

# Now for the good news – pools can **SAVE** you water



## SPASA Victoria is turning the concept of a water-guzzling pool on its head

**S**PASA Victoria has launched the Water Neutral Pool campaign to encourage and recognise the building of water-friendly pools.

Although the program is called Water Neutral Pools, it espouses ideas which could actually make the pool "water positive", by harvesting up to 6000L of water each year for use in the garden and around the home – even in drought conditions.

SPASA Victoria is publicly calling on all pool owners to take three easy steps to make their pools water-wise.

General Manager Brendan Watkins says the Water Neutral Pools program can deliver environmental, economic, and most importantly water savings.

"This is about setting a new standard in responsible pool ownership. Water Neutral Pools utilise both water harvesting and water saving devices to minimise water use," he says.

"A Water Neutral Pool has a water tank to collect rainwater used to top up the pool, a cover to conserve water lost through evaporation and a backwash minimisation system to prevent excessive backwashing.

"Each year a Water Neutral Pool can harvest thousands of litres of water that can be reused around the garden and in the laundry."

Well-known environmentalist and meteorologist Rob Gell assessed the Water Neutral Pool program and participated in the program launch in April.

Watkins urges SPASA members to get behind this program and promote the Water Neutral Pools program to consumers. He says

they should work with consumers as they build a Water Neutral Pool or retrofit an existing pool to ensure compliance.

He also suggests members register their own pools.

"Knowing that many SPASA members are proud pool owners, we are encouraging them to 'put their best foot forward' and register their own Water Neutral Pool. It's easy, because SPASA members have the ability to self-assess.

"All they have to do is complete the Certification Form (available for download from [www.splashmagazine.com.au](http://www.splashmagazine.com.au)) telling SPASA of the three vital features installed. Then SPASA will send a free fence plaque and Certificate of Compliance.

"The best advocates for our campaign are the professionals within the industry. We've got a few members signed-up already, but we need more. Completing the form only takes one minute."

Watkins says that just as hybrids are gaining popularity in the car market, he wants consumers to choose a Water Neutral Pool. Householders with a Water Neutral Pool will be supplied with a certificate and a fence plaque allowing them to show their community that they are responsible pool owners.

The launch was held at the site of the first Water Neutral Pool at Glen Iris. The pool is fitted with a water tank, pool cover and backwash minimisation system.

The Water Neutral Pool program has been methodically tested using Bureau of Meteorology data and independently reviewed by Rob Gell and Access Environmental.

### Can you help with the new pool pump standard?

A new swimming pool pump standard is currently in an advanced stage of development.

The proposed new standard will be called Performance of household electrical appliances - Swimming pool pump-units. It will have two parts:

- Part 1 - Energy consumption and performance
- Part 2 - Energy labelling and minimum energy performance standard requirements

This standard will be of interest to all people and businesses involved in the industry, including owners, builders, manufacturers and retailers.

If you would like to contribute with new perspectives and fresh ideas to the development of these important standards, please contact Peter Seebacher on (02) 9484 6434 or email [pjs@auseng.com.au](mailto:pjs@auseng.com.au).

Alternatively, if there are any people that you think should be on the committee please let Peter know their details and he will contact them.

### Book now for the inaugural SPLASH! Environmental Awards Dinner

A new addition to SPLASH! Week is the SPLASH! Environmental Awards.

Join your peers and colleagues at the inaugural event to be held 31 July 2008 at the Sofitel Broadbeach.

Charismatic performer Anh Do, one of the hottest young entertainers in Australia, will be the MC for the evening – and if you have seen him on Rove or Thank God You're Here, you'll know that an entertaining evening is to be had!

Three awards will be presented during the night:

- Most Environment-Friendly Residential Pool – sponsored by Sunbather
- Most Environment-Friendly Retailer – sponsored by Pentair Water
- Most Environment-Friendly Commercial Pool – sponsored by Sancell

Tickets are \$130 per person which includes dinner and beverages. Tables of 10 are only \$1100. Go to [www.splashmagazine.com.au](http://www.splashmagazine.com.au) to register or call Melanie on (02) 9660 2113.



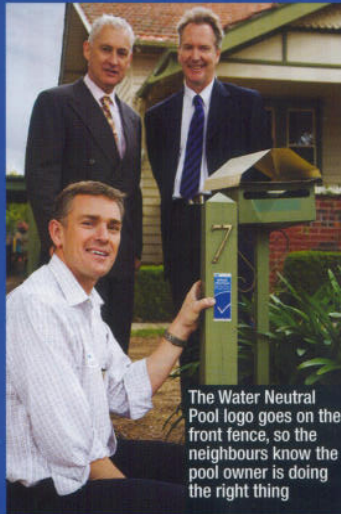
## Facts about a Water Neutral Pool

### What is a Water Neutral Pool?

A Water Neutral Pool utilises both water saving and water harvesting devices to ensure it is “water-wise” by minimising mains water use.

