WATER EFFICIENCY
RAINWATER TANKS

HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL

> "Rainwater harvesting systems must be designed to minimise health and safety risks and need to be maintained."

Rainwater tanks store rainwater run-off from your roof and offer an alternative water supply for use in your home and garden. Using rainwater helps conserve valuable mains drinking water and reduces stormwater run-off which can pollute local creeks and rivers.

Tank water can be used for toilet flushing, clothes washing, topping up swimming pools, watering the garden or washing cars and boats. Typical components of a rainwater harvesting system include the roof and gutters, collection system (rain-heads, downpipes and first flush water diverter), tank, and supply system (pumps, controllers and filters).

CHOOSING A RAINWATER TANK

There are five main types of rainwater tanks:

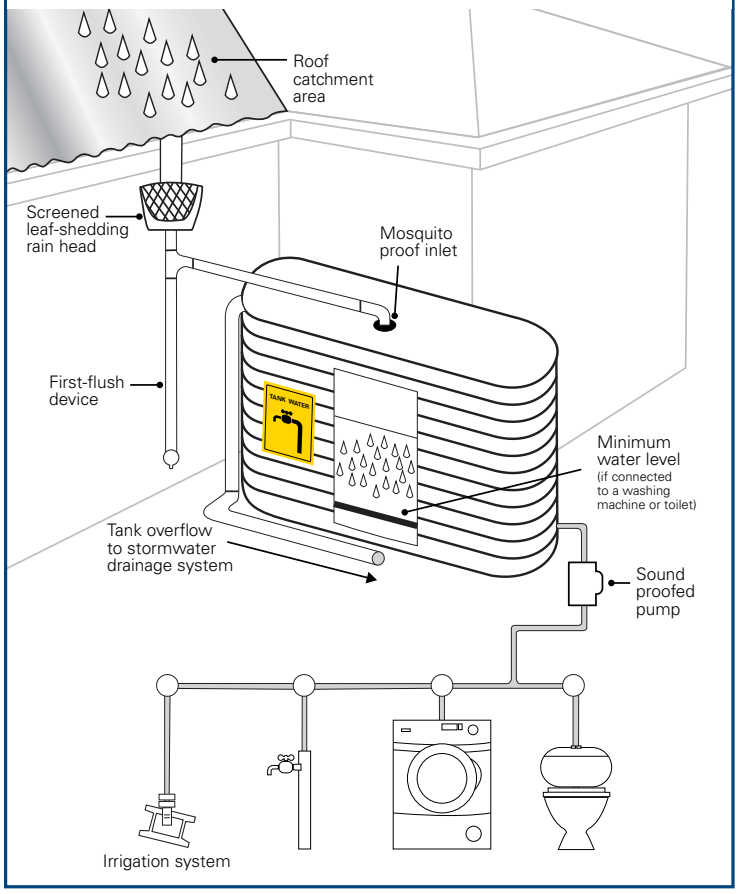
1. Polyethylene
2. Metal
3. Fibreglass
4. Concrete
5. Bladder

The type you choose depends on a number of factors such as budget, space, water demand and whether the tank will be above or below ground.

THINGS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER

- intended use of harvested rainwater
- amount of water you currently use
- size of your roof catchment area
- available space and proximity to downpipes
- connecting tank for internal use in the toilet and laundry
- additional fittings such as pumps and filters
- suitable size and type of tank for your needs
- Council requirements

RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM



MAINTAINING YOUR TANK

Tanks are low maintenance not 'no' maintenance! Dust and debris from a roof can contaminate rain water. A first-flush water diversion device should be used and regularly cleaned. Gutters and leaf-screens should also be regularly checked. To prevent mosquitoes from entering the tank, all inlets and outlets to the tank need to be blocked with insect-proof screens.

DO I NEED COUNCIL APPROVAL?

