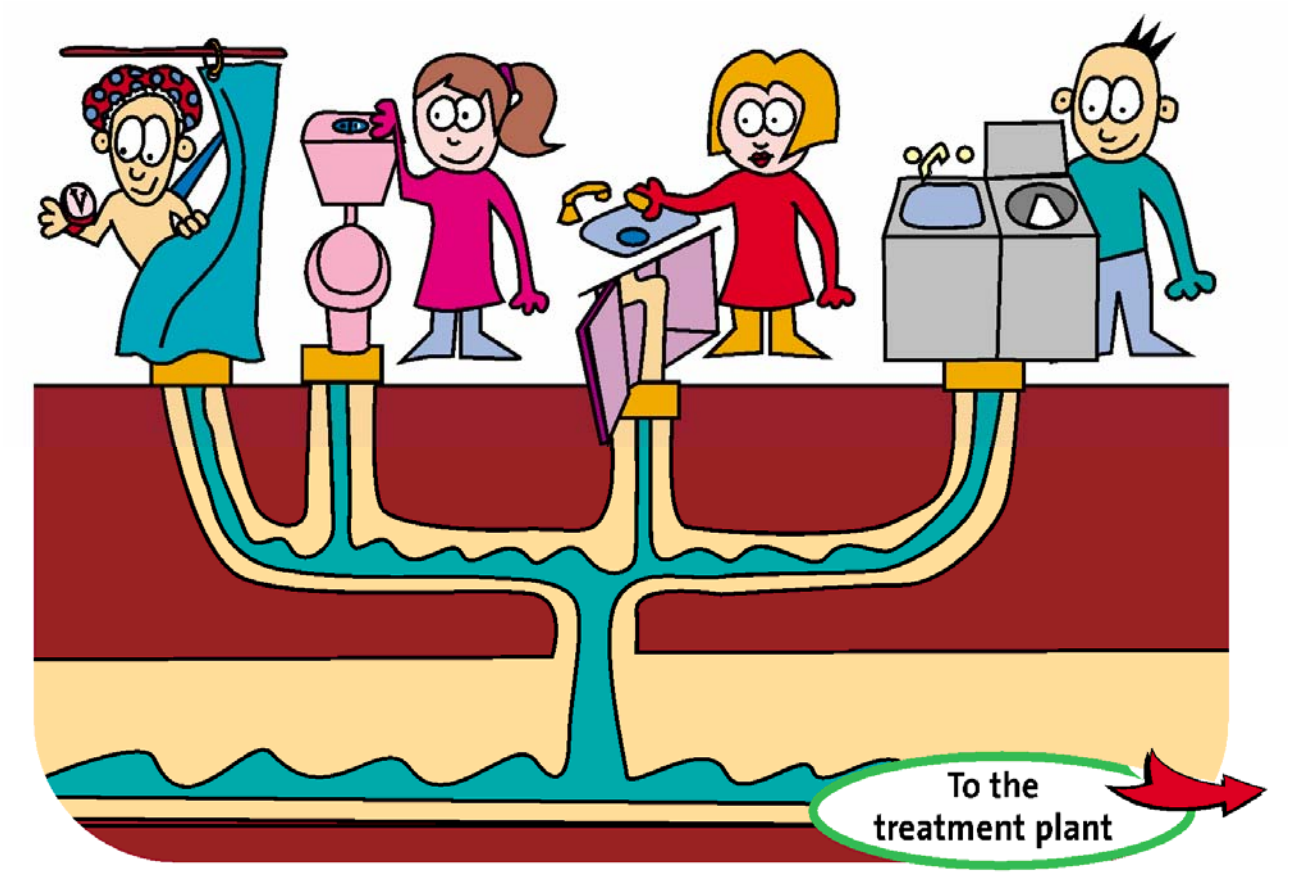
WIDE BAY water

PROTECTING OUR SEWERAGE SYSTEM



Description of Sewer and Stormwater

SEWER

What is sewage?

Sewage is waste matter from the community. It includes such things as faecal matter, urine, household and commercial wastewater, and industrial wastes. It does not include stormwater.

