

Media Release

7 August 2023

Multi-year smoke testing program commences on sewer network

Gladstone Regional Council is set to commence a multi-year smoke testing program of its sewer network covering nearly 700km of infrastructure across the region.

Smoke testing helps to identify faulty pipelines, infiltration, and inefficient manholes in the sewerage system.

Gladstone Region Councillor Chris Cameron said this method is both effective and cost efficient in detecting unauthorised water entering the sewerage network.

“Testing will be carried out via catchment areas with the program beginning in Tannum Sands from Tuesday 8 August before moving to the catchment of Gladstone Central, West Gladstone and South Gladstone next month,” Councillor Cameron said.

“Testing will be carried out over a five-year cycle, with ‘Year 1’ and ‘Year 2’ of the program expected to be completed by the end of February 2024.

“If defects are found within the infrastructure they will be marked for repair.”

Cr Cameron said testing will be carried out on approximately 687km of sewer network.

“This distance is the equivalent of driving from Gladstone to Byron Bay,” he said.

“Treating additional quantities of unknown water quality at our sewerage treatment plants can lead to potential damage to the receiving environment, warrants substantial fines from the Department of Environment and Science, can lead to reactive and costly maintenance, and also increases electricity consumption.

“By undertaking smoke testing we can achieve economic efficiencies while also detecting any issues that could cause lasting environmental impacts.”

Residents in affected catchment areas will be notified in advance via a letterbox drop. Smoke used to carry out the testing is non-toxic.

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