

# GUTTER-VAC®

Capability Report 2011





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## Background

Prior to Gutter-Vac there was only one way to effectively clean gutters, and that was slowly and laboriously by hand. Gutter-Vac pioneered the first effective gutter vacuuming machine that can quickly and easily vacuum all mud, sludge and debris from gutters, roofs, downpipes (to the first bend) and rainwater tanks.

The Gutter-Vac service system combines Gutter-Vac's cleaning equipment with a systemised service offering and a temporary roof safety system that complies with all Australian standards.

### FRANCHISOR COMPANY PROFILE

Gutter-Vac Pty Ltd was established in 1995. Gutter-Vac Pty Ltd manufactures the Gutter-Vac vacuuming units that it provides exclusively to Gutter-Vac franchisees together with its specialised operating systems. Gutter-Vac Pty Ltd also developed a range of height safety equipment that it manufactures and sells to the open market, together with its RTO certified height safety training course.

In 2010 Gutter-Vac commenced its expansion into the USA and expects to have operational units by the end of 2011.



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## Benefits to using the Gutter-Vac Service System

### **RUST**

If gutter debris is not removed it will break down and form sludge. Sludge will rust even the most expensive gutter. Regular gutter cleaning is far less expensive than gutter replacement.

### **WATER BACKFLOW**

Gutters are designed so that the gutter is higher at the front than the back (for a tidier finish). As a result, when rainwater can't drain from the gutters as intended, the rainwater will flow over the back of the gutters rather than the front. The rainwater may then travel into the ceiling cavity and down through the ceiling and in to the property - damaging decor, carpets and electrical items.

### **MOSQUITOES, COCKROACHES, SPIDERS, SNAKES, RATS**

Rotting gutter debris provides a perfect environment for a great number of vermin – all of which spread disease. Many property owners spray in and around their property for pests, but leave the food source and breeding environment in the gutters.

### **FIRE**

It only takes a single flaming ember to land in a gutter full of dry leaves to set a property on fire. The consequences of which can be devastating.

### **SERVICE DIFFERENCE**

- The Gutter-Vac service is comprehensive. The standard service includes a roof blow down, gutter vacuum clean as well as the vacuum clean of valleys and downpipes (to the first bend).
- Gutter-Vac uses powerful, petrol-driven vacuums with custom-built attachments. This combination enables Gutter-Vac to remove debris from areas of gutters and downpipes that no other method of cleaning can manage.
- Each vacuum unit incorporates “wet-dry” technology –meaning sludge and other wet material pose no problem.
- Gutter-Vac generates no mess - the gutter debris is sucked into a large drums in trailers and taken off site (or placed in gardens at the property owner's request).
- Gutter-Vac will also assist in maintaining properties by providing a free roof report and preventative maintenance plan with every gutter clean. The Gutter-Vac roof report and preventative maintenance plan are useful maintenance tools for property owners and managers who need to stay abreast of property issues.
- Every Gutter-Vac job is backed by a satisfaction guarantee.



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## Gutter-Vac Service Offerings

All Gutter-Vac operators offer the following services:

- gutter cleaning;
- roof cleaning;
- unblocking downpipes;
- clearing blocked stormwater lines;
- ceiling cavity cleaning; and
- any other related services.

The Gutter-Vac service has the following special features that appeal to property owners, it:

- saves time and effort;
- reduces the possibility of fire damage (especially in rural or semi-rural areas);
- eliminates the chance of water build-up and serious damage in ceiling and building structures caused by blocked gutters and thereby reduces the risk of damage to valuables;
- lengthens gutter life;
- reduces availability of breeding areas for insects especially disease carrying mosquitoes;
- reduces allergy risk from dust mites in ceiling cavities and may improve health; and
- eliminates public liability issues associated with height safety.



## Network Profile



Gutter-Vac is the largest specialized gutter cleaning network in the world with **47 units** across 7 States & Territories. Gutter-Vac has operators in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania and is growing at approximately 20% per year.

All Gutter-Vac operators are equipped with Gutter-Vac's vacuum machinery and height safety apparatus and are trained in Gutter-Vac's service systems and height safety.

All Gutter-Vac operators are gutter cleaning specialists.

### INSURANCES

All Gutter-Vac business owners hold public and product liability insurance to the minimum value of \$10,000,000 together with any requisite worker's compensation insurances.

### HEIGHT SAFETY TRAINING & EQUIPMENT

The effectiveness of the entire Gutter-Vac cleaning system relies on a safe working environment for its franchisees. In 1995 Gutter-Vac invented the Ballantyne T-Bar and pioneered the first effective travel restraint anchorage device, which when used in conjunction with their tethering system, allowed its operators to safely manoeuvre roofs.

All Gutter-Vac franchisees are trained in height safety and comply with the National standards. Gutter-Vac operators use compliant workplace health and safety forms, including a comprehensive Safe Work Method Statement.

