

	<b>COUNCIL POLICY</b>	
	Combined House Drain Council Policy	
	Policy Number	CP088
	Directorate	Wide Bay Water and Waste Services
	Owner	Ken Diehm, Chief Executive Officer
	Last Approved	24/05/2023
	Review Due	24/05/2026

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the ownership, repair, and maintenance responsibilities for privately owned combined house drains.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all properties containing and/or using a combined house drain.

### 3. HEAD OF POWER

*Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2019  
AS/NZS 3500: Plumbing and Drainage*

### 4. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

To assist in the interpretation of this Policy the following definitions apply:

**“Combined house drain”** means a sanitary drain for receiving discharges from 2 or more neighbouring premises, other than a sanitary drain owned by the sewerage service provider for the premises.

**“Employees”** means all full time, part-time, casual, or fixed term employees of Fraser Coast Regional Council including any contractor, consultant or volunteer engaged or undertaking works on behalf of Fraser Coast Regional Council.

**“Private Plumber”** means an experienced Plumbing Contractor who has obtained a plumbing licence from the Plumbing Industry Council and is not employed by or on behalf of Fraser Coast Regional Council.

### 5. POLICY STATEMENT

A combined house drain is a privately owned sanitary drain serving two or more properties, draining to a single connection to Council’s sewerage infrastructure. As it is not a Council asset, the maintenance and repairs of a combined house drain is the responsibility of the owners of the properties served by the drain. Council responsibility for maintenance and repairs stops at the sewer connection to the Council sewer main or manhole.

Internal property maintenance and repair of combined house drains is the joint responsibility of all connected property owners. To provide equity for properties benefiting from a combined house drain it is recommended that costs are apportioned as follows:

- All properties connected to a combined house drain upstream from a repair will pay an equal share of the cost.

- Where a combined house drain is damaged by a property owner through whose land the drain passes, then the costs of the repair should be apportioned to the owner causing the damage.
- Where repairs are necessary for health reasons and property owners refuse to carry out the repairs, Council may carry out the necessary works and allocate the costs to the relevant properties.

### **Emergency Clearing of Combined House Drains**

While combined house drains are privately owned assets, Council may provide a service to clear blockages in a combined house drain in an emergency situation where there is a risk to public health or the environment, until more permanent repairs can be arranged by a suitably licenced plumber by the property owner.

An emergency situation is defined by a customer request afterhours or on the weekends where the property owners have been unable to have the property attended by a private plumber. This service does not extend to blockages within a building or to house drains which are not readily accessible. Council may back charge the property owners for the clearing of combined drains (*Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2019, s107*). The owners will be invoiced as a sundry debtor and the management of the sundry debtor will be consistent with the Debt Recovery Council Policy (edocs 2843028).

### **Combined House Drains not on private property**

Council will take responsibility for maintenance of combined house drains not on private properties. When a customer engages a private plumber and it is determined that the blockage or repair is not on private property the Council may reimburse a private plumber for hours worked. The plumber may claim a maximum of 2 hours of work from Fraser Coast Regional Council when emergency clearing is required. The plumber must contact the Council prior to work and must include quotation for work to be performed. Claims in excess of 2 hours must be approved by the Sewer Network Co-Ordinator or Executive Manager Network Operations and Maintenance prior to payment.

Where a combined house drain located outside of private property is damaged by a third party Council will seek to recover the costs.

### **Notification of Combined House Drain Connection**

New property owners shall be notified of connection to a combined house drain by Council's Rates department at the time of the property search and supplied with an information paper to detail responsibilities for emergency clearing and ongoing maintenance.

Council also recommends property owners connected to combined house drains liaise with other connected neighbours serviced by the combined house drain to:

- Detail the process for maintenance or repair of the combined house drain.
- Plan agreed cost sharing arrangements and regular maintenance and cleaning.
- Authorise property owners to spend a certain amount to carry out emergency repair works without joint consultation.
- Acknowledge that property owners are obliged to provide clear access for maintenance or repair of the drain if required.

### **Redevelopment of Properties Connected to a Combined House Drain**

The augmentation of the sewer will be determined in the development assessment process. The process may require the developer to extend the sewer to ensure individual connection points.

## 6. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Information on Combined House Drains #4054547  
Customer Service Charter #3298906  
Debt Recovery Council Policy #2843028

## 7. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed when related legislation/documents are amended or replaced, other circumstances as determined from time to time by Council or at intervals of no more than three years.

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### Version Control

Version Number	Key Changes	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Document Number
1	New Policy		03/09/2015	3006017
2	Update to Name / Logo - WBW		08/06/2020	3006017
3	Transition to Council template Update to: Head of Power, Definitions, Emergency Clearing, maintenance of House Drains and redevelopment of properties connected to a combined house drain.	Council	24/05/2023	4558210