



INFORMATION BULLETIN No 8

October 2018

Griffith City Council received \$2.1 million in funding from the NSW Government's Restart NSW Water Security for Regions program for Council's installation of sewerage infrastructure for the villages of Lake Wyangan, Nericon and Tharbogang.

Scheme works commenced on site in February 2018 and are due for completion in late 2018.

The Contractor, Hills 2 Harbor Plumbing, has now completed all live connection works for the three villages and is continuing to carry out reinstatement works within the properties and around the streets of the scheme area.

Customers are advised that a defect liability period of twelve months applies to the works and, should there be a need to carry out any reinstatement works in this period, the customer should contact the Griffith City Council on (02) 6962 8100 during normal business hours.

Customers are referred to previous Information Bulletin No 7 and note articles that referred to upcoming survey works and health check, alarms and faults, maintaining power supply and not to put wipes into the toilet.

Recent power interruption at Lake Wyangan

Residents of the Lake Wyangan sewered area recently had a power interruption that lasted most of the day.

Upon start up, some alarm panels were in alarm condition where the sewage level of the tank was above the high level set point. This is normal after an extended outage and, once the power was restored, the units commenced pumping requiring some time to totally clear the system. In the case of other similar outages and where the alarm persists, the matter should be reported to Council.

First rate notice for sewer access charges

Property owners should note that the levying of sewerage charges will commence in November 2018 and will first appear on the trimester notice issued in March 2019.

GRIFFITH CITY COUNCIL



Home Owners

Pressure Sewer Manual

It is strongly recommended that you read this manual and thereafter keep it in a safe, but readily accessible place. You should re-familiarise yourself with it each year. If the property is rented then the manual should be provided to the tenant along with instructions for them to familiarise themselves with the document. This document is available on the Council website.

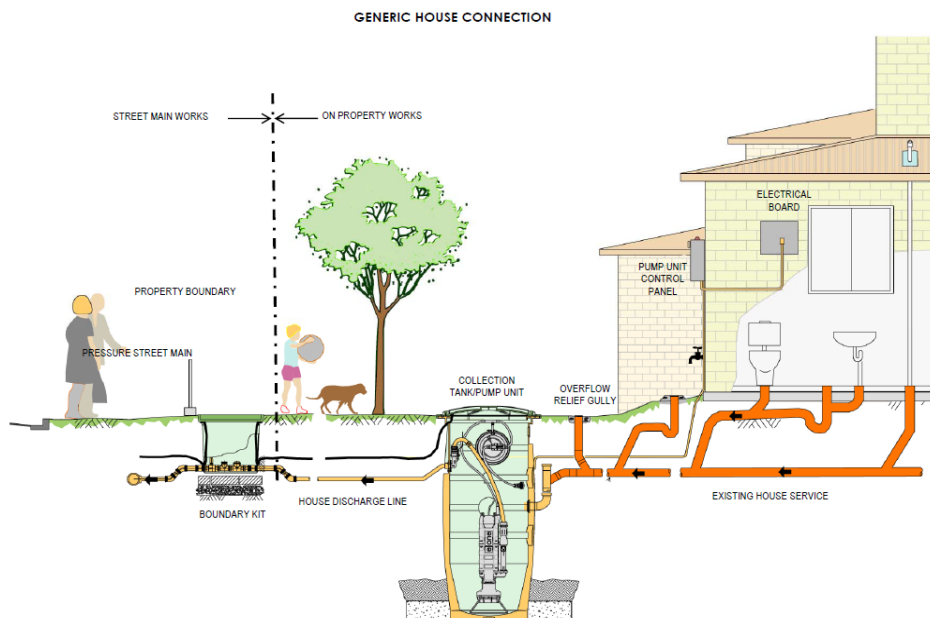
1 INTRODUCTION

This manual has been put together to assist you on how to operate your pressure sewerage system, what to do if things go wrong and what not to do.

Your property's sewerage service is provided by a Pressure Sewerage System. A typical system is shown below.

These systems have been in operation for around 10 years within the Griffith City Council area and should require little more thought or effort on the part of the resident than for a more conventional sewer system, excepting that the resident is required to contact Council if the alarm sounds.

