

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## Contents

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program</b> .....                             | <b>3</b> |
| 1. What is the Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program?.....                     | 3        |
| 2. Who can apply for support under the program? .....                                  | 3        |
| 3. What can I get a rebate for under the program?.....                                 | 3        |
| 4. What will not be considered for funding?.....                                       | 4        |
| 5. What will I be responsible for after receiving support through the program?.....    | 4        |
| 6. Who will deliver the program?.....  | 4        |
| 7. When do applications close?.....  | 4        |
| <b>Eligibility</b> .....   | <b>5</b> |
| 1. Who is eligible to apply?.....  | 5        |
| 2. Who is not eligible to apply?.....  | 5        |
| 3. What areas did the 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires impact?.....                     | 5        |
| 4. If I have already completed works, am I still eligible for the program?.....        | 6        |
| 5. Can I apply for a rebate if I am on a reticulated water system?.....                | 6        |
| 6. Do I need to use a local supplier and/or service provider?.....                     | 6        |
| 7. Do I need to use an accredited plumber to install my rainwater or septic tank?..... | 6        |
| 8. How do I find a licenced potable water carter to fill up my rainwater tank? .....   | 6        |
| 9. Do I need to be insured to apply for this program?.....                             | 6        |
| 10. If I have already claimed for insurance can I apply for this program?.....         | 6        |
| <b>Application Process</b> .....   | <b>8</b> |
| 1. How do I apply? .....   | 8        |
| 2. What supporting documents will need to be provided?.....                            | 8        |
| 3. How much funding is available for each rebate component?.....                       | 9        |
| 4. How long do successful applicants have to claim the rebate?.....                    | 9        |

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

|    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 5. | How do I submit an application?.....   | 9         |
| 6. | Who can I contact for further information or help in completing my application?..... | 9         |
| 7. | When will I hear whether I have been successful?.....                                | 10        |
|    | <b>Rainwater Tanks .....</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| 1. | What rainwater tank should I install?.....   | 10        |
| 2. | What standards do they need to comply with? .....                                    | 10        |
| 3. | What do I need to consider when I install a rainwater tank?.....                     | 10        |
| 4. | What water do I need for firefighting purposes?.....                                 | 11        |
|    | <b>Septic Systems.....</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| 1. | What septic system do I need to install?.....  | 11        |
| 2. | What standards does the septic system need to comply with?.....                      | 11        |
| 3. | What steps do I need to follow to put in a new or replacement septic system?.....    | 11        |
| 4. | What are Land Capability Assessments?.....   | 12        |

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program

### 1. What is the Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program?

- The Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program (the program) will support households that have lost or significantly damaged rainwater and/or septic tanks on their primary place of residence as a result of the 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires.
- Jointly funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments, the program will provide up to \$20,000 in rebates to support eligible households on non-reticulated water systems to reclaim expenses for the replacement of their primary use rainwater and/or septic tank to ensure they have access to usable drinking water and safe disposal of wastewater.
- The intended program outcomes are to replace rainwater and septic tanks on impacted properties and to build longer term resilience and sustainability for households through the provision of rainwater tanks and septic systems that meet current Australian standards and local council requirements.
- Rebates will be available for work completed since the commencement of the bushfires on 21 November 2019 until 31 May 2023, to allow time for households who are rebuilding to access the rebate.
- This program does not intend to take the ongoing responsibility of domestic wastewater management from Local Government.

### 2. Who can apply for support under the program?

- Households who are not able to connect to a reticulated water and wastewater service and have had their home, rainwater tank or septic system destroyed or damaged during the 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires.
- In some circumstances although the resident's house was not damaged during the bushfire, their rainwater and/or septic tank was damaged or destroyed beyond economic repair. Households in this circumstance will still be eligible to apply for the program if they have not already received help through other agencies.

In other cases, a rainwater or septic tank system may be undamaged and will just need reconnections or minor work to become operational again. Households will be eligible to apply and if eligible will receive support to cover the full cost of reconnection.

### 3. What can I get a rebate for under the program?

- The program will provide support for:
- Up to half the cost of the following:
- The purchase and installation of a new primary use rainwater tank system to residents rebuilding homes, up to a maximum of \$3,000.
- The purchase and installation of a new primary use septic tank system to residents rebuilding homes, up to a maximum of \$15,000.
- The full cost of the following:
- The initial refill of the rainwater tank specifically installed as part of this program, up to a maximum cap of \$500.
- Any combination of assessments required to get council approval to install or alter a septic system including condition reports undertaken by a qualified plumber and Land Capability Assessments, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

- any minor repairs or reconnections required if the tank systems are undamaged and comply with current standards, up to a maximum of \$2,500.
- The program will also cover relevant associated costs including: the purchase of rainwater or septic tank system, associated plumbing and materials connected to system, installation costs and delivery charges – up to the maximum outlined above.

