What is a Water Sensitive Home?




Stormwater Sensitive Homes

Before we built houses, rainfall would naturally soak into the ground and slowly flow to our creeks and rivers.

Today, with so many houses and concrete surfaces, rain falling onto a houseblock or runoff from watering gardens flows to the nearest underground drain and piped quickly to the nearest creek carrying with it pollution that can harm our waterways.

The main components found in stormwater pollution are large quantities of substances such as nitrogen and phosphorus, heavy metals and fine sediments. Some of these pollutants are from natural sources, such as nitrogen from atmospheric deposition. Most however, are from garden fertilizers, litter, construction sites and cars. All of these are washed into waterways following rainfall.

The amount of stormwater pollution that is actually generated from a single house and garden is not high, but collectively our entire neighbourhood hurts our local waterway.

Everyone is therefore part of the solution.

MelbourneWater

Melbourne Water 131772
Melbourne Water Corporation, PO Box 4342, Melbourne Victoria 3001

What is a Water Sensitive Home?

A suite of initiatives through Local Government, State Government and Melbourne Water are encouraging developers and builders to protect our waterways and bays from stormwater pollution through onsite Water Sensitive Urban Design stormwater treatment (WSUD). WSUD measures are simple treatment measures that collect, reuse and treat rainfall that falls onto your block. By improving the quality of stormwater before it reaches the local waterway, you are helping to:

- Delay and reduce the volume of stormwater discharge to streams
- Improve water quality in streams and groundwater
- Use water resources more efficiently
- Protect stream and riparian habitats
- Prevent erosion of waterways
- Protect the scenic and recreational values of streams

How do I make my home stormwater sensitive?

A stormwater sensitive home is one in which the dwelling and its surrounding land are designed and used so as to minimise harmful impacts on the natural water cycle.

By collecting and reusing stormwater in the home, and treating the stormwater to improve its quality before it leaves the houseblock, a stormwater sensitive home will help keep our rivers, streams and bays healthy.

The solution is simple and you are part of it.

How do I improve the quality of stormwater leaving my block?

Improving the quality of stormwater that leaves your block can be achieved simply. Victorian standards for treating stormwater now exist and require the removal of 80% of suspended solids, 45% of total Nitrogen and 45% of total Phosphorus from stormwater runoff.

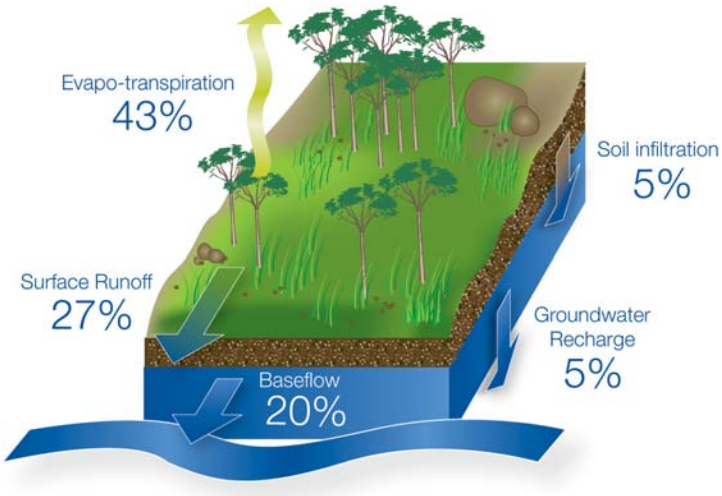
There is enormous scope for creativity when designing new homes or rebuilding an old one so that they incorporate a variety of WSUD treatments to meet the standards. Treatments can include rainwater tanks plumbed to a toilet, raingardens, or porus pavements installed instead of concrete pavements.

There are 4 additional fact sheets in this series that outline some of the commonly used stormwater treatment measures suitable for making your home stormwater sensitive.

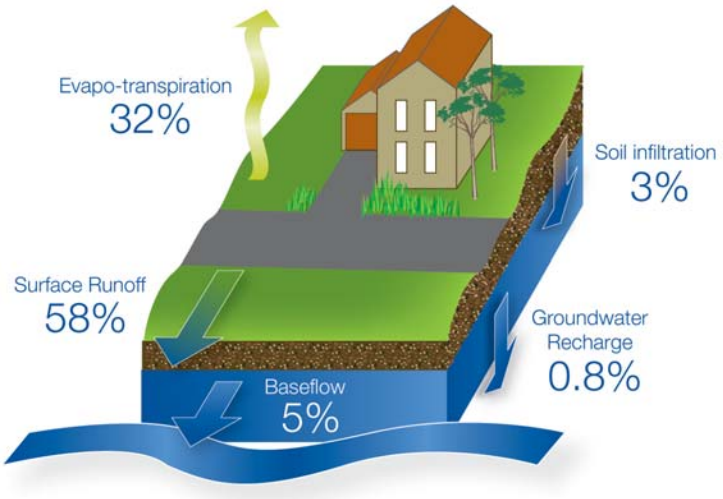
Fact sheets include:

1. Rainwater tanks
2. Porus Paving
3. Raingardens
4. Site layout and landscaping

Changes to water flows in urban areas



Water flow in a natural environment



Water flow in an urban environment

For more information:

Melbourne Water's Water Sensitive Urban Design Website: www.wsud.melbournewater.com.au

Municipal Association of Victoria Clearwater Program: www.clearwater.asn.au

Water Sensitive Urban Design in the Sydney Region: www.wsud.org

Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines, Victorian Stormwater Committee, CSIRO publishing, 1999.

WSUD Engineering Procedures: Stormwater, Melbourne Water, 2005.

Delivering Water Sensitive Urban Design: Final Report of Clean Stormwater – a planning framework, ABM, 2004.