



WATER QUALITY & TESTING

Testing of water?

Testing of rainwater and bore water may provide an indication of water quality and suitability for drinking. However microbiological water quality changes with conditions (for example the first rain after a dry period may wash many contaminants such as bird droppings into the supply). A single water test cannot prove that the water is safe. Testing cannot test all possible sources of contamination, generally an analysis is done for an indicator bacteria (for example E.coli).

Can I get my water tested?

Yes you can through an accredited laboratory. However before investing in the expense of testing please consider the information below.

- **Tasmanian Laboratory Services www.taslab.com.au offer a service to the Circular Head Area.**
- **The Department of Primary Industries and Water have analytical services website <http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/CPAS-5MQ297?open>.**
- **Other testing services may be found in the Yellow Pages.**

What testing of water occurs?

- Reticulated town water supplies are tested and monitored by TasWater.
- Council samples some recreational waters in summer for suitability for swimming
- Other government agencies conduct surface and ground water monitoring for environmental monitoring.
- Many businesses are required to implement their own testing programs.

RAINWATER AND BORE WATER SUPPLIES

For more comprehensive information please **Guidance on use of rainwater tanks** published by the National eHealth council below:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-enhealth-raitank-cnt.htm

Rainwater Tanks

Microbiological quality of supplies can only be guaranteed by regular treatment and monitoring programs. Boiling water for drinking (to a rolling boil) is one way of reducing the risk of gastrointestinal illness from water. Research indicates well maintained rainwater tank systems producing clear and free of odour, present a low risk of illness to most people.

So before you consider testing the supply please consider the following precautions:

- Keeping rainwater tanks, roofs and gutters clean (regular cleaning, there are contractors who offer this service).
- Protecting and covering rainwater tanks and openings to prevent pest access.
- Minimise places where birds or animals can nest where the water is collected
- Install a first flush device so the first contaminated amount of rainfall is diverted away from the tank.
- Maintaining filters (bacteria will pass through most common filters, however the filter will remove dirt and other contaminants to which bacteria may be attached).
- UV filters can be effective in killing bacteria in clean and clear water, but these must be properly maintained for effectiveness.
- Boil water before drinking (on a rolling boil)

Bore Water

- Make sure bores are capped, and draw from a source not subject to contamination (avoid aquifers likely to be affected by septic tanks, or agricultural, industrial or animal wastes). Many factors influence the likelihood or groundwater contamination including depth of bore, soil type and underlying geology which may not be obvious from the surface.
- A sample analysed for microbiological quality should be obtained after pumping the bore for a period of time sufficient to draw fresh bore water from the bore into the sample.
- Bore water from properly constructed bores away from sources of contamination can produce water of consistent microbiological quality.
- Bore Water may be chemically unsuitable for consumption or may impact on plumbing (for example hardness which causes scaling in hot water cylinders), analysis for chemical quality can be arranged with a laboratory.