

A Brite future

A NEW rain-storage gutter that recycles rainfall for use inside (such as toilet flushing) or directs it into the soil has attracted the attention of Australia's Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation.

Developed by New South Wales company Rainsaver, the storage gutter is one of the innovations that will be featured in the centre's latest round of BRITE case studies, to be published later this year.

Frank Smith, of Rainsaver, was living with a young family in a home reliant on tank water when he began investigating ways to better manage rainwater. He developed an oversized gutter that would replace a water tank and use all the rainwater that fell on a roof.

Instead of downpipes, the overflow from the storage gutters is returned to the soil by a process of infiltration.

Plugs can be installed at suitable points for plumbers to connect the gutters to toilet cisterns or other outlets and overflow holes direct excessive flow into garden beds.

The installation of rain storage gutters at the Gladesville Road Community Centre in Sydney has reduced its mains water demand by 26%. Because overflow is directed into the garden, all the rain that falls on the roof is used on-site except in extreme storms.

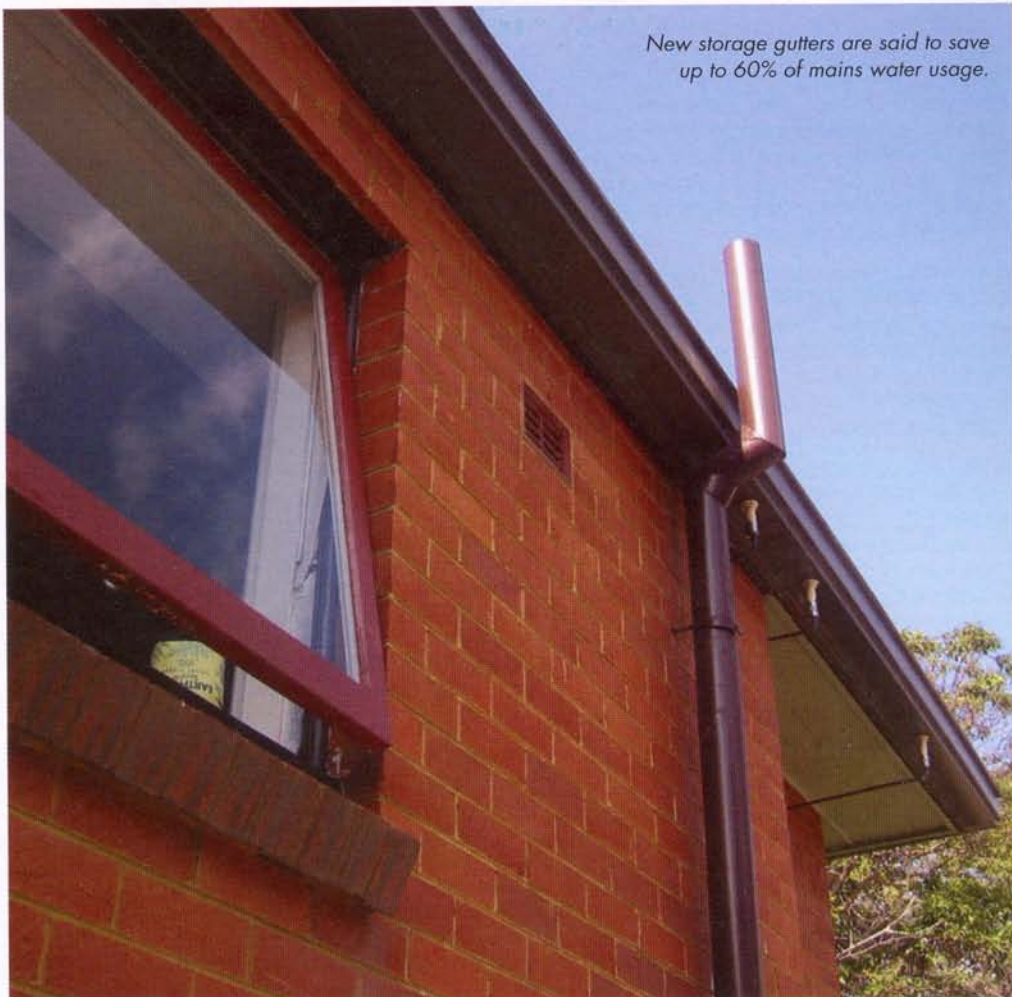
The Urban Water Resources Centre at the University of South Australia has estimated water storage gutters could save between 30-60% of mains water usage a year. Other studies show installation of the gutters is up to 27% less expensive than traditional guttering plus an equivalent-sized rainwater tank.

Further information on the case study will be released at the BRITE Case Studies 2005 Launch in Brisbane on November 2.

They are the product of a national search conducted every two years by the BRITE (Building Research, Innovation, Technology and Environment) project to find projects that encourage innovation in the property and construction industry by demonstrating its benefits and showing how obstacles can be overcome.

Keith Hampson, chief executive officer of the research centre, said the examples of technical and operational excellence discovered through the BRITE project were a vital tool for the industry in improving efficiency and lifting economic performance.

"The project is proving to be a successful way of promoting innovation in the building and construction industry," Hampson said.



New storage gutters are said to save up to 60% of mains water usage.

Abrasive breakthrough

A WET abrasive blasting system recently released on to the Australian market is attracting high levels of interest from mining, manufacturing and service industries.

The German-made Torbo system is claimed to be the only blasting system able to operate effectively and efficiently at low or high pressure.

Developed originally for use in stone masonry, for the fine restoration of monuments and statues, it allows the operator to vary both the pressure and blast media flows for a vast range of surfaces.

Coupled with the ability to use a large range of media types with different measures of hardness, the Torbo system can be used to clean surfaces from stone and fibreglass to steel, without damage. Case studies include its use for the steel

surface preparation of a United States Navy submarine for a new coating, where it was credited officially with saving \$US500,000 in reduced worker hours.

The wet abrasion system produces no dust, ensuring its environmental acceptance compared with standard blasting systems, is quieter than existing systems, and requires little protective clothing for the operator.

Haydn Ledger, of franchise holder Westate Equipment, said the Torbo system had been accepted into many overseas mining operations. It was quickly being acknowledged by mining, marine and industrial businesses in Western Australia for its effectiveness, environmental advantages and other benefits such as low operating costs and portability, Ledger said.