## 4. What will not be considered for funding?

- The program will not fund the following:
- The purchase of land;
- Routine or ongoing maintenance activities;
- Operating costs, for example electricity costs to pump the septic tank systems, maintenance costs;
- Any additional materials connected to the systems (e.g. toilets, bathroom fittings etc.);
- Upgrades or improvements to septic systems that have not been damaged or are on properties that have not been impacted by the bushfires.
- Applications received after 31 May 2023.

## 5. What will I be responsible for after receiving support through the program?

- Residents will be responsible for any ongoing maintenance and operational costs of the system they are installing on their property. This includes additional rainwater tank refills, treatment and servicing of septic systems, and energy costs associated with pumping or running of the systems.
- For septic systems, where a property is served by a treatment system other than a gravity-flow primary treatment and land application system, it is mandatory that the property owner has an accredited and trained service technician routinely service and maintain the treatment unit and land application system in accordance with the Septic Use Permit conditions.

## 6. Who will deliver the program?

- Melbourne Water is responsible for administering this program on behalf of the Victorian Government.

## 7. When do applications close?

- Applications must be submitted by 31 May 2023; 11:59pm.

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## Eligibility

### 1. Who is eligible to apply?

- To be eligible for the rebate you must satisfy the following:
- The home must be the principal place of residence.
- The applicant must be the current landowner and the landowner at the time of damage.
- For rainwater tanks, the property must not be able to be connected to a reticulated water supply system.
- For septic systems, the property must not be able to connect to a reticulated sewerage system, as agreed with your water corporation.
- The damage to the home, rainwater and/or septic tank was directly caused by the bushfire, as verified through the bushfire recovery clean-up process.
- Must have sought available insurance arrangements prior to seeking assistance.
- Intending to rebuild your home in the same Local Government Area and require rainwater and/or septic tank installations.
- Ensure you use an appropriately licensed and accredited installer.
- Ensure all rainwater and/or septic tanks must be designed, manufactured and certified to the relevant Australian Standards and installation complies with current building standards.
- For rainwater tanks, this will be verified on provision of details on the make and model of the rainwater tank system you have installed.
- For septic systems, this will be verified through the septic tank permit application process and Land Capability Assessment requirements.

### 2. Who is not eligible to apply?

- You are not eligible to apply if:
- The damage was not directly from 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires.
- The cost and installation of the rainwater and/or septic tanks were fully covered through available insurance arrangements.
- You have received support through other Commonwealth, State or other government programs, or through philanthropic sources (i.e. Red Cross), that has been used towards replacement of destroyed or significantly damaged rainwater and/or septic tanks.
- You have already received support for the installation of both a primary rainwater and/or primary septic tank replacement through this program.
- Applications for rainwater tank funding will not be accepted for homes that are on a reticulated water supply system.
- Similarly, applications for septic tank funding will not be accepted for homes that can connect to a reticulated sewerage system, as agreed with your water corporation.

### 3. What areas did the 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires impact?

- The 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires directly impacted the Local Government Areas of Alpine, Towong and East Gippsland.

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## 4. If I have already completed works, am I still eligible for the program?

- Support under the program will be available for any work completed since the commencement of the bushfires on 21 November 2019.
- Eligible households can apply for a standard rebate for the cost of a rainwater and/or septic tank system they have already purchased, including any installation fees. Verification of satisfactory installation and receipts for works must be submitted together with the application.
- Eligible households can also apply for a standard rebate for the cost of essential assessments including condition reports and Land Capability Assessments; the initial refill of the newly installed rainwater tank; or in the case that your rainwater or septic system are undamaged and comply with current standards, the cost of minor repair and reconnection works.

## 5. Can I apply for a rebate if I am on a reticulated water system?

- No. Households are not eligible to apply for a rebate if they are able to be serviced via a reticulated water supply provided by your local urban water corporation.

## 6. Do I need to use a local supplier and/or service provider?

- It is strongly encouraged that you source local suppliers and service providers to support wider community recovery.
- However, to allow for flexibility and in case there may be a limited number of specialised local service providers it will not be a mandatory requirement of the program.

