



Water sensitive urban design

Rainwater storage and reuse systems

Summary

Rainwater storage systems are a simple method of capturing rainwater, traditionally from roofs, for use as an alternative water supply source and to reduce consumption of scheme water. When installed and maintained in accordance with recommended guidelines, they can provide a high quality source of water.

This brochure is part of a series that explain various aspects of water sensitive urban design. Please see *Water sensitive urban design in Western Australia* for background information on water sensitive urban design.

Main benefits

- Rainwater storage systems reduce the demand on potable water supplies.
- More rainwater is harvested when the tank is plumbed inside the house for uses such as toilet flushing. This creates a consistent drawdown on the tank supply, so there is always space to collect rainwater.
- They reduce the amount of directly connected impervious areas.
- They reduce stormwater peak flow rates and volumes.
- They reduce water supply peak flow rates and volumes.
- They can be retrofitted in houses and other buildings, including in high density urban areas.
- They can provide a water supply for (water sensitive) urban gardens and reduce the heat island effect in high density urban landscapes.

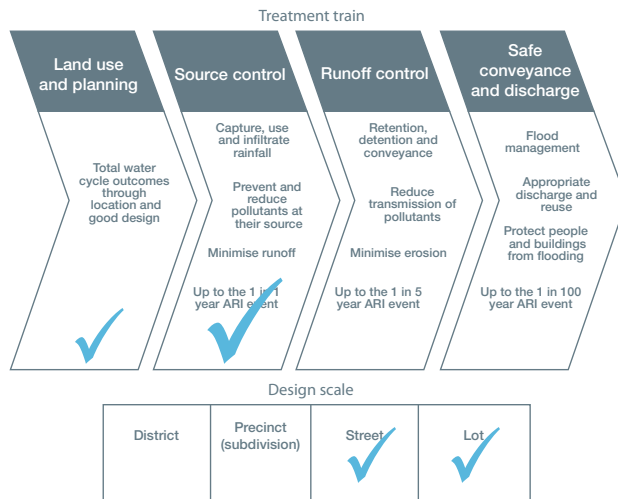
Design factors

- Put 'first flush' devices and mesh screens over all inlets and outlets to minimise maintenance requirements and preserve water quality.
- Designs for stormwater management include an air gap with trickle feed discharge level control and may include an infiltration trench or soakwell, depending on site characteristics.
- Storage can be above or below ground.
- Match storage size to collection area, end use, rainfall quantity and seasonal variability.
- Larger storage sizes are required where rainfall is unreliable and alternative supplies are not available.

Target pollutants

Rainwater storage systems are not designed to achieve direct improvements in stormwater quality.

Where they can be used in the water sensitive urban design process



Concrete underground tank



Slimline domestic rainwater tank

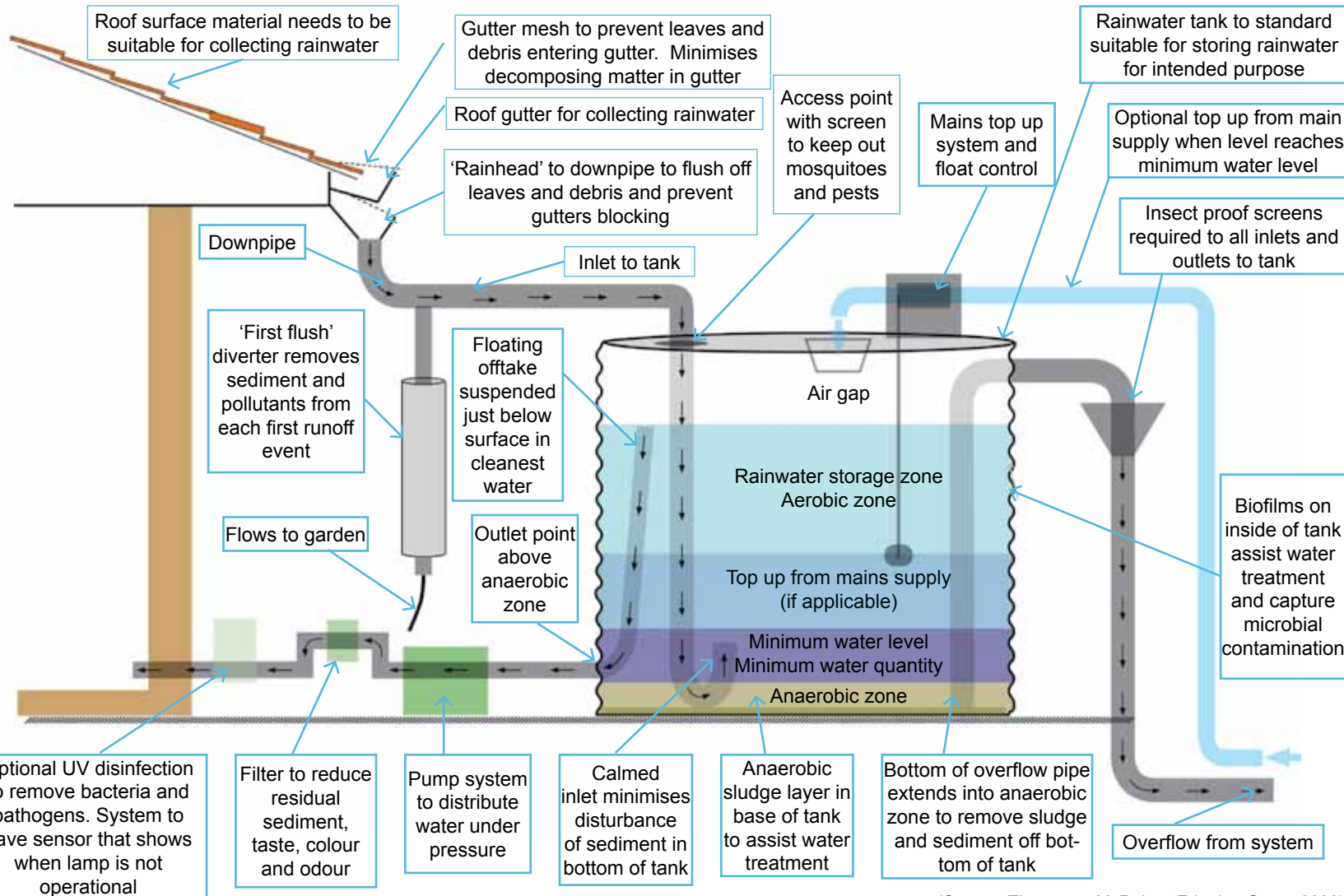


Poly domestic rainwater tanks

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Example of above ground rainwater tank



Required reading

Australian runoff quality: a guide to water sensitive urban design, 2006, Engineers Australia, available at <www.arq.org.au>.

Rainwater tank design and installation handbook, 2008, HB230-2008, Standards Australia.

Stormwater management manual for Western Australia, 2004-07, Department of Water, available at <www.water.wa.gov.au>. See Section 2.1 of Chapter 9 – Structural controls.

Testing of products for use in contact with drinking water, 2005, AS/NZS 4020:2005, Standards Australia.

Urban rainwater collection guidelines, Department of Health, Western Australia.

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