Most residential water tanks (up to a maximum capacity of 10,000 litres) are exempt from requiring development consent from Council, however, there are conditions to this (see overleaf) as outlined in State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 that need to be met. If your rainwater tank does not meet all of these requirements, development consent may be required prior to tank installation.

To identify if your property benefits from exemption circumstances you can use the online Electronic Housing Code (EHC) system located on council's website:
My Property→Building and Development→Electronic Housing Code
hornsby.nsw.gov.au/property/development-applications/electronic-housing-code

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY 2008

(EXEMPT AND COMPLYING DEVELOPMENT CODES)

CONDITIONS FOR RAINWATER TANKS

HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL

RAINWATER TANKS (ABOVE GROUND)

Specified development

The construction or installation of a rainwater tank above ground is development specified for this code if it is not constructed or installed on land in a foreshore area or in an environmentally sensitive area.

Development standards

(1) The standards specified for that development are that the development must:
(a) if it is on land other than land in Zone RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4, RU6, R5, E2, E3 or E4:
(i) for an educational establishment—not have a capacity of more than 25,000 L, and
(ii) in any other case—not have a capacity more than 10,000 L, and
(iii) be located at least 450mm from each lot boundary, if the tank has a height of more than 1.8m above ground level (existing), and
(b) if it is on land in Zone RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4, RU6, R5, E2, E3 or E4—be located at least 10m from each lot boundary, and
(c) be located behind the building line of any road frontage, and
(d) not rest on the footings of an existing building for support, and
(e) not require cut and fill of more than 1m below or above ground level (existing), and
(f) be fitted with a screened rain head designed to ensure self-cleaning and prevent leaf litter entering into the water tank, and
(g) be fitted with a first-flush device incorporating an automatic resetting valve that causes initial run-off rainwater to bypass the tank, and
(h) be constructed or installed with inlets and outlets designed to prevent mosquitoes breeding in it, and
(i) have its overflow connected to an existing stormwater drainage system that does not discharge to an adjoining property, or cause a nuisance to adjoining owners, and
(j) have a sign affixed to it with a statement to the effect that the water in the tank is rainwater, and
(k) if it is constructed or installed on or in a heritage item or a draft heritage item—be located in the rear yard.

(2) Pumps attached to the development must be housed in an enclosure that is soundproofed.

(3) If reticulated water is provided to the lot, the development must not be interconnected with any system supplying drinking water to the lot unless it complies with the relevant water authority's requirements.

(4) In this clause:
educational establishment means a building or place used for education (including teaching) and includes a pre-school, a school, a tertiary institution that provides formal education (such as a university or TAFE establishment) and an art gallery or museum that is not used to sell the items displayed in it (whether or not the building or place is also used for accommodation for staff or students).

RAINWATER TANKS (BELOW GROUND)

Specified development

The construction or installation of a rainwater tank below ground is development specified for this code if:

(a) it is constructed or installed on land in Zone RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4, RU6 or R5, and
(b) it is not constructed or installed on land that is identified on an Acid Sulfate Map as being Class 1–5, and
(c) it is not constructed or installed on land that is identified as an environmentally sensitive area.

Development standards

(1) The standards specified for that development are that the development must:
(a) be fitted with a first-flush device that causes initial run-off rainwater to bypass the tank, and
(b) have a sign affixed to it stating the water in it is rainwater, and
(c) be constructed or installed to prevent mosquitoes breeding in it, and
(d) have its overflow connected to an existing stormwater drainage system that does not discharge to an adjoining property, or cause a nuisance to adjoining owners, and
(e) if it is constructed or installed on or in a heritage item or a draft heritage item—be located in the rear yard.

(2) Pumps attached to the development must be housed in an enclosure that is soundproofed.

(3) If reticulated water is provided to the lot, the development must not be interconnected with any system supplying drinking water to the lot unless it complies with the relevant water authority's requirements.

State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 2008 (exempt and complying development codes):
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_reg/seppacdc2008721/