## 7. Do I need to use an accredited plumber to install my rainwater or septic tank?

- Yes. When installing a rainwater or septic tank, getting a condition report on your septic system or conducting any minor repairs or reconnections as part of this program make sure you use an accredited plumber.
- Further information on this process is available on the **Accredited Plumber Fact Sheet**

## 8. How do I find a licenced potable water carter to fill up my rainwater tank?

- Contact your Local Council for a list of approved licenced potable water carters that you can use to fill up your new rainwater tank system.

## 9. Do I need to be insured to apply for this program?

- No, you do not need to be insured to be eligible for this program.

## 10. If I have already claimed for insurance can I apply for this program?

- The Victorian Government may decline to make any payment where a landholder is claiming or has claimed such costs under their own insurance arrangements or other Government schemes or programs for the relevant damage or loss.

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

11. Can I apply for a rebate if I have recently purchased the property/was not the landowner at the time of the damage?

- No. You will not be eligible to apply for a rebate if you were not the landowner at the time of the damage. For example, if you have recently purchased a property in an eligible region but were not the owner at the time of the damage caused directly by the 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires.

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## Application Process

### 1. How do I apply?

- Support under the program will be available for any work completed since the commencement of the bushfires on 21 November 2019. Eligible households can apply for a standard rebate towards the cost of a rainwater and/or septic tank system they have already purchased, including any installation fees. They will supply verification of satisfactory installation and receipts for works with the application.
- Eligible households can also apply for a standard rebate towards the cost of essential assessments including condition reports and Land Capability Assessments; the initial refill of the newly installed rainwater tank; or in the case that your rainwater or septic system are undamaged and comply with current standards, the cost of minor repair and reconnection works.
- Once you have all the information needed and are ready to apply head to the application page: [www.melbournewater.com.au/Bushfire-rebates](http://www.melbournewater.com.au/Bushfire-rebates) – or - complete an application form and email or post to Melbourne Water, together with the supporting documentation

### 2. What supporting documents will need to be provided?

- Before submitting an application, you should complete the checklist below to make sure you have all the information required:
- Copies of tax invoices and receipts for all completed works or claims
- Evidence that you own the property
- Two types of identification that show the property address to confirm that it is your principal place of residence (e.g. rate notices, electricity bills, phone bills, driver's license or similar)
- Clean up completion certificate from BRV (or evidence that demonstrates your property has been through a bushfire damage clean-up process)
  - A copy of compliance certificate from your licensed plumber on completion of work
- Details of the account that the funding support will be deposited
- A declaration that the replacement of the rainwater and/or septic tanks has not been covered by available insurance arrangements prior to seeking assistance.
- For Rainwater Tanks:
  - Details of the model and size of the proposed tank;
  - Invoice (copies are acceptable) for the initial refill of the water tank;
  - Acknowledgement that you have considered the property's water requirements
- For Septic Systems:
  - Details of the model and size of the proposed system;
  - If required, a condition report on your existing septic system has been completed by a qualified plumber.
- A copy of the Land Capability Assessment undertaken as part of the permit process and a copy of the invoice for work undertaken during the LCA process;
- A copy of the Septic Tank Certificate of Use on completion of work



# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## 3. How much funding is available for each rebate component?

- The **maximum** support available to successful applicants per household will be:
- Up to \$15,000 for septic systems;
- Up to \$3,000 for rainwater tanks;
- Up to \$1,500 for essential assessments, including condition reports and Land Capability Assessments;
- Up to \$500 for the initial refill of the rainwater tank;
- Up to \$2,500 for the cost for any minor repairs or reconnections required if the tank systems are undamaged.
- You will need to meet half the cost of the purchase and installation of the rainwater tank or septic system.
- If your total costs are greater than the maximum support outlined above, you will need to meet the additional costs.

Support will be provided in a rebate payment. Please ensure you apply for all components that are most relevant to your current situation.

## 4. How long do successful applicants have to claim the rebate?

- Funding for the program will be available over three years from mid-August 2020-21 until 30 June 2022-23.
- Applicants will have up until 31 May 2023 to submit an application for a rebate under the program.

## 5. How do I submit an application?

- You can apply online at Melbourne Water's webpage [www.melbournewater.com.au/Bushfire-rebates](http://www.melbournewater.com.au/Bushfire-rebates) – or - complete an application form and email or post to Melbourne Water, together with the supporting documentation. Relevant email and postal addresses can also be found on their website.
- Make sure you have copies of the supporting information needed to be submitted with your application as outlined in section 2 above.
- Before applying, please read and understand the program guidelines, the application form and any other information that may be relevant to your situation.
- If you have any extenuating circumstances that have caused unforeseen costs or have impacted your eligibility, please contact Melbourne Water to discuss your application.

