



## CaseStudy

### Challenge

Virgin Active is a market-leading global health and fitness club with over 140 branches in South Africa providing over 10 000 direct jobs. With multiple branches present in the Western Cape, the business was faced with the challenge of maintaining operations during a severe drought that occurred throughout the region. As a result, Virgin Active undertook extensive measures to save water and sustainably maintain operations under water-scarce conditions and austere restrictions.

### Solution

More than half of all water used at the average Virgin Active branch is used for showering. Consequently, Virgin Active installed low flow shower heads, shower timers and buckets, which reduced shower water use by 72%. The second major water requirement is for use in the club pools. Virgin Active accessed alternative water for their pools which saved 186 kilolitres of water per month across the Western Cape. The spas and hot rooms typically used an average of 60 kilolitres per month at a club. These facilities were closed off to members in order to save water. Within the ablution facilities, low flow aerators and dual flush systems were installed in bathrooms which reduced the average ablution facility water usage by 65%. Greywater treatment plants were installed at all 30 of its Western Cape branches with a collective yield capacity of 9 000 kilolitres of water generated per month. Other water saving interventions included a reduction in pool backwashing, the installation of online water metering and sub-metering and continuous water monitoring and audits.

### Lessons learnt and plans for the future

Virgin Active intends to further reduce their water consumption through augmenting their supply with groundwater for treatment via reverse osmosis units at four of its branches. Once accessed, Virgin Active anticipates a 71% increase in water savings.



2019

## Reducing water usage in health and fitness clubs

**Virgin Active**  
Cape Town, Western Cape

**Virgin Active reduced water usage by 62% through ablution facility retrofits and alternative water and greywater treatment plants.**

### Business benefits

Virgin Active invested over R24 million towards an extensive range of technological, behavioural and process-related interventions to reduce and save water. The business reduced water usage within the Western Cape branches by 62% and as a result, the branches now use a total of 7 652 kilolitres per month. The payback across all interventions was 20 months.

<b>Monthly business water savings</b>	12 586 kilolitres
<b>Monthly Municipal savings*</b>	R 1 243 496
<b>Total capital investment</b>	R 24 361 264

\*Monthly water savings based on the City of Cape Town Level 6 water and sanitation tariffs at R57 per kilolitre (water) and R44 per kilolitre (sanitation).

### For your business to also benefit...

1. Visit our business drought support page for info on how to get started:  
[www.greencape.co.za/water-business-support](http://www.greencape.co.za/water-business-support)
2. Become a GreenCape member and receive industry updates, news and events info:  
<https://www.greencape.co.za/become-a-member/>