### What are the benefits of a Water Neutral Pool?

- Reduced water use – delivering water savings, energy savings and cost savings while reducing the impost on mains water;
- Reduced chemical use – cuts pool maintenance costs;
- Water collection at site – another way of saving water and money by storing water and diverting it for use in laundries and toilets, and on gardens;
- Enhanced property value;
- Demonstration of the pool owner’s responsible attitude to water conservation.



The Water Neutral Pool logo goes on the front fence, so the neighbours know the pool owner is doing the right thing

### What are the features of a Water Neutral Pool?

A Water Neutral Pool must, at a minimum, have the following features:

1. Water tank to collect rainfall to top-up the pool as needed;
2. Pool cover, to conserve 90% of water lost through evaporation;
3. Backwash minimisation system, to prevent excessive backwashing (e.g. cartridge filter, oversized sand filter, centrifugal/pre-filter device, backwash recycle system).

There are a range of other positive options that pool owners can take to maintain a “water-wise” pool, including:

- Installing shade sails and wind covers to help prevent evaporation;
- Ensure the pool has suitable overhanging pavers or decking to keep splash-out to a minimum;
- Never over-filling a pool;
- Keeping your pool’s water in the correct condition or “balanced” to avoid emptying polluted water;
- Checking pipes and drains each year to ensure there are no leaks;
- Keeping pets out of the pool;
- Discouraging rough play and unnecessary splashing by pool users.

### Is there any evidence Water Neutral Pools save water?

ANALYSIS shows a Water Neutral Pool can save thousands of litres of water every year. Over a 12-month period, pool owners with an adequate sized rain tank, who conscientiously use a pool blanket (physical or chemical) and a backwash minimisation system, will not need to use mains water to top-up their pool.

### How much water can be saved?

THE table below shows how much water can be saved annually by a Water Neutral Pool. The data is based on an 8m x 3.5m, 40,000L pool, using a pool cover 50% of the time. It compares:

- A. A non-Water Neutral Pool;
- B. A Water Neutral Pool over a 30 year period (1971-2000) based on average rainfall and evaporation rates;
- C. A Water Neutral Pool over a 10 year period (1997-2007) based on average rainfall and evaporation rates during this time of drought and climate change.

	Rainfall into pool	Rainfall into water tank (based on 50m roof)	Loss to water tank diverter	Water gained	Loss through evaporation	Backwash loss	Total water loss	Surplus water
A	18,329	N/A	N/A	N/A	34,124	5,724	39,848	-21,519
B	18,329	8,700	42,359	17,062	2,862	19,924	22,435	22,435
C	12,555	22,420	8,700	26,275	17,062	2,862	19,924	6,351

### This data shows:

- That even during a time of drought, a Water Neutral Pool provides 6,351 surplus litres of water that can be used by the pool owner in their garden, laundry or toilet;
- The importance simple devices such as water tanks and pool covers can play;
- That a mix of devices produces the best water conservation outcomes;
- That having a Water Neutral Pool is easy and achievable and delivers real water savings benefiting the whole community.

### What size tank is needed?

SPASA has established standard minimum tank sizes to achieve optimum water savings:

- 20,000 litre pool = 2,500 litre water tank
- 40,000 litre pool = 4,000 litre water tank
- 60,000 litre pool = 5,000 litre water tank

### Who can certify a Water Neutral Pool?

SPASA members are able to install a Water Neutral Pool, as are owner builders and registered building practitioners. However, only a SPASA member can provide a pool owner with a Water Neutral Pool compliance certificate and plaque.

SPASA members/pool owners will need to advise SPASA that their pool has the required Water Neutral Pool features by providing site photos or receipts proving purchase, SPASA will then be able to confirm the pool owners have installed a Water Neutral Pool and will issue a certificate and display plaque for property owners to promote that their pool is water efficient.

### Will it cost more to have a Water Neutral Pool?

MAKING a pool water neutral represents only a small proportion of a pool’s total investment – and will reduce water and chemical costs in the long term.

Water efficient features vary in price according to pool size. A 40,000L Water Neutral pool would cost an average \$3,800 (based on \$1,500 for a 5,000 litre tank, \$700 for an 8 x 4 metre pool blanket and \$1,600 for a backwash minimisation system).

All costs associated with being certified Water Neutral are set-up costs and are necessary in order for pool owners to be certified as responsible water managers.

SPASA encourages home owners to consider both the environmental cost of not making their pool a Water Neutral Pool as well as the future economic savings to be had by reducing the use of increasingly expensive water and pool chemicals. ☺