## 6. Who can I contact for further information or help in completing my application?

- For application support contact Melbourne Water, via [Bushfire-rebates@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:Bushfire-rebates@melbournewater.com.au), or on 131 722.
- For further information in respect to the program and other support programs available to fire affected communities please visit Bushfire Recovery Victoria at [www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria)

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## 7. When will I hear whether I have been successful?

- Your application will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and provision of supporting documentation.
- Support will be awarded to applications that satisfy the eligibility criteria, subject to available funds.
- When you submit your application, you will receive an acknowledgement that the application has been received.
- To assist with the assessment of your application, you may be contacted during the assessment process to clarify any details or documentation.
- Once the application has been assessed, you will receive notification of the outcome of your application.

## Rainwater Tanks

### 1. What rainwater tank should I install?

- Any rainwater tank installed will need to comply with current Australian standards and local council regulations and permit approvals – see below
- You will also need to ensure your rainwater tank will meet all your household's water requirements.

### 2. What standards do they need to comply with?

- Australian and Australian/New Zealand Standards that apply to tanks and their associated fixtures and fittings are:
  - AS 2070 Plastics materials for food contact use
  - AS/NZS 2179 Specifications for rainwater goods, accessories and fasteners
  - AS 2180 Metal rainwater goods – selection and installation
  - AS/NZS 3500 National plumbing and drainage code
  - AS/NZS 4020 Testing of products for use in contact with drinking water
  - AS/NZS 4130 Polyethylene (PE) pipes for pressure applications.
  - AS/NZS 4766 Polyethylene storage tanks for water and chemicals
- Make sure you check with your accredited plumber that your rainwater tank complies with the above standards.

### 3. What do I need to consider when I install a rainwater tank?

- When installing a rainwater tank, consideration must be given to the property's water requirements including water required for the household, firefighting purposes, stock and human drinking water, garden watering, weed spraying or for washing machinery. There are useful guides and water audit calculators available on Victorian Government websites include:
  - <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/liveable-cities-and-towns/using-alternative-water-sources>
  - <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/soil-and-water/water/farm-water-solutions/what-are-my-options/water-supply-options-for-rural-lifestyle-properties>

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

- <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/soil-and-water/water/farm-water-solutions/farm-water-calculator>

## 4. What water do I need for firefighting purposes?

- More than 80 per cent of the 2019/20 Eastern Victorian Fires affected properties are on land subject to the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO). The overlay requires a range of bushfire protection measures for new development including a static water supply provided for firefighting and property protection.
- Please read the **Water for Firefighting Purposes Factsheet** carefully to understand your obligations for supplying water for firefighting purposes.

## Septic Systems

### 1. What septic system do I need to install?

- The type of septic system required for your property will be verified through the septic tank permit application process and Land Capability Assessment requirements.

### 2. What standards does the septic system need to comply with?

- The proposed domestic wastewater management systems must address the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria Publication 891.3 Code of Practice, Onsite Wastewater Management (2013) and the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1547:2012 On-site Domestic Wastewater Management.
- A list of onsite wastewater treatment systems with valid certificates is available at the EPA website: <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/environmental-information/water/about-wastewater/onsite-wastewater-systems>

### 3. What steps do I need to follow to put in a new or replacement septic system?

- To check if your septic system has been damaged get a licenced plumber to assess your system and provide you with a condition report.
- If the condition report advises that you need to significantly alter or replace your septic system then:
  - Contact your local council to discuss the requirements and application process for a permit to install/alter a Septic Tank system. As part of the this process you may need:
    - Application form;
    - A planning permit; and
    - A Land Capability Assessment
  - If you are in a special water supply catchment area your permit may also need to be referred to the responsible land management authority.
  - Once your local council has provided you a Septic Tank Permit to install/alter you can install a system that meets relevant Australian Standards.
  - When Council is satisfied the installations are in accordance with the Code they will issue the owner a Septic Tank Certificate of Use.
- Further information on this process is available on the **Septic Waste System Assessment Fact Sheet**

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

## 4. What are Land Capability Assessments?

- Land Capability Assessments (LCAs) will be required for all properties with no reticulated wastewater services with significantly damaged septic systems.
- If you are unsure if an LCA is required, get a licenced plumber to check your septic system and provide you with a condition report. The condition report will advise you of any damage that has occurred and if an LCA will be required.
- The LCA identifies building and development constraints including soil types, drainage lines, land slope, proximity to waterbodies as well as other relevant landscape concerns. The assessment will provide landholders and their architects, designers, engineers, insurers and builders with advice and options to guide the design and siting of a house.

# Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program FAQs