What is the sewerage system?

This is the network of pipes and structures for the collection and transfer of sewage to the treatment plant.

Why is the sewerage system important?

It is important to have a sewerage system to treat and dispose of sewage correctly because, besides having a bad smell, sewage contains bacteria and other substances that can be harmful to our health.

When sewage goes into the sewerage system where does it end up?

After going through a number of screening processes at the wastewater treatment facility, the liquid content is recycled for irrigation and the solid content is recycled as agricultural soil conditioner.

STORMWATER

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is water collected or discharged as a result of rain and its run-off. Collection areas are:

- roof water
- surface water (run-off from paved and unpaved areas)
- sub-soil water (water accumulated within the ground).

What is the stormwater system?

This is the network of pipes and structures that collect and remove stormwater from areas such as street and property drainage.

Why is the stormwater system important?

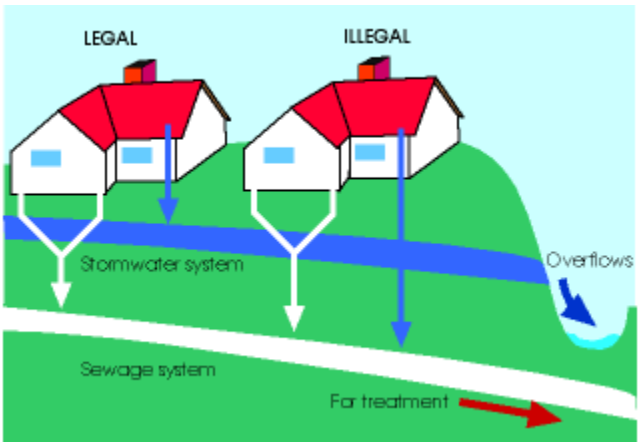
The stormwater system is necessary to take water away from urban areas as fast as possible to prevent flooding.

When water goes into the stormwater system where does it end up?

Most of our stormwater travels through gutters, drains, pipes and open channels, eventually washing into our nearby pristine waterways of Hervey Bay

DIFFERENT PATHWAYS OF STORMWATER AND SEWAGE

This diagram shows the different pathways and legality of stormwater and sewage:



What can happen when things get into the wrong system?

*Consider the **sewerage** system...*

These systems have been designed to accommodate flow of sewer only, not sewer and stormwater. If large amounts of stormwater enter the sewerage network it can overload the system leading to sewage spills which can contaminate the environment.

It would cost hundreds of millions of dollars to increase the capacity of Hervey Bay's sewerage system to deal with all this extra water, which should not be going into the sewerage system in the first place.

How is stormwater entering the sewerage system?

Wide Bay Water have been performing hydraulic flow analysis and smoke testing together with CCTV investigations of the sewerage system to find out where stormwater is entering the sewerage system.

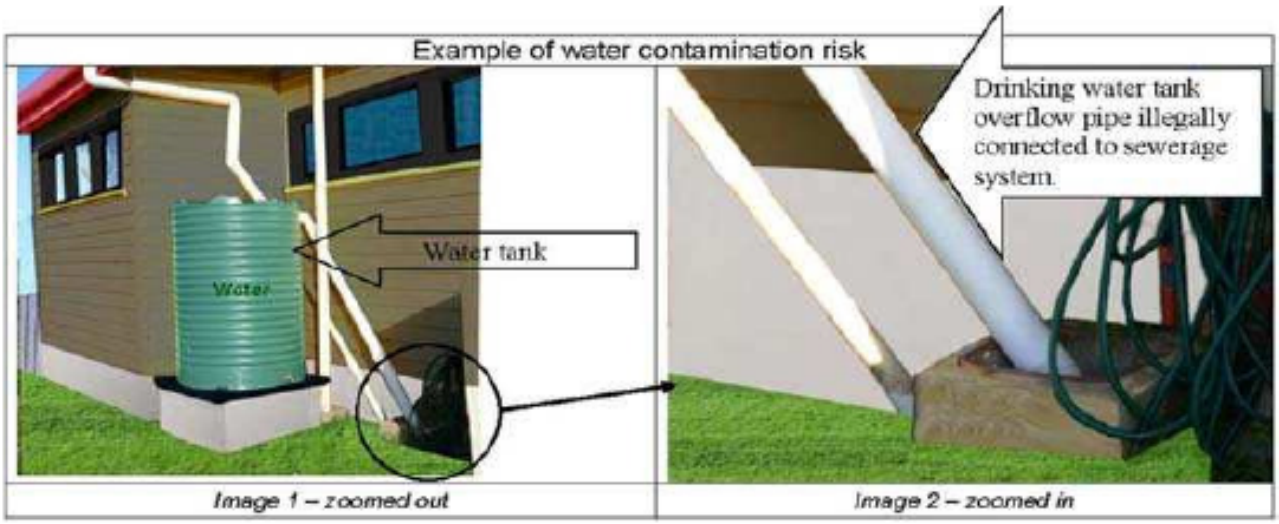
These tests have identified two main reasons:

1. Infiltration. This is where water seeps into sewerage pipes and maintenance holes through cracks or bad joints. Infiltration may occur long after rain.
2. Inflow. This is where water enters the sewerage system via illegal cross connections with the stormwater system. Stormwater can also enter the sewerage system via private sewer mains. In this case, it becomes the property owner's responsibility.

Are there any risks if my property's stormwater is connected to the sewerage system?

Yes. If you discharge stormwater into the sewerage system you may run the risk of sewage backing up and spilling out in your house or yard when there are heavy rains.

Because of the present high usage of tanks in the area, cross-connections of stormwater and sewer can also be dangerous. The image below is a prime example of cross-connection where drinking water is at risk of being contaminated through an illegal stormwater connection to the sewerage system can be viewed via the picture below.



If my stormwater is not connected properly, do I have to fix it?

Yes. Improperly connected stormwater connections can be hazardous and are illegal. If your property's stormwater is incorrectly connected, a notice will be served on your property. The illegal connection would need to be addressed before you can sell your property.

Will fines be issued for illegal connections?

While Wide Bay Water Corporation has the right to prosecute under the Water Management Act 2000 or P.O.E.D, it understands that, in many cases, the illegal connection may have been made before the current owner purchased the property. Fines will not be issued at this stage, but will be considered if illegal connections are reconnected in the future.

Residents are asked, however, to be proactive and make the necessary changes as soon as possible as these issues affect the whole community.

How can I tell if my stormwater is going into the sewerage system?

In many cases you can see downpipes, which carry stormwater from the roof, pointing into sewer gully traps or grates outside. Often there will be sewerage pipes such as those from laundries or bathrooms going into the sewer gully trap as well. Stormwater can also enter the sewerage system when sewer gully traps are below ground level and used to drain sometimes large outdoor entertaining areas. See below for some examples of Illegal Stormwater connections into the sewerage system.

