

FEDHASA calls on members to become innovative in saving water

This week, the City of Cape Town announced that dam levels are at 33.6%, compared to the same period last year when the average dam levels were sitting in excess of 61%. With level five water restrictions officially in effect in the city, the Federal Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA) Cape region has joined calls for its members and business alike to become innovative when considering water usage cutbacks.



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FEDHASA Cape chairperson, Jeff Rosenberg says while the association's member establishments have heard the call and are doing what they can to become water smart, especially in recent months, now is the time for them to "think out of the box" and come up with fresh ideas to help combat a "monumental problem" and, in turn, encourage smaller establishments to follow suit.

"As we face this drought disaster, we are reminded every day that we simply cannot do without water. It's everyone's responsibility to ensure that we do our bit to conserve and take care of this scarce, much-needed natural resource," says Rosenberg.

According to Rosenberg, ticking the water-saving boxes is a unified effort that takes commitment and hard work from both hotel staff and guests alike. He says establishments like Spier Farm Management and Resort in Stellenbosch, the Hotel Verde Cape Town Airport and Tsogo Sun Hotels in Cape Town are just a few of the FEDHASA Cape member establishments that have introduced viable water saving initiatives.

Hotel Verde Cape Town Airport has specifically been designed with keeping environmental sustainable features in mind and since its inception in 2013.



Water wise tourism: How to save water and maintain a luxury offering

12 Sep 2017



Hotel Verde delivering on its promise to save water by:

Daily contribution

- Introducing a grey water recycling system.
- Increasing educational signage throughout the hotel informing guests of the water crisis.
- Encouraging shorter showers.
- Enforcing the use of the half-flush buttons on all toilets.

Innovative thinking

While an ongoing daily contribution goes a long way and has significantly assisted Hotel Verde in its water-saving efforts, the hotel constantly investigates other long-term, sustainable and innovative water-saving plans like:

- Installing low flow technology to save more water
- Investigating a Reverse Osmosis plant to reduce the hotel's dependency on the municipal water supply

The overall impact

The hotel's water-saving efforts have paid off and it achieved the double Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum Certification specifically for:

- Using only 35% of water required by a hotel of the same size, saving 65% in total

Smart campaigns

In an evolving digital world, where social media platforms reign, the hotel launched its #WaterwiseTourismCT campaign, calling on all industry role players to join the Twitter discussion, which focused specifically on how the water crisis has impacted tourism in the province, the industry's contribution to saving water and to create opportunities from the provincial disaster.

Tsogo Sun committed to making a significant contribution

Tsogo Sun Hotels, Cape Town are committed to making a significant contribution to conserve water and to join the rest of Cape Town in ensuring that the dams don't run dry, especially with the summer season fast approaching. To-date, Tsogo Sun reduced its water usage at its Cape Town hotels by nearly 300,000 litres a day in the last six months.

Day-to-day efforts

- Removing bath plugs from bathrooms to discourage guests from taking a bath.
- Encouraging shorter showers.
- Changing bed linen on guest departure.
- Installing water restrictors on shower heads.
- Replacing linen serviettes with paper serviettes in the restaurant.
- Issuing water saving tips to guests at check-in.
- Water saving signage displayed in all public areas.

Work in progress

Behind the scenes, hotel officials are hard at work brainstorming potential ideas that could further save water and in-turn make a positive, lasting contribution to the water supply.

Alternative measures include:

- Converting water cooled chillers to air cooled chillers.

- Introducing push button taps in all staff areas.
- Investigating desalination plants for the Southern Sun, The Cullinan, and Southern Sun Waterfront.

Some advice for establishments

The hotel group urges all establishments to place water conservation at the top of their priority list by:

- Creating ongoing awareness on the crisis.
- Identifying areas that use water, involving staff and brainstorming possible solutions to using less water.

Becoming water conscious at Spier

Ten years ago Spier began its water conservation journey, realising then that water is a scarce natural resource and developed its goals around waste water recycling and consumption.

The basics

- Communicating accurately with both staff and guests on the hotel's water conscious journey.
- Recycling 100% of water through a treatment plant.
- Reusing recycled water in the hotel's gardens and grounds.

Novel ideas in the pipeline

The team at Spier are regularly putting their heads together to ensure they live up to the hotel's sustainability mandate established a decade ago, especially in the wake of the Western Cape drought. Ideas in the pipeline include:

- Installing a new pool water harvesting system, and until it's up and running the hotel's seven swimming pools will remain closed.
- Investing in water from air machines to generate potable water and reduce the drinkable water from purifying machines.

Spier saves

The establishment's management and staff believe water is a core business asset that requires innovation, education, and collaboration to save water, having implemented a number of water savvy initiatives the hotel has saved:

- 55% of water by enforcing its extra drought crisis efforts

As the country celebrates Tourism Month this September, under the Sustainable Tourism banner, Rosenberg says: "As FEDHASA Cape, we are incredibly proud of our members' efforts to become water wise and we encourage all new innovative ideas to be shared with the FEDHASA Cape office which we will circulate to all our members."

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