2 COMPONENTS OF THE SYSTEM



The pressure sewerage system shown above essentially comprises of 4 main elements:

- A property boundary kit
- A pump unit, including grinder pump and collection tank
- An alarm panel
- A property discharge line

2.1 Property boundary kit

Under no circumstances should you attempt to operate the valve within the property boundary kit located at the front of the property. Griffith City Council will operate this valve when required.

2.2 Pump unit

The pump unit consist of a small tank placed on your property, a small grinder pump to break solids and allow them to be pumped through the property discharge line and a mechanical and electrical system to coordinate the operation of your system. The collection tank is buried within your property, but the top needs to protrude from the ground. This will facilitate repairs and service particularly if an emergency response is required. ***The collection tank lid is not to be buried and must be accessible at all times.*** Burying the lid may lead to system failures.

2.3 Electrical alarm panel

Power to the pump unit is provided from your electrical distribution box. The operation of the grinder pump is alarmed by the electrical alarm panel. The electrical alarm panel also provides an audible and visual alarm to give you adequate warning that the pump needs to be serviced. ***Under no circumstances is the alarm panel to be accessed, obstructed, moved or removed by the property owner.***



2.4 Property discharge line

The property discharge line connects the property boundary kit to the pump unit. This line is used to discharge the sewage off the property.

2.5 Maintenance to customer's plumbing system

Under no circumstance should a customer or their contractor undertake any maintenance works within 1 metre of the collection tank or associated works. For further information, customers should contact Griffith City Council on the numbers given below.

3. EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

For repairs to your pump unit and house discharge from the pump unit, Griffith City Council should be contacted on **the following numbers;-**

Time	Contact N°
Monday to Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm	6962 8100
Outside Business Hours	6964 0886

If an issue arises with the operation of the unit and there is a need to contact Council, the caller should describe the problem to the Customer Contact Officer who will then ascertain the best course of action. Griffith City Council is committed to respond to emergency calls within 1 hour during business hours and 2 hours outside of business hours.

When you are speaking to the Service Operator you need to confirm if there is an urgent need for the repairs to be carried out immediately. The normal method of repairs is to carry out next day servicing to:-

- Minimise the inconvenience to the residents and their neighbours;
- Minimise any potential damage to the householder's property (particularly the landscaping) by carrying out servicing during daylight hours;
- Contains servicing costs by avoiding after hours call outs;

4 WHAT TO DO IF THE ALARM SOUNDS

If the pump unit alarm sounds, you should take the following steps:



Alarm Panel



Silence Button

4.1 Turning off the audible alarm

Turn off the audible alarm by pressing the silence button on the alarm panel. This audible alarm has a time switch and will only operate for approximately 10 minutes. You cannot turn off the red light. It will turn off when the fault is cleared and the pump unit is functioning correctly, or the pump lowers the water level in the tank to below the alarm set point. If the red light has been activated for more than 1 hour, contact Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3 and report that the alarm has been activated.

4.2 Power failures and blackouts

If the alarm sounds immediately after a power failure, wait for one hour after power has been restored before calling Griffith City Council. (The alarm can be silenced in accordance with 4.1 above). The alarm may sound when the

power is restored simply due to the fact that the sewage has built up to a high level and there has been no pumping during the blackout.

You are advised to minimise wastewater flows (refer to 4.4) during and immediately after power failures to allow the system to clear.

4.3 Floods and Storms

During a flood or storm event, the customer is not required to make any alteration to the normal operation of the pressure sewer unit. In the event that the collection tank is inundated with stormwater, the pump alarm may activate, however, this should clear within a short period of time after a storm event when the alarm should reset. The customer is requested to contact Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3 if the alarm does not reset itself within 1 hour.

4.4 Minimising wastewater

You can minimise wastewater when the alarm is on by:

- Keeping showers to a minimum.
- After taking a bath, leaving the plug in or bucket out the water onto the lawn.
- Switch off any drainage (automated or not) from swimming pools and spas.
- Practice good water savings techniques such as not leaving taps running.
- Do not use washing machines.
- Do not use automated dishwashers.

