

Information sheet

Waste management

Greywater and sewage in the Environmental Protection Act

This information sheet outlines the relationship between greywater and sewage and how the Environmental Protection Act 1994 relates to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018 in dealing with them.

Background

Sewage treatment works, other than no-release works, with a peak design capacity of 21 equivalent persons or more are licensable as environmentally relevant activity (ERA) 63 — sewage treatment — under schedule 2 of the Environmental Protection Regulation 2019. These sewage treatment works will be referred to as 'ERA 63 STW'.

The *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018* (PD Act) creates a process for regulating on-site sewage facilities (on-site sewage treatment for less than 21 equivalent persons — i.e. sewage treatment that is not ERA 63) and greywater disposal or use.

Definitions

The PD Act contains the following definitions:

- sewage, by reference to schedule 3 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, means household and commercial wastewater that contains, or may contain, faecal, urinary or other human waste
- greywater means wastewater from a bath, basin, kitchen, laundry or shower, whether or not the wastewater is contaminated with human waste
- sewered area means
 - a) a service area for a sewerage service under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*; or
 - b) a connection area for a wastewater service under the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*.

Relationship between greywater and sewage

Greywater is a component of sewage. Greywater can be collected and disposed of separately to sewage. The PD Act makes a distinction between kitchen greywater (greywater from the kitchen or greywater contaminated with grease or oil) and greywater other than kitchen greywater (OTK greywater).

Under s. 78 of the PD Act, kitchen greywater must be discharged:

- for premises in a sewered area—the sewerage system for the area
- for premises not in a sewered area—
 - a greywater use facility that includes a greywater treatment plant; or

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- an on-site sewage facility; or
- an environmentally relevant on-site sewage facility (ERA63 STW).

Under s. 79 of the PD Act, OTK greywater can be:

- used untreated on-site for watering of gardens and lawns by bucket or hose in a sewered or unsewered area; or
- discharged to sewer in a sewered area; or
- discharged to a greywater use facility in a sewered or unsewered area; or
- discharged to an ERA 63 STW or an on-site sewerage facility in an unsewered area.

Relationship between the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* only deals with greywater when it is a component of sewage and the treatment works has a peak design capacity of 21 equivalent persons or more.

The PD Act deals with sewage for treatment plants with a capacity of less than 21 equivalent persons.

The PD Act also deals with greywater treatment and/or use.

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Approved:

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Enquiries:

Permit and Licence Management
Ph: 1300 130 372 (select option 4)
Email: palm@des.qld.gov.au