



Maintenance of Sanitary Drainage Policy

Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Property Owners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of private sanitary drainage, including any portion of that drainage located outside of their property. Council is not responsible for maintenance or repair (including removing blockages from any cause) of private sanitary drains.

Council will not reimburse any costs relating to work carried out on Council's sewerage infrastructure unless prior approval was obtained for that work.

2. PRINCIPLES

Council will expend funds only in the public interest, and has no responsibility to bear the costs of maintaining or repairing private sanitary drainage.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all work undertaken on sanitary drainage and Council's sewerage infrastructure within the Local Government Area of Townsville.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The General Manager Water and Waste is responsible for ensuring that this policy is regularly reviewed in accordance with Council's policy and procedures on policy development.

The General Manager Water and Waste, Team Manager Water and Wastewater and Team Leaders of the Wastewater Team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is understood and adhered to by all relevant personnel.

5. DEFINITIONS

Terms defined in the:

- (a) *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*;
- (b) *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002*;
- (c) *Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003*;

have the same meanings in this Policy.

If a term is defined in more than one of the listed laws and there is any difference between those definitions, then for the purposes of this Policy priority is to be given to the definition in the order in which the laws are listed here

Private sanitary drainage means the sanitary drainage that is owned by a property owner other than the Council, which may include pressure mains.

6. POLICY

6.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF PRIVATE SANITARY DRAINAGE

Under the law the property owner is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the *sanitary drainage* servicing their property up to the point of connection to Council's infrastructure.

The device that is the point of connection to the Council's infrastructure is defined as the property service. Under the law the Council owns and is responsible for maintenance and repair of the property service.

The property service is usually located within the property owner's land, but it may be located outside of the property owner's land, and in some circumstances may be a located a considerable distance outside the property owner's land. When the property service is located beyond the property owner's land, a portion of the property owner's private sanitary drainage is located outside the property owner's land.

Regardless of whether the property service is located inside or outside of the property owner's land, the Council is not responsible for and – except as set out in this Policy - will not carry out maintenance or repair works upon private sanitary drainage. The Council is not responsible for and will not pay costs arising from works on private sanitary drainage including for example the cost of clearing any blockages caused by the ingress of tree roots or other foreign objects.

It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain and repair their private sanitary drainage. When the private sanitary drainage extends beyond the property owner's land, it is the property owner's responsibility to obtain any necessary approvals to carry out work on that other land.

6.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF COMBINED SANITARY DRAINS

Under the law the Council is not responsible for maintenance or repair of combined sanitary drains, however to serve the public interest the Council will maintain and repair combined sanitary drains from the point at which the private property services connect.

6.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF COMBINED SANITARY DRAINS

The property owner is responsible for engaging and paying for the services of a private plumber or drainer to clear a blockage in their private sanitary drain.

Council may clear the blockage if:

- (a) The private sanitary drain services a residential property in a sewered area of Townsville excluding Magnetic Island; and
- (b) the property owner requests the council to clear the blockage; and
- (c) the property owner provides a written acceptance that the property owner will be liable to pay the Council's standard blockage clearance fee.

(Note that Magnetic Island is excluded because transport delays and costs make work by Council upon private sanitary drainage on Magnetic Island cost-prohibitive).

Council will not, in normal circumstances, clear a blockage on a commercial or industrial property. If Council does clear a blockage on a commercial or industrial property, that work will be charged at the relevant sewerage blockage clearance fee specified in the current Fees and Charges Schedule, or if it is necessary to excavate and/or remove and reinstate paved or concreted surfaces and/or structures, actual costs will apply.

6.4 CLEARING OF BLOCKAGES IN COUNCIL SEWERS AND SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING PROPERTY SERVICES

Council is responsible for clearing blockages in Council's sewerage infrastructure.

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Third parties, including private plumbers or drainers must not undertake any work to inspect, clear a blockage in or repair Council sewerage infrastructure – that is, beyond the start of the property service (the connection point) - without obtaining Council's (Wastewater Team) approval **prior** to commencing any work.

Council will not reimburse the cost of any work performed upon Council's sewerage infrastructure if the work was performed without Council's prior approval. Council may take action against any person who unlawfully interferes with Council infrastructure.

If Council approves a private plumber or drainer to clear a blockage, Council will reimburse the cost up to a maximum amount equivalent to one relevant sewerage blockage clearance fee specified in the Council's current Fees and Charges Schedule. Council will not reimburse the cost of CCTV inspections.

If Council approves a private plumber or drainer to conduct repair of council's sewerage infrastructure, Council will reimburse to the value of the previously approved quotation.

Council will reimburse the property owner after receipt of completed form QAF0459 Reimbursement of Wastewater Costs and a copy of the paid plumber's or drainer's invoice.

7. LEGAL PARAMETERS

Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 Local Government Act 2009

Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002

Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 (Pt 5)

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Townsville City Council Fees and Charges Schedule

AS/NZS 3500.2:2003 - (Plumbing and drainage—Sanitary plumbing and drainage)

Form QAF0459 Reimbursement of Wastewater Costs

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