Minimising wastewater generation does not mean you cannot use the system. Toilets can still be flushed and normal cooking can proceed.

4.5 Frequent sounding alarms

If you notice that the alarm sounds frequently and then turns off and **investigate**. Determine if there is any;-

- Sewerage coming from the Overflow Relief Gully. (An inspection opening just upstream of the pumping unit.);
- Discharge coming from the ground around the tank lid?
- Perceptible odour problems?
- Power failure and have you waited the suggested 1 hour before calling;
- Unusual pump noises?
- Sudden household discharge;
- Heavy rainfall event;

If the frequent alarms continue you are asked to report this to Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3. In the meantime keep using the unit as normal and switch off the audible alarm when it occurs. The light will go off when there is no longer an alarm condition.

5 THE GOLDEN RULES

There are a few golden rules pertaining to the operation of the pressure sewerage systems that you need to be aware of, and comply with at all times. These are:

1. **Do not attempt to repair the unit yourself.** Griffith City Council is maintaining your unit on your behalf (as part of your sewer rates). Your actions may void the warranties attached to the system.
2. **Do not take off the lid or enter the pumping unit** The inside of the pumping unit represents a confined space working environment that could be lethal.
3. **Do not discharge any of the prohibited substances set out below into the pressure sewerage system**
4. **Do not connect your roof or yard drains into to the pressure sewerage system.** The pressure sewer system is not designed to accommodate stormwater flows.
5. **When going on holidays, flush the pressure sewerage system.**
6. **If evacuating in an emergency, turn off all power, including the power to the pumping unit.**
7. **When in doubt about your pressure sewerage system, ask Council.**

6 REPAIRS TO THE SYSTEM

Griffith City Council will arrange for the repairs to all parts of the pressure sewer system. All repairs to the pump unit and property discharge line are usually the responsibility of the Griffith City Council. Repairs on the owner's plumbing upstream from Inspection Point upstream of the entry to the pump unit and nominally within 1 metre of the tank are at the owner's expense, as for any other form of sewerage system.

6.1 Access

You must ensure that Griffith City Council has 24 hours access to the pump unit, alarm panel and boundary kit and associated infrastructure. This means that the resident should ensure that pets can be contained, gates are accessible and there is unrestricted access to the tank/pump and the alarm panel. Should Griffith City Council make arrangements with the resident/property owner to access the property, however, on arrival, access to

the system cannot be achieved, Griffith City Council reserves the right to charge a service call.

6.2 Warranty and repair costs

Maintenance of the system is at no additional cost to you. The exceptions to this may be if you have:

- Discharged matter into the pump unit that you have been advised not to (refer to part 7 below)
- Accessed the pump unit – i.e. either the collection tank or the alarm panel.
- Interfered with the property service line or property boundary assembly.
- Sealed off the venting to the unit.
- Moved/relocated the alarm panel.

6.3 Burst pipes



If the property service line from the pump unit bursts (this will become evident by wet ground or water eruptions from the ground), you should immediately contact Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3 and turn off the power to the pump, this is achieved by turning the switch (circuit breaker) off in your main electrical distribution box. You should then minimise wastewater generation as previously suggested (refer to 4.4).

6.4 Wet areas around the tank

If you notice that the ground immediately around the pumping unit is wet, you should contact Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3 and have them inspect the site. You should then minimise wastewater as previously suggested (refer to 4.4).

6.5 The alarm is activated when you are not at home

It is advisable to notify your neighbours of the location of your new unit and its alarm/alarm panel, so that if your alarm is activated when you are not home, they can contact Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3 who will inspect the property.

7 WASTE NOT TO BE DISCHARGED INTO THE SEWER

Certain substances are not to be discharged into this or any other household sewerage system under any circumstances. To do so may result in a blockage of the property service line.

These include:

- **Cooking oil and fats**
- **Glass**
- **Metal**
- **Seafood Shells**
- **Rocks**
- **Nappies, socks, rags or clothes**
- **Chemicals***
- **Storm Water**
- **Plastic or wooden objects**
- **Paints (water and oil based)**
- **Sanitary napkins or tampons**
- **Kitty litter**
- **Flammable materials**
- **Lubricating oil and/or grease**
- **Petrol, diesel**
- **Salt water (sea water)**

* Other than those used in normal domestic products such as dishwashing powder, detergents & hair dyes.



