About…
Bore water

WHAT IS BORE WATER?

Bore water is groundwater that has been accessed by drilling a bore into underground water storages called aquifers.

Licensed and Registered Plumbing Practitioners working with bore water will need to take the following into consideration:

- Usage – How will the water be used on the premises or property?
- Licensing – What licences and permissions are needed before harnessing bore water?
- Water quality – Health and quality considerations for using bore water.

Usage – How will the water be used on the premises or property?

The use of bore water depends on its quality.

Throughout Victoria bore water quality ranges from drinking water supplies to water that can only be used for irrigation, gardens, livestock and industry.

Salt levels in the water determine its quality, so it is essential that the bore water is tested to determine its appropriateness for use.

Where available, a reticulated water system supplied by a Water Authority should always be used for human consumption and food preparation.

Care must be taken to protect drinking water supplies when utilising bore water in conjunction with any reticulated drinking water or private drinking water supply by the installation of:

- An appropriate backflow prevention device to protect the drinking water supply from the bore water.
- Any connection of the drinking water supply to the bore water supply must be installed by a Licensed or Registered Plumbing Practitioner.

BORE WATER LICENCES AND PERMISSIONS

A Bore Construction Licence from the local or rural water authority must be obtained before constructing or altering a groundwater bore more than three metres in depth.

The owner of the property or premises will need to make the application to their local water authority. Additional licences may be required depending on the area and the intended use of the water.

Plumbing practitioners are advised to contact their local water authority prior to beginning work with bore water for up-to-date information.

DRILLING

All drilling must be conducted by a licensed driller, who should be aware of best practice guidelines, bore construction and development, and decommissioning of drill holes.

Plumbing practitioners can find a licensed driller via the Australian Drillers Industry Association website at www.adia.com.au

HEALTH AND QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Plumbing practitioners should direct property owners to have bore water professionally tested in a laboratory to determine its suitability for intended use.

Customers should be encouraged to keep detailed records of their bore, its construction and performance in order to monitor its efficiency and to determine reasons for any problems that may occur.

BORE LOCATION AND QUALITY

Good bore location and construction is of primary importance to ensure quality water supply.

To avoid the possibility of contaminating the water supply, new bores should always be sited as far as practicable away from potential contamination sources, such as drainage lines, feedlots and septic tanks.

Other steps include:

- Protecting the bore from livestock access by erecting fencing, allowing at least a 50 metre clear zone around the bore
- Sealing the bore to prevent surface water or shallow ground water from contaminating the ground water
- Protecting the groundwater once it is pumped to the surface through the use of properly maintained, enclosed water systems and storage tanks
- Use of backflow prevention devices. Bores located on high

ground will also prevent surface runoff and other material entering the supply.

Need more information?

- The Department of Environment and Primary Industries website has detailed information for bore water and ground water users including specific information relating to both metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria
- Visit www.depi.vic.gov.au/water/groundwater or call the DEPI enquiry line on 136 186.