



Yarra Valley Water | *a fresh approach*

Using your pressure sewer system

An owner's manual





Using this manual

This manual is a guide to the operation and maintenance of the pressure sewer system installed on your property. The system is easy to use and we strongly recommend that you take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with how it works.

There are some basic things that you should know about your pressure sewer system. These include:

- how to care for your unit*
- what happens if the alarm sounds*
- what procedures need to be put in place before you go on holiday.*



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What do I need to know about pressure sewer systems?

Why install a pressure sewer system?

Pressure sewer systems are an economical and environmentally-friendly way of collecting, transporting and disposing of wastewater from households. They are often used in areas when the landscape is either very hilly or very flat, in areas which regularly flood or have high water tables, or where it is impractical to install other types of sewerage systems.

What is a pressure sewer system and how does it work?

A pressure sewer system is made up of a network of fully sealed pipes which are fed by pumping units located at each connected property.

The pumping unit processes the household wastewater and transfers it to the pressure sewer located in the street via a small pipeline within the property. The pressure sewer forms part of the overall pipe network which ultimately transfers the wastewater to

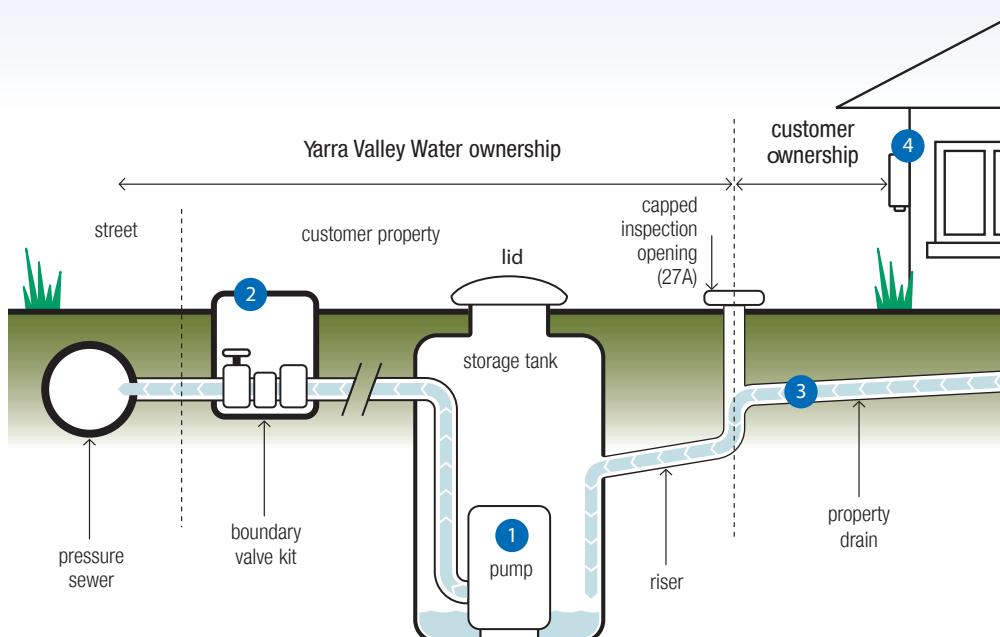
the nearest wastewater treatment facility – this could be within the surrounding area or many kilometers away.

Once installed, the only visible parts of the pressure sewer system are the tank lid and control panel (see above).

What components make up a pressure sewer system?

The pressure sewer system on your property is made up of four key elements, as shown in the diagram below.

Pressure sewer system components



1. Pumping unit

This includes a small pump, storage tank, and level monitors which are all installed underground so that only the top of the storage tank (or lid) is visible.

2. Boundary valve kit

Ensures that wastewater which is already in the pressure sewer cannot re-enter your property and enables maintenance staff to isolate you from the system in the event of an emergency.

3. House service line

This is a small diameter pipe (not dissimilar to a large sprinkler system pipe) which connects the pumping unit on your property to the pressure sewer in the street.