As with any waste water treatment system that discharges to the environment, Griffith City Council encourages the use of low sodium and low phosphorus products to minimise the impact that these chemicals have on the environment such as algal blooms and salinity.

If you are in any doubt about any substances entering the sewerage system you should call Griffith City Council on the numbers given in part 3.

8 SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

8.1 Entry to collection tanks

Customers are warned that they **must never** access any of Griffith City Council's assets on their property including the collection tank and the property boundary kit.

There is no need for the resident to enter the system. Should Griffith City Council believe that access has been gained then the customer may receive a written warning from Griffith City Council and may also attract an administration fee.

8.2 Overflow Relief Gully

It is recommended, as with conventional gravity sewerage systems, that the overflow relief gully is kept clear at all times to ensure that if a blockage causes a backflow, sewage will not enter the dwelling through internal fixtures (refer Diagram in part 2).

8.3 Unoccupied house

In a situation where the home will be unoccupied for more than one week, the pump unit will need to be flushed out as this will ensure that it does not become a source of odours. It is suggested that:

- You run about 50 Litres of clean water into the pump unit until the pump activates and runs for about 1 minute (typically this can be achieved by running the water into the bathtub and then releasing it into the sewerage system). After that time, turn off the water and allow the pump to run until it shuts off automatically.
- It is preferred that the power to the pump unit is ***not*** switched off, however, if you wish to turn the power off, it is recommended that water supply to the house is also turned off at the stop tap to avoid the risk of collection tank overflow. Customers should note that if the power is turned off to the pump, the alarm will not operate and if an alarm condition arises, a sewage overflow may occur. Council will not be liable for any costs or other actions in the case where the electricity supply to the unit has been intentionally interrupted by the owner and/or occupier.
- Where Council receives a foul odour complaint arising out of a customer's failure to flush the unit prior to an extended absence from the property, it may choose to recover costs from the resident to carry out work to mitigate the nuisance.

8.4 Council Access to the Pressure Sewer Equipment

The minimal requirements for access by Council repair service people are set out in section 6.1. However, some key aspects in respect to access that need to be noted are:

1. The unit is not to be buried, paved, concreted over nor permanently covered with any material
2. When the Council repair agent comes to repair the unit, it must be accessible. If Council officers are unable to locate the unit because it has been covered, Council may refuse to carry out repairs until the owner exposes the unit and Council may apply a service charge to the resident.

At minimum, Council may pass any costs on to the resident for it to locate and uncover the pumping unit and it may choose to impose the fines for this covering of the asset under section 635 of the Local Government Act (1993).

3. If pets are not secured, Council officers may refuse to enter the property and carry out any repair works. In this instance Council will not be held liable for any repairs unable to be carried out and it may elect to apply a service charge.

4. Access to the pumping unit for a trolley/lifting device will be required. The officer will need to place a lifting frame above the pumping station to lift out the pump and then carry the pumps away to their vehicle requiring a path for the trolley. Any resident that closes off access may be responsible for any additional costs incurred including additional equipment, such as cranes etc. Council will not be held to next day responses in these instances.
5. Residents with properties that have restricted access must be present to allow Council service staff access to the pump unit and alarm panel at the agreed time.

8.5 Council not liable

Council will not be held liable for any overflows that may occur on the property where the resident has failed to notify Council. Residents will be liable for any flows that discharge from their property and may be prosecuted for environmental breaches if they have failed to notify Council. A record of all notifications will be maintained by Council.



What You Need to Know about Pressure Sewerage Systems A Householders Guide

This brochure is intended to provide a basic guide to real estate agents and prospective homeowners to better understand what is involved where a pressure sewerage unit is installed on a property.

What are Pressure Sewerage Systems?

Pressure sewerage systems comprise a small on property pumping unit (just a bit smaller than a septic tank) that pumps the household sewerage into a reticulation system of small diameter pipes laid at minimum depth. The reticulation pipes then carry the sewerage to the treatment plant either directly or by a central pump station.

