

# City Sightseeing water conservation efforts reduces consumption to 20 litres a day

With effective water-saving habits and a desalination plant, City Sightseeing has reduced its municipal water usage from 8,000 litres of water a day to 20 litres.



HelenOnline via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Commenting on the plant and its water-saving efforts, the company's owner and chairman, Claus Tworeck said: "Because our head office is so close to the sea, it was viable to dig a well point that fills up with seawater. We then installed a desalination plant that provides water for our entire head office; at the moment we can run 100% off the grid when it comes to water use."

The desalination plant extracts clean, drinkable water from saline water, the salt water is then taken out of the well and put into a tank, from where it goes into the plant. The water then undergoes a purification process called reverse osmosis that removes ions and molecules to create consumable water.

## Water-conservation best practices

Beyond installing water-efficient technology, City Sightseeing has also significantly lowered the need for municipal water by cutting down on its overall water use.

The organisation is making a concerted effort to follow global best practice regarding water-conservation methods and to create alternative resources beyond using municipal water. “Even when the drought is over, most of these measures will stay in place. Global warming is a reality and these little initiatives will go a long way towards sustainability,” adds Tworeck.

## **Small changes with big results**

In addition to the desalination plant, City Sightseeing has prioritised water-saving measures in running its daily operations. One small measure with a big impact has been the changing of hand-basin tap heads. “It’s gone from between six and nine litres a minute, to around 0.9 litres a minute, which is just a fine spray that comes out of the taps,” continues Tworeck.

Additional steps include putting bricks into toilet cisterns, which allows for unchanged water pressure when flushing but using less water. “We’re now down to about 3.5 litres of water per flush and even though we’re using desalinated water, we’ve really tried to limit our consumption,” says Tworeck.

Another innovative practice is the harvesting of water from the air conditioning system. City Sightseeing staff uses this water for handwashing, and for mopping and cleaning the buses.

The easily recognisable red buses are on a once-a-week washing schedule to help ease the pressure during the water crisis. These practices have been implemented across all City Sightseeing’s tour offices. The harvested water from air conditioners is also used to water plants around the various offices.

## **Beyond saving water**

In addition to the installation of the desalination plant, City Sightseeing has also made the shift towards installing solar-energy panels at its head office. This will assist in lowering its carbon footprint and being more energy efficient in the future. The head office is producing 80% of the energy it needs through solar energy.

Other ongoing initiatives include banning plastic straws in the tour offices and providing customers with paper bags for their purchases.

The company is also the first bus company in South Africa to be certified carbon neutral. To further lower its overall carbon footprint, City Sightseeing has started investigating electric double-decker buses as a viable option in the future. While South Africa doesn’t have the necessary infrastructure to implement this immediately, this may become feasible in the next three to four years.

City Sightseeing urges tourists to keep coming to the city, while being mindful of the drought – ticket offices have signage explaining the water crisis to visitors, while the audio commentary for Cape Town tour routes also mentions the drought.

“Once tourists are here, they just need to be mindful that water is a scarce resource. It’s not a case of not consuming water, it’s about not wasting it,” concludes Tworeck.

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