

# MAKING POLICY WATER CONSERVATION FRIENDLY

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In early 2007 New Zealand watches the severity of droughts across the Tasman and counts itself lucky that its rainfall is higher and its rainfall patterns more predictable. If anything there is a complacency in the community about our water availability which is counter to the idea of conservation. This lack of concern is however not universal. Many water retailers and wholesalers are recognising a number of factors which impact on reticulated water supply, such as population growth, climate change and perturbations and higher water demand with larger houses. They see the need for significant expenditure and upgrading to water supply and treatment plant over the next couple of decades unless water demand from reticulated supply is reduced.<sup>1</sup>

There are many technological improvements available to assist in water conservation, at the home, neighbourhood and regional scale. Many of them, especially in the home are not complicated or even expensive to install or apply but in most parts of urban New Zealand their uptake is very limited. The lack of understanding of the need for water conservation is likely to be one cause which can be addressed but of more concern are anecdotal stories of people who want to for example, install urban rain tanks and find Council regulations working against them.

Beacon Pathway, who have an overall goal to bring about significant improvement in the sustainability of New Zealand's residential built environment, have embarked on an in-depth and comprehensive review of all policy and regulations relating to all potential water conservation technologies to determine what the best policy tools and frameworks are to strongly support and remove any regulatory barriers to water conservation uptake in the home.

## References:

1. Watercare Three Waters Issues Report TW2, June 2006. <http://www.watercare.co.nz/default,476.sm>