The pumping unit is normally a plastic/fibreglass collection tank of

differing storage capacities. There is also a small alarm panel incorporating alarms and monitoring features, which is either mounted on a steel post near the unit or to the side of the dwelling.

Household sewage flows through the property drainage system into the collection tank and when the volume in the tank reaches a preset level, the pump will automatically turn on and pump out the sewage. Typically the pump will operate for one to two minutes at a time again turning off at a preset level.

If the pump fails to operate, the volume in the collection tank will build up to a level where an alarm sounds and, if after waiting for an hour, the alarm persists, the resident is then asked to contact Griffith City Council who will carry out the repairs on the unit.

There is normally around one day additional storage above the alarm level and the unit can still operate for a limited period before service. The pressure sewer system is essentially the same as a conventional gravity system, only requiring that the owner/occupier contact Griffith City Council if the alarm sounds. The audible alarm will turn off in 10 minutes or can be silenced before then.

Are Pressure Sewerage Systems Second Class Sewerage Systems

No! Pressure sewerage systems are one of a number of viable sewerage service alternatives that are available to Council. Pressure sewer is normally used where it represents a more suitable alternative than conventional sewerage systems, and this generally occurs where the area to be served:

- Is flat requiring a large number of expensive central pump stations.
- Has unstable soils and/or requires deep excavations
- Has a high water table
- Is in rocky conditions
- Has a large distance between the properties to be constructed.
- Requires minimal disturbance of the existing area for unique reasons

Pressure sewerage systems might also be installed in areas where inflow and infiltration are causing problems for conventional sewerage systems

Have the Units Been Installed Elsewhere?

There are in excess of 1 Million of these units installed world-wide with the technology having been in the USA

for 40 years and in Europe for around 30 years.

Griffith City Council already has a number of these units in service.

Will a Pressure Sewerage System Impact the Value of My Property?

Yes it will increase the value of your property in the same manner as having conventional sewerage connected to your house will.

Who Pays for the Power?

The alarm panel is normally wired into the household power board and power costs to run the system is paid by the resident as part of their normal household electricity bill.

Typically this will see an increase in power usage of up to 75 kilowatt hours per annum for the average household.

What happens if the Unit breaks down or there is a Power Failure?

If the pumping unit fails, the audible alarm will normally sound and this can be silenced by activating a switch located on the alarm panel. The alarm light will remain until the fault condition is cleared.

One of the benefits of pressure sewerage is that any system blockage outside the property will not back up into individual properties and therefore the only persons who can contribute to any overflow are the property residents themselves. When the alarm sounds there will still be sufficient storage to allow the resident to use household facilities with some limitations. The resident on each property will receive a Home Owner's Manual and Quick Reference Guide to assist the resident in knowing what to do in relation to the pressure sewerage unit on the property.

Experience has indicated that the units will require some form of maintenance. The normal method of repair is for Griffith City Council to replace the unit with a spare pump and take the defective unit back to the workshop for repairs. This process takes less than one hour from when the maintenance crew arrive on site

Are there any Special Precautions or Restrictions with these Systems?

Essentially the answer is no. They have none of the septic tank type limitations on lifestyle. There are some materials such as petroleum products, abrasives, rags etc. that should not be

put down the system but these should not be discharged into a conventional system either.

The homeowner is required to enter into a Homeowners Agreement with Griffith City Council that, in conjunction with the Home Owner's Manual and the Quick Reference Guide, will detail what can and cannot be safely discharged into the Pressure Sewer system.

The Pressure Sewer units also have some increased flexibility regarding the location of the various components to accommodate swimming pools, large spas or house extensions. These are evaluated on a case by case basis

Where Do I Go To Get More Information

If you require further information regarding pressure sewer systems, Council Policy or other supporting documents, please search the Griffith City Council web site –

www.griffith.nsw.gov.au or phone Griffith City Council on (02) 6962 8100

The alarm goes off when it rains

This means that rainwater may be getting into your system and overloading it. Call Council to check whether rainwater is entering the system via defective or inappropriate plumbing. If this is the case, it is the property owner's responsibility to fund repair costs.

