

**Effective:
Soapstream
handwashing
system.**



Fail-safe student hygiene

CONNIE CLARKE

Perth businessman and hand-hygiene campaigner Keith Gregory believes his invention could help rid WA classrooms of the germs and bacteria that cause runny noses, fever, diarrhoea and vomiting in schoolchildren.

Mr Gregory is the inventor of Soapstream, a vandal and tamper-proof metal device that can be retrofitted to existing taps and which contains a pellet of soap. The water-saving system has an arm that swings into the water flow and releases the pellet, which Mr Gregory said would allow one student to wash their hands twice daily for an entire year for less than a dollar.

"All of the research shows that a child needs to wash their hands four times to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in viruses and bacteria causing stomach upsets and a 24 per cent reduction in cold and flu viruses," Mr Gregory said. "The problem that a lot of schools have around the current liquid soap dispensers is them being vandalised or damaged, while the soap-on-a-rope method is just another chance for the transfer of more bacteria."

Mr Gregory said Soapstream dispensers could not be damaged or stolen and would help to remove bacteria-laden solids under the finger-

nails of schoolchildren. Schools were the only places not covered by legislation to carry soap in their toilets.

More than 40 WA schools had shown interest in implementing the system while it had been tested for three months by the City of Vincent in its Avenue carpark public toilet block with good results.

"What we are trying to do is get children to own the responsibility for washing their hands, so we are developing an online game which will be rolled out along with the Soapstream system into each school.

"Grimstoppers enlists kids to rid their school, the environment and the world of disease and infection and make the school toilets a place to respect. The purpose is to change children's habits so that handwashing becomes a natural behaviour which they will carry through to adulthood."

Game developer Noah Falstein would arrive in Australia in December to start putting together the production team, Mr Gregory said.

City of Vincent chief executive John Giorgi said the Soapstream unit installed in the male toilets at Leederville had cost \$383, with installation costs of \$100. It had maintained ideal levels of germ control during the three-month trial period.