

CASE STUDY

Golden Century Seafood Restaurant

About the restaurant

Located in Chinatown, the Golden Century Seafood Restaurant is one of Sydney's biggest Chinese restaurants. They serve Hong Kong Chinese style seafood to about 7000 customers per week. The restaurant opens 7 days a week, 16 hours a day and employs 120 staff including 10 chefs and 35 kitchen staff. The restaurant kitchen has 8 wok stoves, each with 2 burners. The restaurant has been in business since 1989



and is part of the Golden Century Group of restaurants. It is currently managed by Eric Wong, Chief Executive Officer, and Linda Wong, General Manager.



What are the environmental gains?

- 💧 37% reduction in water used by stoves
- 💧 5,460,000 litres of water will be saved per year
- 💧 Staff's awareness of water saving has greatly increased
- 💧 Staff have adopted new water saving practices

What did they do?

The restaurant management was aware of the new waterless wok stove that was introduced by suppliers in 2006, but was hesitant because of the new untried technology. When the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECC) project started, restaurant management watched the demonstration DVD, attended the program launch and were the first restaurant to sign up to install the new stoves.

Management obtained a quote from their supplier to change all eight stoves. They signed an

agreement with the ECC entitling them to a \$2000 subsidy for each traditional stove that was replaced by a waterless wok stove. The subsidy was paid upon notice that the traditional stoves were received by a metal recycling company.

Two weeks before the woks were replaced, water meters and data loggers were installed to measure the water usage of the traditional stoves. The water meter remained in the same position for one week after installing the new waterless wok stoves to measure the change in water use. The restaurant was running as usual. Data shows that the average water use for traditional stoves was 3,100 litres per day and the average water used after replacing with new waterless wok stoves was 1,200 litres per day. An average of 1,900 litres of water per day was saved per stove, a saving of 13,000 litres per day for the restaurant.

Chefs were initially reserved but in less than a month they were used to the new Waterless Wok stoves which are constant reminders to all kitchen staff to save water. Staff have increased their knowledge about water conservation and now take many actions to save water – for example



kitchen and bathroom taps are turned off properly, vegetables are no longer washed under constantly running water and plates are scraped and soaked before washing. Restaurant management also learnt about a new technology for urinals where water is replaced with a special chemical. Even though there was a greater cost involved, urinals were changed to save water.

Management is continuing to search for new water saving technologies to help the business save water. The Golden Century Group has also decided to install waterless wok stoves in their other restaurants – the Moore Park Golden Century Restaurant and City Noodle Café in Star City.

Why did they do it?

With the introduction of Level 2 water restrictions, restaurant management became increasingly aware of their large water bill and started to explore ways to save water in their business. The General Manager identified that taps for stoves and stove cooling were running continuously when stoves were in use, up to ten hours per day. Chefs were encouraged to turn off the taps during cooking, but they argued that it was difficult to constantly turn off taps while cooking and that the traditional stoves were designed to need the cooling water.

Restaurant management realised that the traditional Chinese cooking styles used large amounts of water and saw opportunities to increase staff's awareness about the importance of saving water – both to save money and as a general social responsibility. Mrs Wong, General Manager reports that “we felt that we could change attitudes by participating in the project and replacing the stoves, to show that we can save water. Saving water and participating in such a good project is our duty for society”.

Restaurant management can see real benefits from participating in the Saving Water in Asian Restaurant Projects “Instead of spending a lot of funds on advertising, the project provides real dollars – the subsidy to assist restaurants to succeed in their water saving goals. The cost of replacing equipment in business is expensive so we hope there will be more projects like this to help businesses become environmentally sustainable.”



What were the costs and saving?

The restaurant saved \$13,200 per year by reducing water use. The average monthly water bill was reduced from \$7400 to \$6300 (not withstanding an increase in the cost of water per unit).

Eight new waterless wok stoves cost the restaurant \$41,000. They received a \$16,000 project subsidy. Restaurant management estimate that with the project subsidy and reduced monthly water bills, they will be able to pay off the costs of replacing wok stoves in about two years.

This is one of a series of case studies featuring businesses that participated in the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW 'Saving Water in Asian Restaurants Project' which was funded by the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund. By taking part in this project, Asian restaurants receive education to enhance water conservation in their businesses and a subsidy to replace conventional wok stoves with more sustainable technology, the new waterless wok stove. In Stage 1 of the project, 23 participating restaurants saved 66,000,000 litres of water per annum.

More information

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Supported by the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund