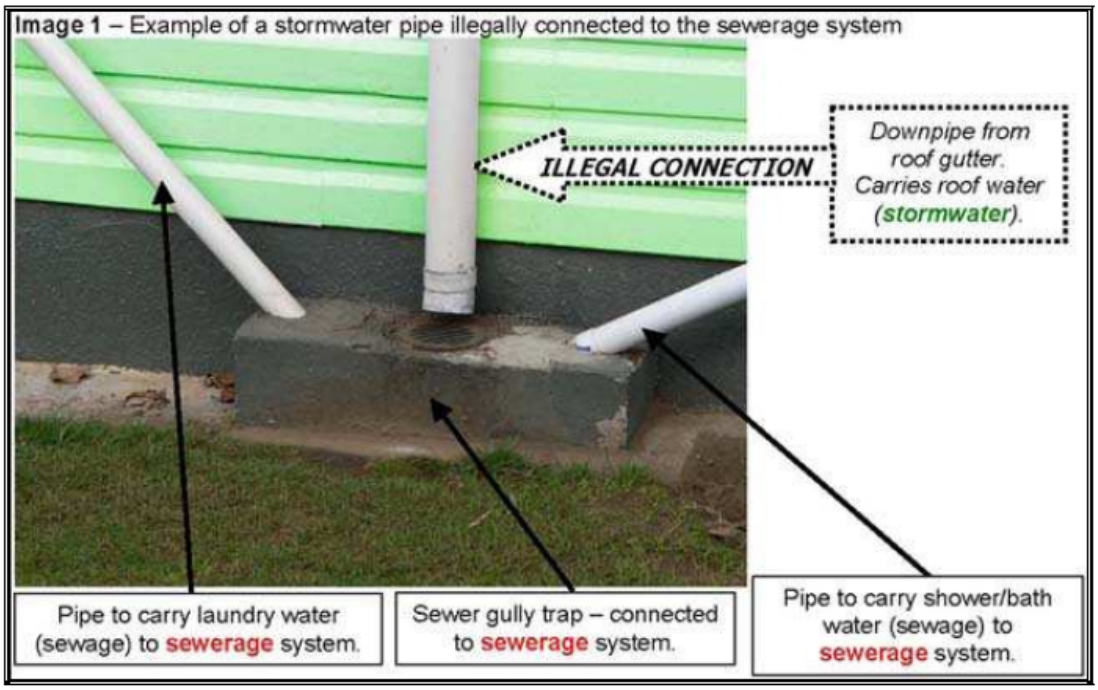
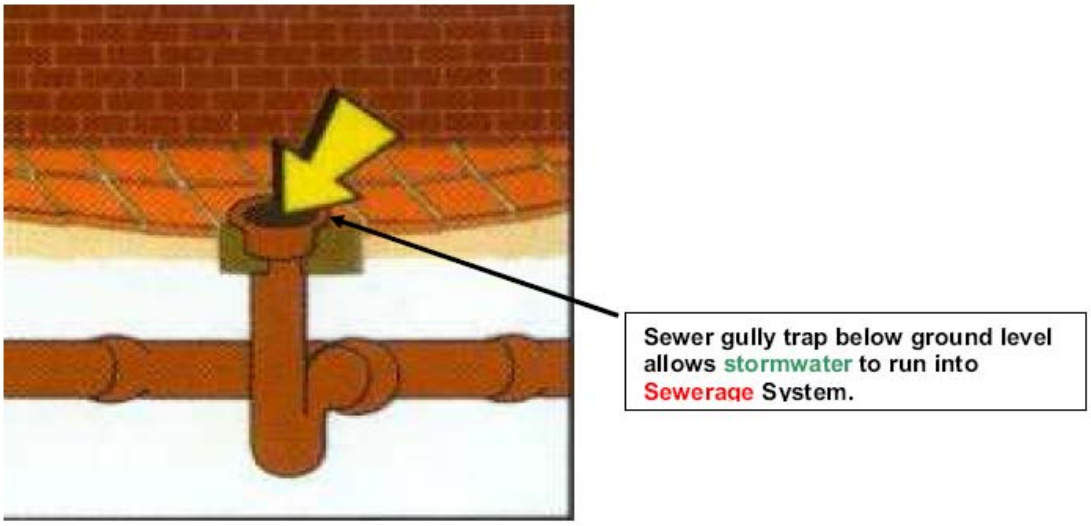


Image 2 - Example of a Sewer Gully now below ground level.



Examples of illegal inflow to sewer

The effect of swimming pool backwash water is going into the sewerage system

Although it is a statutory requirement to have pool backwash water plumbed to sewer for health reasons we should all be aware that it is illegal and immoral to use backwash systems to drain pools during heavy rain events to avoid overflowing the pool onto the yard surrounds. In fact it is beneficial to the community and the environment to isolate pool backwash systems during these heavy rainfall events.

Why waste thousands of litres of water from your swimming pool down the drain. Divert backwash into a specially designed backwash tank for future use.

It is recommended that you backwash your pool once every month for three minutes. An average pool pump may pump approximately 400 litres per minute. That is 1200 litres per backwash wasted down the drain!

Why not store this water in a specially designed backwash tank for future use during the swimming months when water levels are critical to maintain a functional pool.