

# Stormwater vs wastewater



## Your plumbing is your responsibility

Property owners are responsible for maintaining the pipes and downpipes on their properties. There are two types of water that will come from your property – and they must be kept separate:

- **Wastewater pipes** (from bathrooms, kitchen and toilets) connect to Council's system to transport wastewater (sewage) from residential, commercial and industrial areas for treatment.
- **Stormwater pipes** collect stormwater from driveways, roofs and other hard surfaces for eventual release in waterways.

### Why don't stormwater and wastewater mix?

Problems occur when stormwater enters the wastewater system. Each time it rains, pressure from the extra water can cause pipes to back up and force open wastewater manholes causing wastewater overflows.

## How to prevent overflows - looking after the wastewater system

### Make sure stormwater connections are legal

It is illegal to connect stormwater pipes and drains to the wastewater system. Water from your roof should be connected to the stormwater system. Your licensed plumber can help you with this. You can also contact Redland City Council for advice.

### Repair or replace broken pipes or damaged covers at inspection points

Most properties have an opening into the wastewater pipe, known as an inspection opening (IO).

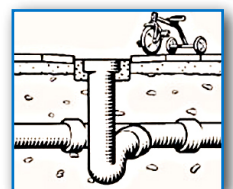
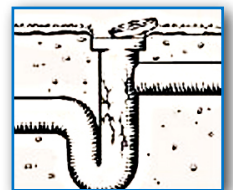
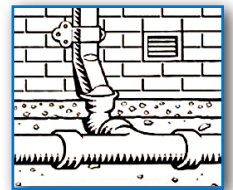
It is generally a vertical pipe from the underground wastewater line to the surface with a round plastic or metal cover about 150mm in diameter. Damaged inspection points let stormwater into the wastewater system.

### Report damaged maintenance holes to 3829 8999

These important access points to the wastewater system and should be kept clear. Poorly fitted, cracked or low-lying maintenance holes can let water into the wastewater system.

### Make sure your 'gully' is about 50mm above ground level

An overflow relief gully (ORG) is an open pipe covered with a grill. It is often found just outside your house or building. It releases backflow from blocked wastewater pipes so overflows don't occur inside your house. If the ORG is damaged or too close to the ground, stormwater can seep into the wastewater system.



## Protect your plumbing

### Know what can't be poured down the sink or flushed

There are many common things that are bad news for your household plumbing that can cause expensive blockages.

They can also make their way into the sewerage network, block the sewer line and disrupt the City's treatment plants. Blockages increase operating costs, but more importantly can potentially cause sewage overflows. Wastewater Treatment Plants are designed to treat only certain waste from toilets and sinks.

## Preventing Wastewater blockages and overflows

- Ensure your stormwater connections are legal – wastewater and stormwater shouldn't be plumbed together.
- Avoid putting cooking oil, fats or food scraps down the kitchen sink
- Never flush wipes, nappy liners, paper towel, nappies, sanitary napkins, tampons, incontinence pads, bandages, cotton buds or condoms. Products marketed as 'biodegradable' or 'compostable' or even 'flushable' can not necessarily be safely flushed.
- Never pour chemicals used for home and garden maintenance down drains
- Wherever possible use phosphorus-free (denoted by a 'P' or 'NP' on the packaging) cleaning products. Phosphorus-free washing and dishwashing powders help reduce the amount of chemicals used at wastewater treatment plants.

