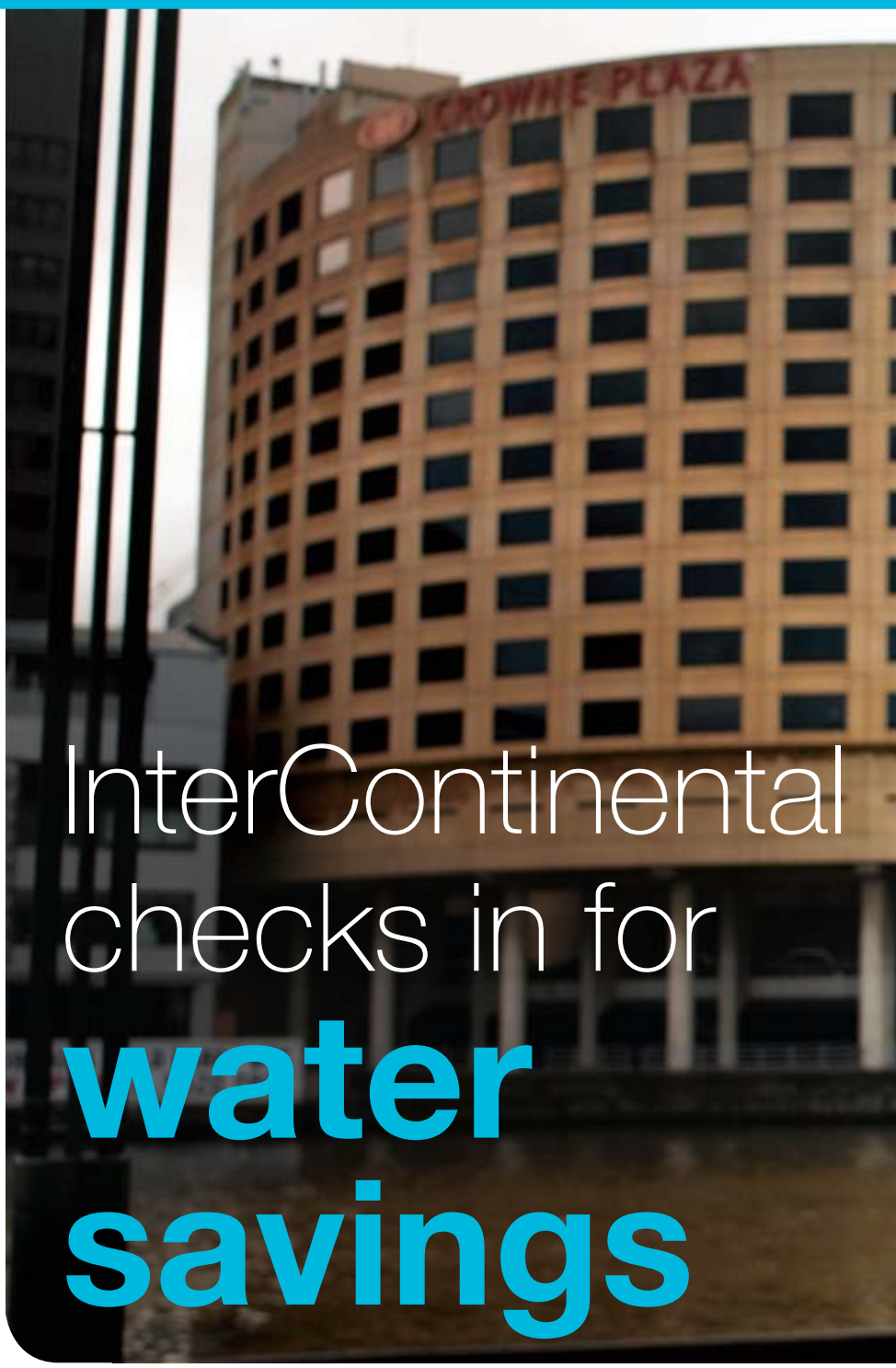


InterContinental checks in for **water savings**

When InterContinental, one of the world's largest hotel groups, began looking at ways to improve water efficiency, they soon realised they had to take the initiative.

"While staff and management are really committed to saving water, we have no control over how much our guests use," said Robin Power, InterContinental's Area Engineer Manager Victoria.

Mr Power, the water conservation 'champion' at Holiday Inn on Flinders and Crowne Plaza Melbourne, began his assault on water waste by taking the matter out of guests' hands.

In 2006, both hotels fitted flow restrictors in showers and hand basins. The devices slashed water use in the showers in half and are even more effective in hand basins, cutting water use from 12 to 5.5 litres a minute.

The 200-room Holiday Inn on Flinders has had flow restrictors fitted, and has recouped its $22,000 investment in less than 18 months. Since the retrofit, the hotel has reduced water use to 261 litres per guest night – about 25 per cent better than best practice, according to the international Green Globe 'Earthcheck' benchmarking system.

