



# Rainwater tanks

Helping homeowners and the environment

Collecting and using rainwater from the roof of your home can reduce your mains water usage, cut your bills and help protect the environment.

## Cut your water usage and your bills

In a typical four person home the toilet and laundry combined can account for 41 per cent of indoor water use. Outside, the garden can account for as much as 19 per cent of the total water usage.

Replacing this mains water with water collected in a rainwater tank can:

- provide real savings on your water bill at a time when water prices are forecast to go up,
- take the pressure off our dams,
- provide you with a flexible water source that is not subject to restrictions, and
- add value to your property.

About one in six households in the Little Stringybark Creek Project area have already received assistance to install a rainwater tank on their property.

On average each of these houses is now saving 121,000 litres of mains water each year. This saves them money and helps to protect the local environment.

### A typical tank system

Tanks installed through the Little Stringybark Creek Project typically include a tank to supply toilet and laundry and an irrigation tank that slowly releases water to nearby garden or lawn.

## Keep it simple

A rainwater tank can be easily installed and connected by a licensed plumber, with minimal disruption to you or your home. And once installed it costs very little to maintain.

The connection to mains water can be retained to ensure that your home will not be disrupted in the event that your tank runs dry.

If you already have a tank for garden watering, you could upgrade it to connect to your toilet and/or laundry.

A 5,000 to 10,000 litre tank will generally provide ample water to meet the year-round needs of an average home and will help protect local waterways by capturing rainfall even in high intensity weather, such as a storm.

The Little Stringybark Creek Project Coordinator can assist you in selecting the right size tank for your home.



### About the Little Stringybark Creek research project

The Little Stringybark Creek Project is a research program putting into practice new approaches to stormwater management, that focus on improving the health of creeks and rivers.

In urban environments, increased stormwater runoff, along with its polluted quality, leads to the degradation of waterways. This project is a world-first attempt to protect and restore a stream (Little Stringybark Creek) through stormwater harvesting, integrated with stormwater filtration and infiltration techniques.

More information is available at [www.urbanstreams.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.urbanstreams.unimelb.edu.au)

### Protect the environment

Rain that falls on your house is washed via your roof gutters and downpipes into the Council's stormwater drains. From there, it is sent directly into your local creek.

As it enters the creek it carries with it sediment and other pollution; causes erosion of the creek's banks and damages the habitat of native fish, platypus, frogs and other aquatic life.

Even if you live away from the creek, the efficiency of the council's drains means your stormwater will damage the creek.

Installing a rainwater tank and reducing the amount of water and the frequency with which it rushes into the stormwater drains can make a real difference to the health of your local river and creek and ensure it is a healthy environment for the plants and animals that live there.

### Maximising the benefits

In the event that your tank is full, onsite stormwater treatments can be used to disperse excess stormwater flows. There are two common ways of doing this:

**Irrigation Tank:** The overflow from the main tank is directed to a small secondary tank (1,000-2,000L). A 'dripper' hose is attached to this tank, that allows for a controlled release of water into surrounding garden beds or lawn, helping to keep your garden green all year round.

**A 'rain-garden':** These specially designed garden beds use layers of different soil types and native plants to filter nutrients and other pollutants from stormwater. They are an attractive garden feature, that never need watering.

Both of these approaches put water into the soil, helping to recharge the ground water system and providing clean filtered water to the creek. A connection is also maintained to the stormwater drains in the rare event that there is simply too much water for the system to cope with.

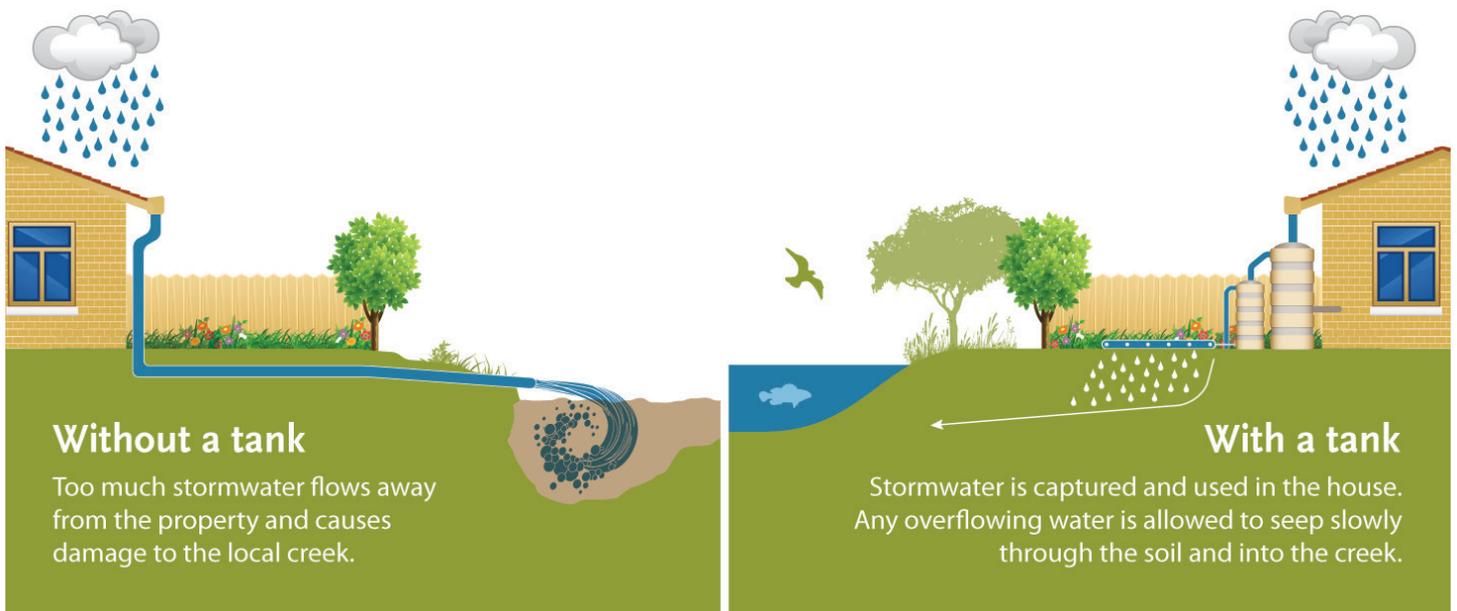
### Contacting us

For more details about the Little Stringybark Creek please contact the Project Officer:

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#### Without a tank

Too much stormwater flows away from the property and causes damage to the local creek.

#### With a tank

Stormwater is captured and used in the house. Any overflowing water is allowed to seep slowly through the soil and into the creek.