The neighbours are away and their system's alarm is sounding

Call Council to investigate and take appropriate action.

The power supply has been interrupted

In this instance, the alarm may keep sounding until the unit clears itself. Press the 'silence' button to mute the alarm until the unit clears itself. If the alarm stays on for more than 60 minutes after the power has been restored, call the council or follow the steps under 'Helpful tips'.

The alarm goes off after backwashing my pool

Backwashing a pool or spa may cause the alarm to activate and remain activated until a quantity of water is cleared through the system. Press the 'silence' button to mute the alarm until the unit clears itself. If the alarm stays on for more than 60 minutes, call Council.

All Sewer System equipment provided are backed by Enviroment Once Corporation (E/One) and carries certification through ISO 19001:2008

Disclaimer: This information was correct at the time of printing and is subject to change

Home Owners Guide to Pressure Sewer Systems

Pressure Sewer Quick Reference Guide

Your property has been equipped with a pressure sewer system. This replaces a septic system and was chosen as a practical and affordable alternative to a conventional gravity sewer.

The ownership and maintenance responsibilities for these pressure sewer systems vary depending on the development conditions that existed at the time each system was installed. If you are unsure of your responsibilities, please contact Griffith City Council for clarification.

The system consists of a below-ground collection chamber/pump unit which stores, grinds and pumps sewage under pressure into council's sewer. This sewage comes from your toilet, sink, shower, bath, dishwasher and washing machine, and is pumped to a sewage treatment plant in your region.

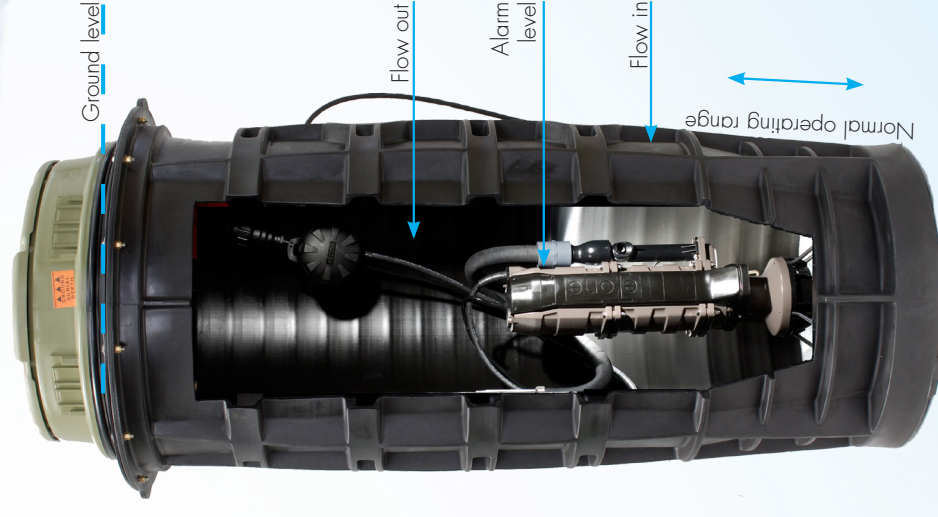
Under normal running conditions your tank stores a maximum of 112 litres and it is then pumped down to 80 litres. In case of a fault and depending on your water usage the tank has a storage capacity of about 24 hours of usage.

The unit is wired to your household's electricity supply and typical costs are minimal. It is operated by a control panel that features audible and visible alarms, which are activated if there are any issues with the system.



Wet wipes is a major problem for the system as they are responsible for 80% of all sewer blockages. It can cost thousands of dollars to repair and if they occur in people's private plumbing the cost may be incurred by the customer.

While the unit is robust and reliable and there is very little that can go wrong, this brochure spells out some handy tips for operating your pressure sewer system.



The pump unit stores, grinds and pumps sewage from your house to the sewer network.