Gutter-Vac, its related safety company Ballantyne Safety and registered training organisation Manitowoc Crane Group Australia Pty Ltd have worked together to develop a course specifically designed for roof workers using the Ballantyne Safety products. All operators who complete the course will now be certified by the Australian Quality Training Framework.

A failure to provide a safe working environment while working at heights can lead to serious injury and death for property owners and small business operators.



WorkSafe has published the following statistics<sup>1</sup>:

- on average there are at least three deaths per year due to falls from height;
- 7% of all lost time injuries and diseases (LTI/Ds) involve falls from heights, about 1,295 LTI/Ds each year;
- incidences increased 27% during the five year period from 2003/04 to 2007/08; and
- on average, each injury involving a fall from a height results in about 90 days off work. In 2007/08 the total number of days lost increased by a factor of five compared to 2003/04 levels.



It was from this backdrop of the environmental, health and safety issues surrounding the gutter cleaning industry that the Gutter-Vac system was conceived.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

In 2008 Gutter-Vac implemented Quality Assurance program ISO 9001. Part of its Quality Assurance includes a comprehensive Environmental Policy, Quality Policy and Safety Policy that Gutter-Vac strictly complies.



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## Client Management Services

Property owners and managers enjoy partnering with Gutter-Vac due its proven systems and world-class equipment which ensure an efficient and professional job, first time, every time.

Our pricing structure also provides fantastic value as our operators do not need to use expensive scaffolding or edge protection equipment. Gutter-Vac can quote national rates on a property basis or at a per metre rate, which allows maintenance companies to budget for gutter cleaning services.

Gutter-Vac offers a comprehensive contract management service, which includes a:

- full time call centre;
- dedicated contract management support team;
- central work distribution point; and
- central billing and payment point.

Gutter-Vac appreciates the need for complying with timelines and management contract guidelines. Gutter-Vac operators are experienced in induction training and compliance with contractor systems.





## Commitment to the Environment & Sustainability

Gutter-Vac is committed to sustainable development, which means we work to ensure our activities, and services enhance the environment in the communities in which we operate.

We are committed to environmental improvement and preventing pollution. We work with customers, suppliers, governments and the community to reduce waste and meet community aspirations for a sustainable future.

Within our own operation we:

- require employees to comply with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and standards as well as Gutter-Vac's voluntary commitments to the community;
- identify and manage environmental risks within our operations and apply best practice principles to prevention pollution; and
- continually improve performance through training, management review, research and development and consultation with the community.

### GUTTER CLEANING AND WATER WAY CONTAMINATION

When examining gutter debris, we can easily identify that the debris is made up of decaying leaves, twigs, grass clippings, various animal faeces and mud.



Gutter debris is rich in nutrients, in particular nitrogen and phosphorus. Nitrogen and phosphorus are essential elements for plant growth, which is why gutter debris makes a fantastic fertiliser for gardens.

While nitrogen and phosphorus are essential elements for plant growth, if they are overabundant in a body of water, they can lead to conditions that have a negative effect on the environment and on human health. In the case of gutter debris, it is not the type of material, but its concentration, that determines that it is a pollutant.<sup>ii</sup>

Nutrient pollution is the process where too many nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus, are added to bodies of water and can act like fertilizer, causing excessive growth of algae. This process is also known as eutrophication<sup>iii</sup>. Severe algal growth blocks light that is needed for plants, such as seagrasses,



to grow. When the algae and seagrass die, they decay. In the process of decay, the oxygen in the water is used up and this leads to low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water. This, in turn, can kill fish, crabs, oysters, and other aquatic animals. iv

Nutrient pollution has consistently ranked as one of the top causes of degradation in waters for more than a decade. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus lead to significant water quality problems including harmful algal blooms, hypoxia and declines in wildlife and wildlife habitat. Excesses have also been linked to higher amounts of chemicals that make people sick.v

When rain falls over urban and suburban areas it collects the highly concentrated nutrients from rooftops and gutters and washes them into our waterways, which contributes to nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.

Gutter-Vac's revolutionary equipment can vacuum clean all wet and dry debris from roofs and gutters, ensuring that nutrient rich waste doesn't contaminate our waterways.

## END NOTES

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<sup>i</sup> [http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/workSafe/Content/Services/Facts\\_and\\_figures/Priority\\_areas.htm](http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/workSafe/Content/Services/Facts_and_figures/Priority_areas.htm)

<sup>ii</sup> <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/nutpollution.html>

<sup>iii</sup> *Overfertilization of the World's Freshwaters and Estuaries*. University of Alberta Press. p. 1.

<sup>iv</sup> Bartram, J., Wayne W. Carmichael, Ingrid Chorus, Gary Jones, and Olav M. Skulberg. 1999. Chapter 1. Introduction, In: *Toxic Cyanobacteria in Water: A guide to their public health consequences, monitoring and management*. [World Health Organization](#). URL: [WHO document](#)

<sup>v</sup> <http://water.epa.gov>

