

FACT SHEET: RAINWATER TANKS

Rainwater tanks store rainwater for a range of uses such as watering gardens, washing cars, flush toilets, wash clothes and topping up pools.

In built-up areas, hard surfaces such as roadways, footpaths and paved areas reduce the soil's capacity to take up water. During heavy rainfall events, the excessive water runoff can overload the public stormwater system and result in flooding and erosion.

Capturing rainwater in tanks helps us conserve the use of town drinking water supplies and also reduces mass volumes of runoff entering the public stormwater system.



Benefits of a rainwater tank

There are many positives from rainwater tanks for individual households and the wider community:

- reducing water bills as an alternative to town water use on gardens, topping up pools etc.;
- boosting household water supply during times of drought;
- saving energy and money;
- protects local waterways;
- reducing the amount of rainwater entering stormwater system;
- efficient use of rainwater runoff/water saving; and
- decreased reliance on the town drinking water supply.

Draft Development Control Plan amendment provisions

One of the ways that Council proposes to support the community to further conserve drinking water and protect the region's waterways is through its proposed Draft Water Sensitive Design measures. These will be put in place through a proposed amendment to the Tamworth Regional Council Development Control Plan 2010.

This Development Control Plan will require that all new houses and other forms of development incorporate a range of water efficiency measures called Water Sensitive Design Essentials in the design stage of the proposed developments. Compliance with three out of six essentials will be required. One of the essentials to choose from is installation of a rainwater tank.

For residential developments, BASIX Certificate rainwater tank requirements are typically taken to be a minimum of 2000L. However, the Draft Development Control Plan controls will require a minimum of a 1.5KL rainwater tank capacity per toilet in the household to be connected to 50m² of roof area per toilet.

By using rainwater to flush toilets, this will help the community save town drinking water for other uses.

Council will require an appropriate mechanism be provided for switching the household to the town water supply (if available) when the volume of water in the rainwater tank(s) is low.

What rainwater tank should I install?

The ideal shape and material for a rainwater tank for your home is dependent on your needs and the site conditions of your property.

It is recommended householders talk with a plumber or tank supplier to get help in choosing the rainwater tank which best suits your needs and maximises the value for your home.

Can I connect my rainwater tank for use in the house?

To offset use of the town drinking water supply, you can connect your rainwater tank to your toilet and laundry.

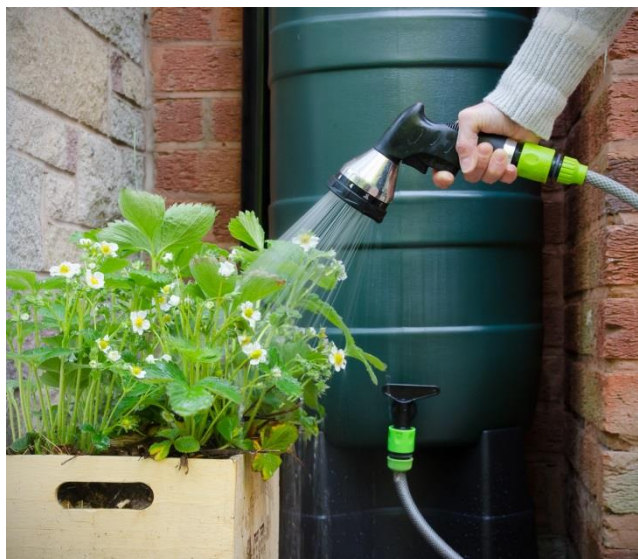
You must comply with backflow requirements required under Australian Standards to ensure preventing backflow of your rainwater to the town water supply.

Property owners are held responsible and can be fined for not ensuring the correct backflow device is installed.

Can I install the rainwater tank myself?

No, the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011* require you to engage a licensed plumber to carry out the installation.

The plumber will be able to ensure you maximise value from your purchase, by connecting the rainwater tank in a way which maximises the roof area for rainwater collection.



Do I need an approval to install a rainwater tank?

Typically, tanks with a capacity of less than 10,000L may be installed without Council approval. However, you must comply with a number of conditions. Please refer to the [State Environmental Planning Policy \(Exempt and Complying Development Codes\) 2008](#) to ensure that your tank does not need Council approval before

carrying out any works. Tanks that do not meet all relevant exempt development conditions require development approval before installation. For information relating to the lodgement of a Development Application please refer to the [Development Support](#) section of Council's website or contact the team at Council's Development Hub.

Did you know?

Rainwater does NOT contain salt - unlike water from bores and wells, which can affect highly salt sensitive plants such as citrus fruit, apple, strawberry, onion, carrots, celery, primula, gardenia, star jasmine, begonia, rose, azalea, camellia, ivy, magnolia and fuchsia.

Applicable Fees

Where Council approval is required, Council's adopted [Fees and Charges](#) will apply.

Water Saving Rebates

Council has a series of rebates for water saving products which are installed in and around the home or business including rainwater tanks. Rebates vary depending on the size of the tank installed and only tanks connected to the toilet and/or laundry are eligible for a rebate.

For more information about rebate rules, visit the [Water Rebates](#) page on Council's website.

Need help?

For further information:

- Call us on (02) 6767 5555;
- Email: trc@tamworth.nsw.gov.au; or
- Visit the Development Hub counter:
Tamworth Regional Council
437 Peel Street, Tamworth
between 8:30am to 4:30pm weekdays.

Further Advice

For further advice in relation to rainwater tanks visit the [Australian Government Your Home](#) website.

For NSW Government advice about rainwater tanks, visit the [Health NSW](#) website.