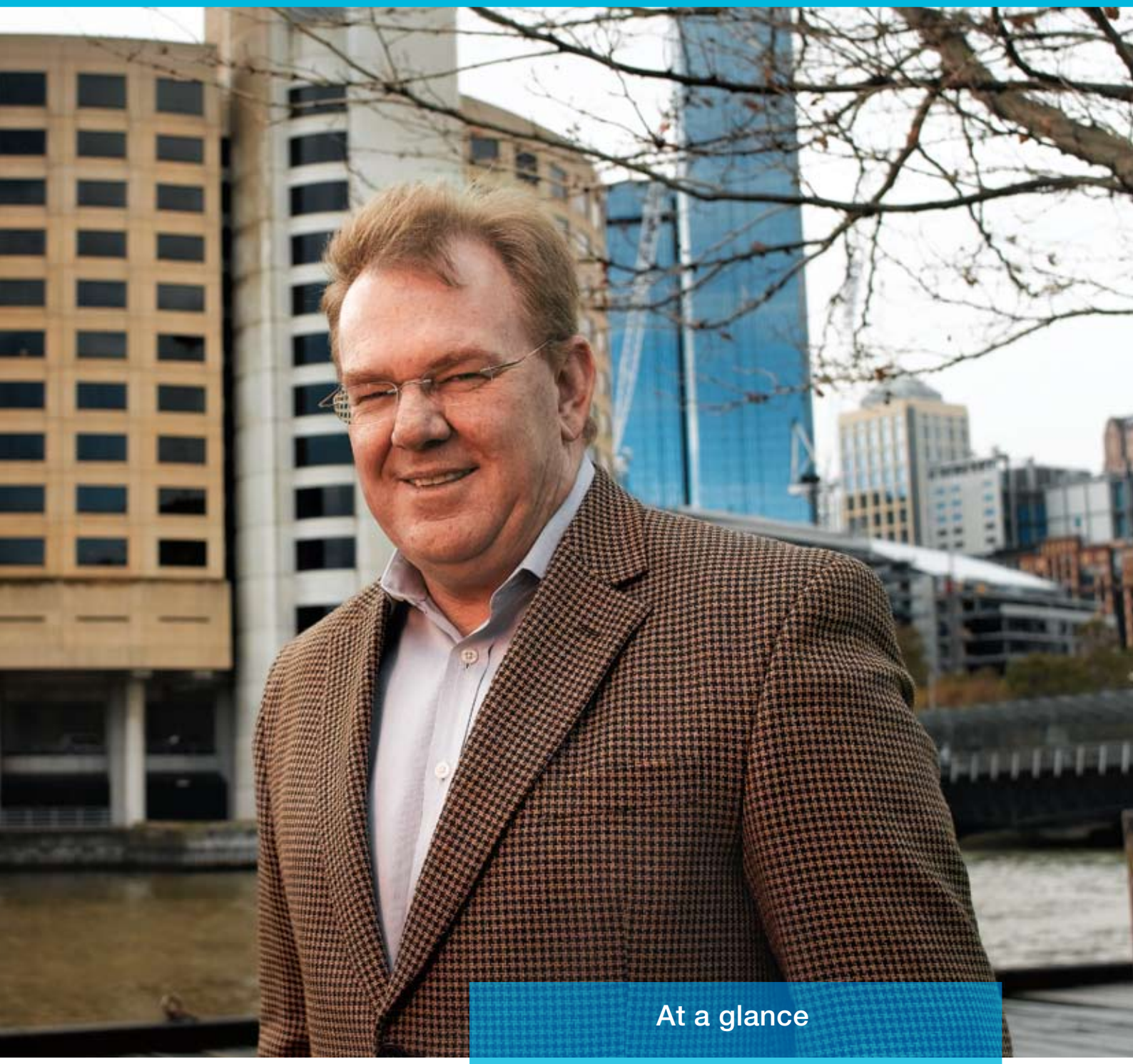
Following the success at its sister hotel, the 383-room Crowne Plaza spent $42,000 fitting flow restrictors and specifically designed low-flow shower heads, which saw a payback period of less than two years.

Mr Power says he has not had one complaint from guests at either hotel and InterContinental's water conservation credentials have received recognition from several quarters.

The Holiday Inn on Flinders won the best environmental initiative at the Australian Hotels Association's national excellence awards last year and it is also leading the 'league table' of city hotels in the City of Melbourne's Savings in the City environmental program.

Both hotels have environmental committees, led by staff constantly looking for ways to improve water and energy efficiency and cutting waste in all hotel activities, especially cooking and cleaning.

And as part of City West Water's Water Conservation Solutions program, Mr Power and his colleagues have installed check meters, customised water



conservation signage for kitchen and other 'back of house' areas, and shower timers for guest rooms.

Mr Power now plans to use water runoff from ice machines to replace backwash water for the swimming pools, and to work with a sublet restaurant at Crowne Plaza to introduce waterless woks.

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At a glance

The Holiday Inn on Flinders and Crowne Plaza in Melbourne's CBD have made dramatic improvements in water efficiency by installing flow restrictors in showers and hand basins