4. Control Panel

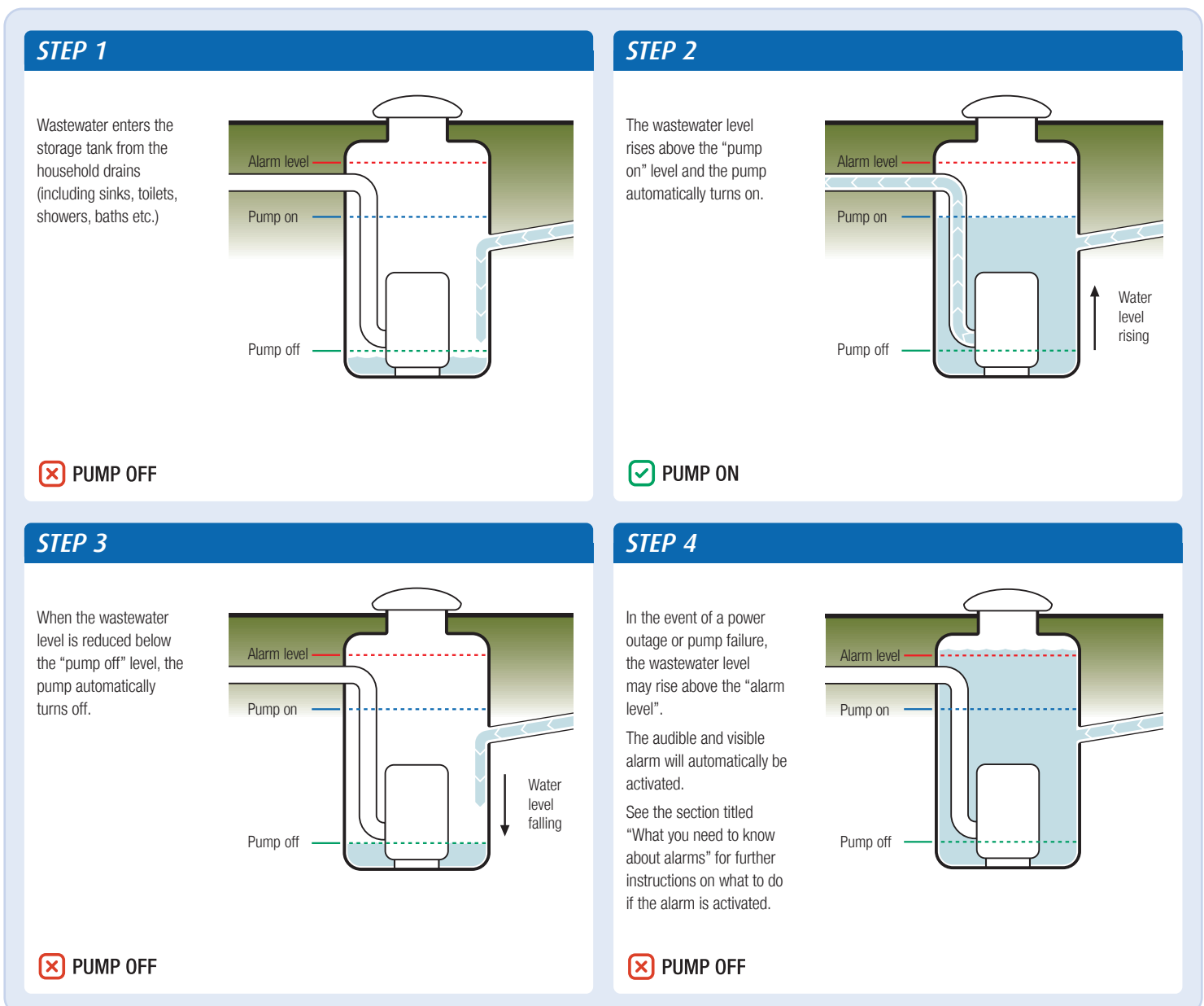
This is a small box which is mounted to the wall of your house containing all the electrical controls for the pumping unit including both the audible and visual alarm systems.



Pressure sewer systems are an economical and environmentally-friendly way of collecting, transporting and disposing of wastewater from households.

How do pressure sewer systems work?

The main component of the pressure sewer system is the pumping unit which is installed on your property. The pumping unit works in the following way:



- The storage tank lid and boundary valve kit must not be covered by any landscaping works. You must also ensure that sufficient space is left around each of these components to enable access should it be required.***

Important information

What items must NOT be flushed down your household drains?

