

# Guidelines for Applicants

## Assessment Criteria

This is one of a series of guidelines to help applicants to the Smart Approved WaterMark, Australia's label for products and services that save water. Applications to the Smart WaterMark are assessed by an Independent Technical Expert Panel against the following four criteria:

1. **Water Saving** - The primary purpose of the product is directly related to reducing actual water use where there is a direct correlation between the use of the product and water savings.
2. **Fitness for Purpose** - Supporting documentation (such as instructions and marketing material) helps ensure that users get the best water savings/efficiency from the product.
3. **Meeting Regulations and Standards** - The product is of high quality and meets industry standards, and customer and community expectations.
4. **Environmentally Sustainable** - The product, while satisfying the above three criteria, is environmentally sustainable, and that in making water savings the product will not adversely impact on the environment in other areas.

The Expert Panel needs verifiable independent evidence that the product achieves the water savings claimed in the application (i.e. through independent testing, case studies or comparative reports). Please note, unsubstantiated marketing claims are not regarded as evidence of water saving.

The Smart WaterMark stakeholder web site has further information on the application process including timetables, fees and online application forms at: <https://www.smartwatermark.org/application-form/>

If you have any questions about these guidelines or your application please contact The Water Conservancy national office. Email: [info@thewaterconservancy.org](mailto:info@thewaterconservancy.org) Landline: 02 7229 5388

## Supporting Evidence

Applications to Smart Water Mark are assessed on the basis of independent, verifiable evidence to justify claimed water savings submitted with each application. Applications that are not supported by this information will not be considered by the Expert Panel.

Independent means that the author or compiler of the evidence has no commercial interest in the sale or promotion of the product which is the subject of the application. Evidence can be derived from any method chosen by the applicant and could include case studies, laboratory testing and product appraisal by independent consultants or organisations. Results from international and Australian tests are acceptable provided that data is presented in English and uses metric units.

Specific guidelines for different types of equipment are prepared to advise applicants on the sorts of testing or evidence that might be acceptable. Applicants are not obliged to follow these guidelines and can present any evidence in support of their application provided that it is independent and verifiable.

## Guideline 5. Plant Pots

### General

This Guideline has been developed to support applications for plant pots to the Smart WaterMark scheme. The design of pots and type of potting media can impact on the efficiency of watering plants in pots. Please note potting media are covered under our Guidelines 2 and 3: *Mulches* and *Soil Amendments for Increasing Soil Water Retention*.

The Expert Panel would like to see trial data that shows evidence that plant pots decrease water loss, or improve water-efficiency, relative to conventional pots. There are a number of different technologies that can be used to make a plant pots more water-efficient, so the exact testing method will vary depending upon the mechanism by which the pot saves water. For example a methodology to illustrate to applicants the kind of testing that could be undertaken to test pots that save water by decreasing water loss through the pot wall is detailed below. The Panel will view compliance with this experiment favourably when testing pots that save water by decreasing water loss through the pot wall. However, if this test is not suitable, the results of any test that demonstrates the water saving characteristics of a pot will be considered - as long as the methodology tests the mechanism by which the pot saves water, and the method is clearly explained in the report provided to the panel.

Applications should also include details on the information that is given to consumers about the water saving features of the pot, such as instructions and a copy of the pot label. This works fine for saving water through pot walls but should we have another suggestion for pots that

- a) Have a sensor inside and a reservoir or
- b) Just have a reservoir at the bottom of the pot which is refilled

## Assessing water-saving capability of pots: An experimental approach

### Aim

To determine if certain types of pot designs or pot treatments reduce water usage by decreasing water loss through the pot wall.

### Experimental Design

Six pots of each pot size/type to be tested, plus six 'standard' pots for comparison purposes. The comparison pots should be of approximately the same volume as the pots being tested. Ideally, the experiment would be conducted in a warm environment (such as a glasshouse) to increase potential moisture loss, or under shelter and protected from rainfall or irrigation.

### Method

1. All pots are to be filled with the same type of potting media.
2. Label all pots appropriately and then water all pots with approximately the same amount of water.
3. The entire surface of the potting media should then be covered with impervious plastic or other material which prevents water loss from the potting media surface. If the pots have drainage holes, these should be blocked (for example with glue or 'Blu-Tac') to prevent any loss of water.
4. Weigh each pot and record the weight and date and time.
5. Pot placement should be randomised, and the positions changed weekly. Randomising, and moving pots weekly, will help ensure all treatments receive the same amount of sunlight/heat on average.

6. Pots should be re-weighed on a daily basis (or more frequently under warm conditions), to monitor moisture loss from the pots. This will be moisture loss predominantly through the pot walls, rather than moisture loss from the potting media surface or pot drainage holes.

### **Presentation of Results**

Tabulate pot weights, calculate weight (moisture) loss averages and ideally graph the results.

Explain if results demonstrate that using the particular pot or pot treatment saves water when compared to a standard pot.

### **About Smart Approved WaterMark**

Since 2004, SAWM has certified water efficient products and services. As a national scheme it delivers a common home and national approach and labelling scheme for consumers and retailers. For consumers, the certification scheme is designed to provide confidence that products and services bearing the label will help them save water around the garden. For the water industry, the scheme provides a national mechanism to identify water saving products and services; one piece of the demand management jigsaw. Certificate holders – licensees - gain the ability to use the Smart Approved WaterMark for marketing advantage.

In 2022 SAWM rebranded to The Water Conservancy (TWC). We are non for profit that is leading the way as in independent knowledge resource and advisory hub for education, facilitation and adoption of a more conscious and sustainable approach to water us in Australia. SAWM is one of the 5 programs offered by TWC to find out more please visit our TWC website: <https://thewaterconservancy.org/>