Merricks Beach Household Water Audits Report

1. Why this project was done

Ten households took part in a trial to understand how rainwater and stormwater are managed in Merricks Beach. Around 70% of water runoff comes from private properties, so what homeowners do has a major effect on flooding, erosion and water quality. The aim was to identify simple, practical ways to keep more water on properties and reduce water flowing into streets.

2. What the audits looked at

Residents showed how water moves around their property, including roofs, rainwater tanks, driveways and drainage areas. Participation was voluntary and no one was required to make changes.

3. Main findings

Residents are already highly engaged and many rely on rainwater tanks. However, common issues included inefficient tank systems, overflow water being wasted, driveway water running to the street, unclear drainage paths and limited areas where water can soak into the ground.

4. Problems identified

Tank overflows often go to waste. Water from roads can affect lower properties. Drainage easements are poorly understood and often not maintained. Water sometimes moves unpredictably between neighbouring properties, causing wet areas and ponding.

5. Low-cost improvements

Suggested improvements include redirecting tank overflow to gardens, creating rain gardens or swales, improving driveway drainage, adding small earth mounds to guide water away from homes, increasing rainwater storage and maintaining gutters and tanks.

6. Benefits of the program

Households gained a better understanding of how water behaves on their property and received practical advice. The wider community benefits because many small improvements can collectively reduce flooding and improve water quality.

7. Recommendations for the future

Residents strongly supported continuing the program. Suggestions included sharing ideas between neighbours, increasing education through newsletters and workshops, applying for grants to fund more audits and focusing on specific issues such as rainwater tanks.

8. Expanding the program

Future audits should include more households and remain simple and practical. Demonstration sites, workshops and follow-up visits could help residents turn ideas into action and measure results over time.

9. Overall conclusion

The report concludes that major infrastructure projects are not the main solution. Instead, many small improvements made by individual households could significantly improve flooding, water quality and water conservation across the whole community.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Bendigo Bank

Melbourne Water

wave CONSULTING

Merricks Beach Residents' Association Inc