You can collect rainwater by channelling it from the roof into a tank. Rooftops make perfect catchment areas, but certain roofing materials, for example lead and tar-based paints and asbestos, can contaminate the water.

Check with your local authority about restrictions on size, height and location of the tank. Also consider what the tank is made from - usually concrete or galvanized iron, fibreglass and recycled plastic; where the tank will be positioned (buried or raised); and what it is lined with (linings may increase the life of the tank and enhance water quality).

You will need a non-porous tank interior to discourage algai growth.

Summer Bush Fire

Before you buy a rainwater tanks, consider the effects fire may have before making your purchase.

The simple facts are that plastics melts and concrete can crack under extreme heat. So to prevent fire damage to rainwater tanks try to have them installed underground or at least in a protected spot under the house. The longer your tanks last the longer they can hold water to help protect your home from fire.

A study initiated by the National Water Commission analysed the cost-effectiveness of installing a rain water tank from the perspective of the home owner in different regions of Australia. The study investigates how cost effective rain water tanks are as a substitute for

mains water supply.

The report highlights that the yield and the cost of rain water tanks varies significantly based on individual household variables, including the size of the roof collection area, water tank size, number of occupants in the home and annual rainfalls. A water tank's yield is determined by both the volume and timing of run-off into the tank and the volume and timing of usage.