

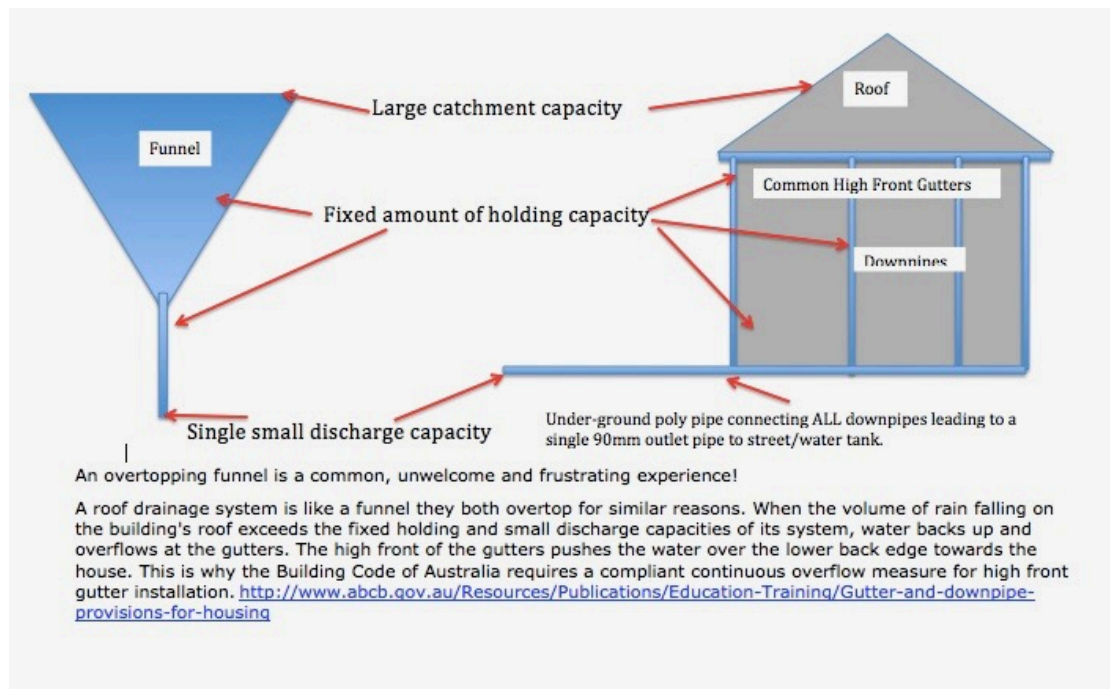
Inquiry into Biotoxin-related Illnesses in Australia

Dear Committee Secretariat,

A brief summary of our concerns.

Our new home lets water into our walls.

Every time it rains we are distressed and concerned that it will be so heavy that storm water will overflow the back of our gutters and run into the adjoining wall cavity.



The vast majority of commonly used gutters are high-fronted. The front edge of the gutter remains higher than the back edge after installation. This creates a **dam wall effect, which** in overtopping storm conditions, forces water **inwards - towards** the building.

A Current Affair recently aired a story on mould in homes and the sickness it causes and this adds another level of anxiety to our situation. We do not want our home to become a mouldy health hazard. The degree of mould related health issues have increase to the level that requires a national inquiry into mould in houses is be undertaken. This is of great concern to us. When high front gutters overflow into the eaves, roof and wall cavities insulation becomes soaked. This wet and dark environment is the ideal environment for mould growth. By the time it is visible on the internal walls and ceilings of the house

mould spore have been circulating unseen for a long time. We do not want to ourselves or anyone else to become another unfortunate statistic.

To prevent water-ingress into the house, special installation requirements are set out in the Building Code of Australia (BCA). Commonly, a compliant installation provides a 10mm gap between the back of the gutter and the front of the fascia. Through this gap, overtopping water is released and so directed away from the building. Another method are slots however these are too small to be compliant.

Our gutters have been installed flush against the fascia, leaving no overflow gap. Overtopping storm water will flood over the eaves lining and into the house. Our builder is refusing to correct the installation of our gutters even though we advised them of the fault in January 2017 and they initially (on three separate occasions) agreed to fix it. We have the emails confirming this. However, in September 2017, we were advised that fixing the gutters would be conditional on us accepting liability for the roof sheeting overhang into the guttering which is already too short. It does not meet the mandatory Building Standards.

We asked our local council (who were appointed by our builder) to help us by inspecting the gutters. However, they claim they only have to do certain checks and the gutters are not on their list. Even though our Council have publicly acknowledged the problems with high front gutters, as far back as 2009, they still chose not to act to protect ratepayers.

We have had many problems throughout our build however it is the gutters and the short roof sheeting that is causing us the greatest concern.

Please, can you help us and let the public know the terrible shortcomings of the building industry and most of all, warn of the dangers of buildings with inadequate overflow for high front gutters. How many other people don't know they have non-compliant, wet, and potentially mouldy homes.

Regards,