

Sewerage Stormwater Drain Blockage Policy

Effective Date:	27 August 2002
Contact Officer:	Manager Infrastructure Services
TRIM Document Number:	D02619151

Procedure and Responsibilities

Objective

This policy aims to:

- outline processes that deal with the harmonious coexistence of private property and community-owned trees;
- explain to property owners the opportunistic nature of tree roots taking advantage of pre-existing defects in sewer systems, particularly in old, non-PVC systems;
- help property owners to understand their responsibilities to prevent sewer blockages and damage to the environment by maintaining their sewer systems in accordance with relevant Standards; and
- resolve issues with tree roots entering domestic sewer systems in an orderly manner.

Policy Statement

Randwick City Council is committed to its 'Leadership in Sustainability' responsibility. Council aims to prevent adverse impacts on water quality and the environment from spills or overflows from sewer or stormwater systems.

Council also aims to minimise costs in relation to damage related to community-owned trees. This will be achieved by implementing the procedures associated with this Policy and other programs.

Introduction

The property owner / Owners' Corporation's authorised representative / Managing Agent's authorised representative (hereafter known as the "owner") is responsible for maintaining the sewer and drainage system on their property.

References

www.sydneywater.com.au
Australian and New Zealand Standard 3500:2003*
Building Code of Australia*
Plumbing Code of Australia*
(* and amendments)

OBJECTIVE

1. Faulty pipes allow tree roots and stormwater into the sewerage system, and allow untreated wastewater to soak into the soil. The property owner is responsible for maintaining pipes and downpipes to prevent:

- a) sewer blockages;
- b) sewerage escaping into the environment; and
- c) unhealthy environmental conditions.

2. If it is suspected that roots from a community-owned tree or shrub have contributed to a blockage and if the owner wishes that Council consider a contribution towards a clearance, Council's plumbing contractor must be called in. On weekdays between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Council must be notified on 1300 722 542. Outside these hours, the after-hours service must be contacted on 1800 429 041.

3. Council will arrange for its contract plumber to attend the site. The owner shall provide the plumber with unimpeded access to the affected property for the purpose of providing the service.

4. The owner will sign an Agreement to comply with Council's Sewerage/Stormwater Drain Blockage Policy on each occasion. Council staff and/or the plumbing contractor will not carry out work at the property unless this Agreement is signed. (Refer to page 5).

5. If Council's plumbing contractor deems a sewer diagram to be necessary, the property owner will bear the cost of the diagram. Where affected pipes do not appear on the sewer diagram, or where the drain has not been constructed in conformance with regulations (AS/NZS 3500:2003), Council has no obligation to carry out any works.

6. If the investigation by Council staff and/or the plumbing contractor demonstrates that the tree/shrubs is/are on Council property and Council has carried out less than two (2) clearances at that property in the same calendar year, Council will pay for the clearance.

7. If Council staff and/or the plumbing contractor are of the opinion that a privately owned tree or shrub has contributed to the blockage, the owner will pay the plumber for the work that has been carried out. If required, the owner may elect to engage and pay their own plumber to complete any unfinished works.

8. Council's plumbing contractor will attempt to clear any blockage but is under no obligation to dig up and/or replace any line, install inspection openings or carry out any work inside buildings or where no direct rodding access is available.
 9. Where Council's plumbing contractors are not available, and Council has carried out less than two (2) clearances at that property, Council will authorise the owner to engage a licensed plumber to carry out the work. Council will contribute to the cost of the clearance only.
 10. Where more than two (2) clearances are required per calendar year, the property owner is advised to consider upgrading their sewer system to PVC plastic with solvent joints. **It is highly recommended that owners upgrade their sewer systems, regardless of the frequency and type of blockages that occur.** Council is under no obligation to pay for sewer system upgrades including works to dig up and/or replace any line, install inspection openings or for work inside buildings or where no direct rodding access is available.
- d) When the owner is authorised by Council to engage a plumber and does not engage a licensed plumber.
 - e) When additional works that are not required for sewer clearances are carried out.
 - f) When works were carried out more than one year before the receipt of a claim.

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Payments, Reimbursements and Contributions

1. Council will contribute to the cost of a maximum of two (2) clearances per calendar year, per property or strata plan, where the blockage is caused by a community-owned tree.
2. Where Council's plumbing contractors are not available, and Council has carried out less than two (2) clearances at that property, Council will authorise the owner to arrange for a licensed plumber to carry out the work. Council will contribute to the cost of the clearance only.
3. **Reimbursements and contributions will not be considered:**
 - a) When Council's staff or plumbing contractor has attended the site but the owner has refused to sign the Agreement.
 - b) When Council's plumbing contractor is available and willing to attend a reported blockage and their services are refused by the owner.
 - c) For clearances that are not authorised by Council.



SR# Office Use Only: _____

AGREEMENT

I/We _____ (Property Owner)

or

I _____ (Name of Authorised Representative)

Representing _____ (Representative's Company)

of _____

(Address of Owner/ Representative)

have reported: (Brief description of blockage)

on ____/____/____ (date reported)

at _____

(Address of blockage or as above)

To be completed by Council's contract plumber.

Provide comments regarding the scope and nature of work.

TIME ON-SITE: _____ am/pm to _____ am/pm

Declaration

- (i) I/We have/have not received a copy of Randwick City Council's Sewerage/ Stormwater Drain Blockage Policy
- (ii) I/We understand and agree to abide by Randwick City Council's Sewerage/ Stormwater Drain Blockage Policy in accordance with the conditions set out therein.
- (iii) I/We agree that on completion of the works by Council's plumbing contractor plumber as specified in the Sewerage/Stormwater Drain Blockage Policy, the Council has no further responsibility or liability for the blockage event referenced above.
- (iv) I/We agree to the brief description of the blockage as detailed above and agree to time on-site.

Agreed by the Property Owner or authorised representative on the _____ day of _____(month and year).

Signature Property Owner or authorised representative:

Signature Council Officer or nominated plumber:

Date ____/____/____