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Manukau Rugby Football Club president Frank Bunce.

A team effort: Manukau RFC's massive water savings

Anyone who has been involved in sport at the grassroots level knows how essential fundraising is for clubs. Large water bills only add to the money pressures.

As part of our Water Efficiency Strategy, we're working to create a blueprint for water efficiency in sports clubs. We recently put this into practice by helping the Manukau Rugby Football Club (RFC) slash its monthly water bill.

"This initiative is hugely important," says Frank Bunce, the current club president (and an ex-All Black). "We're not a wealthy club; we're not in a well-to-do area. Every dollar we get is a struggle and has to be stretched as far as it can go, so the savings we make here can go elsewhere – like on junior members' uniforms or coaching. It's another dollar we don't have to find."

In order to gather information about how much water the club was using, we installed a data logger to its water meter. We then worked with Litefoot – a charity that helps clubs become more sustainable and save money by upgrading their infrastructure – to understand the best ways for the club to reduce its water use.

A number of companies, including manufacturers Methven, MacDonald Industries (Delabie), Caroma and Mico, donated a variety of products, such as water-efficient showers, taps and toilets. Laser Group Services also donated labour for installation through Laser Plumbing.

The results are impressive. Between July, when the upgrades began, and September 2017, water consumption has decreased by 92,290 litres, saving \$552 from the club's water bill. A huge portion of the savings

were due to the upgrades also fixing the majority of the club's leaks.

We have worked out with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) that for every dollar saved on water, at least eight dollars is saved in heating energy. Now the Manukau RFC is hoping to see a drop in its energy bill, too.

By understanding where the biggest opportunities to reduce water use are, we hope our blueprint eventually helps other community clubs that want to be sustainable but don't know where to start.

"Imagine if everyone in Auckland managed to reduce their water consumption by 50 per cent like Manukau RFC, then we could defer the need for Auckland's next water source," says sustainability manager, and author of our Water Efficiency Strategy, Roseline Klein.

