

Watch the flow,
where does it go...

**Does stormwater from your property
enter the sewerage system?**

The magnitude of the problem

The measurement of sewage flow at the wastewater treatment plants clearly shows a substantial difference in the volume of sewage entering the plants during wet weather compared to those periods when no rainfall is recorded.

This difference exceeds a factor of 5 times, which is typically adopted as an acceptable flow increase during wet weather. Within the Mackay region some sewage catchments are recording up to 8 or 10 times the normal dry weather flow.

Preventing stormwater entry is a problem for not only each property owner's house drains but also for council's sewer system, which transports sewage from individual house drains to the treatment facilities.

Along with private house drains, council will also be carrying out detailed inspections of sewers and manholes to ensure rainwater entry into the sewerage system is minimised or prevented.

***Together we can make a difference and
improve the operation of our sewerage system!***

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 **Mackay REGIONAL COUNCIL**



An important message...

Stormwater that enters the sewerage system costs our community, it can also cause drains to back up and even overflow sewage!

Does stormwater from your property enter the sewerage system?

To help you answer this question, Mackay Regional Council will be inspecting properties around the region to identify faults, leaks and improper connections.

The sewerage system is not designed to carry stormwater.

The sewerage system is connected to each property and transfers sewage and other liquid (wastewater) from each home or business to the wastewater treatment plant via house drains, sewers and pumping stations.

The sewerage system is not designed to cope with or carry runoff from rainfall.

During wet weather substantial runoff from rainfall enters the sewerage system in some areas; this means:

- the capacity of the sewerage system is overloaded
- sewage overflows from the system
- the cost of operations and maintenance increases
- sewerage system upgrades which result in higher sewage charges.

It is in everyone's interest that this problem is overcome or at least significantly reduced, particularly when rain is not excessive.

Rainwater runoff can enter the sewerage system in a number of ways such as:

- via the connection of stormwater downpipes and stormwater drainage pipes to the sewerage system (these connections are illegal)



Above: Illegally connected downpipe feeding directly into a gully trap. Below: Smoke testing identifies an illegal connection.



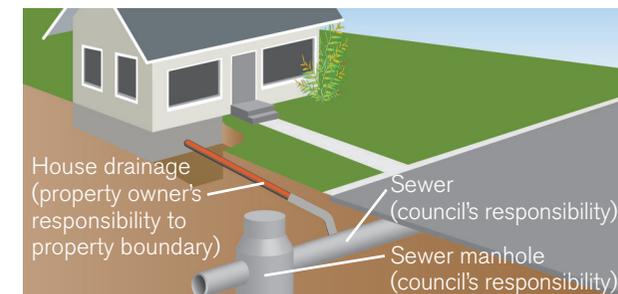
- through gully trap grates that are not at the correct height above ground level or surrounding surface levels (these are subject to stormwater ponding)
- tree roots in sewer pipes that allows groundwater to enter at joints
- via cracked pipes and damaged pipe joints.

Council recognises that during extreme rainfall events it is not possible to completely prevent stormwater or floodwater entering the sewerage system.

Council action

Mackay Regional Council will carry out inspections including smoke testing of the sewerage system, focusing on house drains, gully traps and plumbing within each property throughout the region.

Smoke testing involves the injection of a non-toxic smoke into sewers and house drains to identify how and where smoke escapes into the atmosphere. **For example, smoke being emitted from a downpipe will indicate an illegal stormwater connection.**



Above: A typical house drain connected to council's sewerage system.

House drains are the responsibility of each property owner and need to be maintained to ensure that rainfall runoff does not enter the sewerage system.

The house drain from each property connects to a sewer or sewerage manhole; these sewers and manholes are council's responsibility.

Where an inspection of a property's house drains identifies a defect (allowing stormwater to enter the sewerage system or not allowing the house drain to operate properly) the property owner will be advised and asked to rectify the problem.

Any costs associated with fixing a defect is the property owner's responsibility.