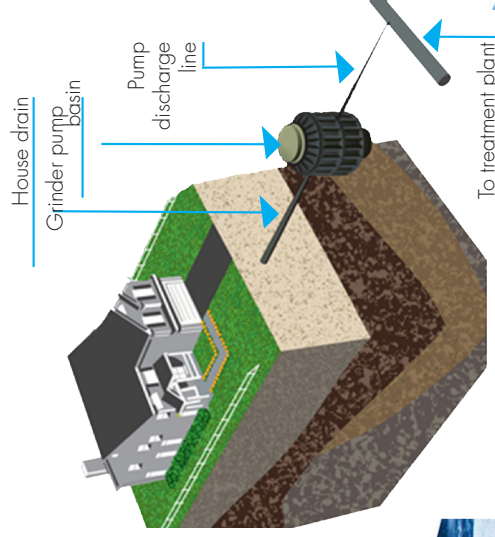
Caring for your system

To avoid blockages and damage to the pump unit, DO NOT put the following items into the system:

- wipes of any description, repairs cost may be incurred by the customer
- sanitary napkins, tampons or contraceptive devices
- nappies
- cotton buds
- coffee grinds
- seafood shells
- kitty litter
- plastic, glass or metal
- gravel or sand
- rags or cloths
- explosive or flammable material
- fats, oils or grease
- chemicals and pesticides
- solvents, paint or turpentine
- petrol or diesel
- storm-water runoff

To protect the pressure sewer system from damage, DO NOT:

- cover the lid on the collection chamber/pump unit;
- walk on the lid of the collection chamber/pump unit or put heavy objects on the lid;
- interfere with any valves or switches;
- turn off the power to the pump (unless in response to a broken discharge pipe); or
- obstruct the vent on the pump unit if fitted.



Your responsibilities

- Respond promptly to any alarms (see 'What to do if the alarm is triggered' section for full instructions).
- Consult with Council when proposing to carry out any works within your property.
- Take care when digging near the unit or the discharge pipe. If you accidentally break a pipeline, call Griffith City Council. The property owner is responsible for the cost of these repairs. For safety reasons, do not attempt to repair the break yourself.
- Maintain clear access to the collection chamber/unit at all times by keeping the area free of plant growth, debris or other obstacles.
- Flush the system if no one will be at the property for more than a month. Do this prior to leaving to prevent odours building up in the pressure sewer system. To flush the system, run water down your sink for a couple of minutes.

Helpful tips: What to do if the alarm is triggered

If the alarm on your pressure sewer system goes off, do not attempt to repair the unit yourself.

In the case of a power outage, the grinder pump will automatically clear itself within an hour upon **restarting**. If the alarm is not due to a power outage, follow the steps below: **Press the button**



The audible alarm will switch off when you press the 'silence' button underneath the alarm panel. The alarm light will continue to be visible.

2. Wait one hour

After this time, check to see if the alarm light is still on. If the light is off, no further action is required. If the light is still on, go to step 3.



3. **Call Griffith City Council** For technical information please refer to your home owners guide or phone Griffith City Council on 6962 8100 from 8.30am - 5.00pm or 6964 0886 outside business hours.



4. **Limit your sewage generation** Until repairs are carried out, limit the amount of sewage going into the system. You can do this by:



- only use water for vital activities such as toilet flushing or short showers;
- not using dishwashers or washing machines; and
- not leaving taps running.

Troubleshooting tips

A pipe is broken

If a break occurs in the sewer discharge pipe, turn off the power to the pump and call the council immediately. Minimize sewage from your household until the break is repaired.

If the break is in your water supply, turn off your water supply and contact the council to arrange repair. The property owner is responsible for leaks on the property side of the water meter.

The unit is emitting strong odours

When operating normally, there should be no strong odours coming from the pressure sewer system. If you can smell odours coming from the unit, run water down the sink for a few minutes to flush the unit. It is also recommended you do this if you are going on holidays or staying away from your property more than one month. If the odour persists, call Council.

There are wet patches around the plumbing unit or discharge pipe

Wet spots should not occur as the pumping unit and discharge pipe are totally sealed. If you notice any wet patches around the pumping unit or discharge pipe, and there has not been any recent rainfall, call the Council.

For Technical Information

Please phone Griffith City Council on: 6962 8100 Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm or 6964 0886
Outside Business Hours