

The Wrigley's plant is not a major user of water but it sets a major example in how behavioural change can make a significant difference to effective water conservation. Employee Stan Pillai typifies this when he says, "We all now have a feeling that we can contribute to everyday measures that reduce the use of water in our workplace."