



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 perspective 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 sewage 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