

## **Shoprite's water-saving initiatives extended to Cape Town schools**

As the Western Cape battles through the worst drought in a century, the Shoprite Group has extended its water-saving initiatives to include a smart meter roll-out programme which will save 1 million litres of water a day at schools across Cape Town.

The school smart meter sponsorship is expected to save millions of litres of water at Cape Town's top 100 high-volume water-using schools. The roll-out of this initiative follows the retailer's hugely successful pilot programme at the Hector Peterson Secondary School in Wallacedene, which resulted in an average daily saving of 40kL of water - the equivalent of the 87 litre daily water allowance for 460 individuals and a R52 000 saving per month.

Before the pilot programme, the school, with over 1 200 students, was consuming 47kL per weekday and 37kL per weekend day. Interventions included closing the main valve at night, replacing the plumbing of half the toilets, which were flushing continuously, and sharing data with learners to motivate them.

Since the interventions, consumption dropped 72% to 13kL per weekday and by 100% on weekends when the valve stayed closed.

Following this success, the Group intends expanding this programme to Cape Town's top 100 high-volume water-using schools in partnership with Bridgiot, a start-up company affiliated with Stellenbosch University, which designed and built the smart water meter locally.

The top users are being identified by regional authorities, and the programme will be implemented within weeks. The Shoprite Group will buy the meters, pay for installation and help fund maintenance at the schools and we expect significant results.

Bridgiot's smart water meters measure and report water use by the minute by transmitting user-friendly consumption information to an internet app, and users are notified of any unexpected usage patterns via SMS and email.

"Smart water metering not only aids behaviour change due to increased awareness about water consumption, it also assists with the prevention of water losses due to leaks that would otherwise have gone unnoticed," explains Professor Thinus Booysen from Stellenbosch University.

Other schools that have also benefited include Laerskool Stellenbosch, which has saved R32 000 a month, and AF Louw and Eikestad which have each saved R7 000 a month. In addition to Bridgiot and Stellenbosch University, Cape Talk, KFM and Pragma have come

on board to support Shoprite in this initiative as drought and rainfall conditions in the Western Cape continue to pose enormous challenges.

The Group's sponsorship of this programme is an important addition to its wide-ranging water-saving initiatives, which also include:

- The ongoing subsidy on the sale of Eastern Highlands mineral water across all Western Cape stores.
- An audit of all taps in stores and the installation of self-closing taps where problems occurred.
- Truck and rolltainer wash activities at distribution centres have been suspended;
- All garden irrigation has been suspended;
- Crate wash activities at distribution centres have been reduced (while still maintaining hygiene and sanitation standards);
- Utilising bricks or 500ml plastic bottles in toilet cisterns to reduce water usage in flushing in all supermarkets;
- The distribution of water tanks and the installation of grey-water systems at its community food gardens across South Africa.
- The Group also supports 36 PlayPumps which bring clean drinking water to over 350 000 people across South Africa daily. (A PlayPump is a specifically designed "merry-go-round" that pumps water into a reservoir as children play on it, providing a healthy water supply to rural communities.)

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