

“We did some work both in Sydney and Adelaide on this. Our findings are: Very few hydrocarbons actually reside in permeable pavings in the long term, about 50% volatilized, and go up through the permeable paving into the atmosphere. And the other 50% provide a very good carbon source for bacteria and get broken down pretty quickly. So if you look at an old permeable paving system that's been in practice for many years and try and find hydrocarbons using, there's a number of heterotrophic plate counts and things you can do for bacteria to detect them, but you can also measure them directly. The evidence just isn't there that they reside there so hydrocarbons is a bit of an urban myth with permeable paving.

Fifty percent volatilize almost immediately and about 50% stay as a carbon source because very little goes through. If you had a very fast draining system, say an impermeable system, underlining your permeable paving and it went straight into a pipe, then you might get hydrocarbons being flushed out of your system, but they won't reside in the actual permeable paving system.”

Transcribed, Professor Simon Beecham, University of South Australia, Water Sensitive SA Conference; “Permeable Paving 2021—HIGHLIGHTS, The fate of hydrocarbons in permeable paving”