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UCT steps up its water-saving initiatives amid recent rains

The recent rains have not slowed down the University of Cape Town's (UCT) response to the water crisis in the Western Cape. The university is looking into sustaining a water saving culture, not only during the current crisis but far into the future.

UCT's departments of Student Housing, and Properties and Services – are rolling out various water-saving measures across residences and campuses. Most recently, a campus-wide rollout of water-efficient washing machines has been launched.

The rollout will see the installation of 238 of these water-saving washing machines, beginning at Obz Square, one of the university's residences in Observatory. These essentially restrict water flow from five litres to 1.4 litres per minute and cuts down time from 40 to 23 minutes per cycle.

John Peters, area maintenance manager of residence maintenance, explains: "The new machines are very high-tech, we are now using 45 litres of water per wash. In the past, with the top loaders, we used 145 litres. We are now going to save 100 litres of water per wash."

After analysing water consumption across the university, they discovered that laundry was one of the largest water guzzlers. These new machines will be instrumental in cutting water usage throughout the residence system.

"But a change in student behaviour is also critical," added Peters. This installation has therefore been accompanied by a drive, facilitated by Student Housing, to encourage students to limit themselves to a single load of laundry per week.

The machines are also easy to use, they are pre-programmed, students need only press a single button. "We have already gone into the second phase at Obz Square. We are fitting aerators, which are restrictors, into all basin taps," said Peters.

The installation of the new washing machines is just one of several interventions that are taking place across the university. The rollout is expected to be completed in May 2018.

Notes to editors

Watch John Peters explain how the rollout of new water-efficient washing machines will help UCT to meet its water-saving goals [here](#).

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