It is very important that the following items are NOT flushed down any of your household drains (sinks, toilets, showers, baths etc.) and into the sewerage system, whether conventional or pressure system:

- glass
- metal or metal filings
- seafood shells
- goldfish stones
- nappies, socks, rags or clothes
- plastic objects
- sanitary napkins or tampons
- kitty litter
- explosives
- flammable materials
- lubricating oil and/or grease
- strong chemicals
- gasoline
- diesoline
- rainwater

If the pumping unit fails due to any of the above items entering the storage tank, the customer may be responsible for meeting the cost of any repairs.

If you are unsure about what items can go into the pressure sewer system, please call Yarra Valley Water on 13 2989.

Why can't rainwater go into the pressure sewer system?

Pressure sewer systems are only designed to accept household wastewater, not stormwater or rainwater. Rainwater must not be directed into the sewerage system for the following reasons:

- it will increase the costs of pumping for you; and
- it can lead to alarms being activated; and
- in extreme situations, the pumping unit may overflow.

If the alarm regularly activates during or after rainfall, you should contact Yarra Valley Water.

Why must I keep heavy weights off the lid?

The lid of the storage tank is not strong enough to withstand the weight of very heavy objects (greater than 500 kilograms). As a guide, the following items should be kept off the lid.

- Cars and other vehicles
- Ride-on lawn mowers.



To turn off the audible alarm, press the button on the underside of the control panel. The flashing light will only turn off if one of our representatives resets it, or the problem which has triggered the alarm is resolved.

What you need to know about alarms

Why is my alarm going off?

There are a number of reasons why your alarm may be activated. The following table provides you with a step-by-step guide to dealing with an alarm activation.

Symptom	Action	How to do it
Alarm sounds	Turn off the audible alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> press the button on the underside of the control panel to disable the audible alarm the audible alarm will automatically shut off after a period of time (regardless of whether the button on the underside of the control panel is pressed).
Flashing light	Report alarm activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the flashing light will only turn off if one of our representatives resets it, or the problem which has triggered the alarm is resolved.
Power outage	Wait one hour before reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the alarm activates following a power outage, please wait for one hour before contacting us the alarm may sound when the power is restored as the wastewater level in the storage tank may have built up to above the alarm level once power is restored, the pump will recommence pumping but may take up to an hour for the wastewater level in the tank to drop below the alarm level (this is due to a number of other pumps trying to empty their tanks at the same time) you should attempt to minimise wastewater generation during power outages to minimize the amount that the wastewater level in the storage tank rises.
Power outage for longer than eight hours	Minimise wastewater generation and advise us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take steps to minimise wastewater generation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not turning on clothes washers while the alarm is active. If washing is urgent, bucket water from the clothes washer onto the lawn as a short-term measure (do not do this if cleaning products are low phosphate) keep showers brief where a bath was filled, leave the plug in until after the alarm is cancelled or bucket out the water onto the lawn switch off any drainage (automated or not) from swimming pools or spas until after the power is restored advise us of extended power outages, particularly if it appears that the duration may exceed eight hours (excluding time when the residents are asleep) in the event of extended power outage events, we may need to organise for your storage tank to be pumped out.
If alarm sounds frequently and then turns off	Investigate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine if there is any sudden discharge (such as from a swimming pool) and see whether the alarm is in response to this if the alarm sounds during or after rainfall, rainwater may be entering the storage tank should the problem continue to occur, please contact us to investigate and repair as appropriate.
If your neighbour's alarm sounds	Contact us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if you suspect your neighbour is not home, please contact us to inspect the property the audible alarm will automatically shut off after a period of time.
Officer attends	Create clear access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure our officer has access to and from the pumping unit as transportation of a faulty pump may be required.



Please call 13 2762 to report any alarms.

What happens if I want to extend my house or landscape the garden?

House service line

The house service line is a polyethylene sewer pipe which connects the pumping unit on your property to the pressure sewer in the street. It is worth familiarising yourself with the exact location of the house service line so that it can be moved (if required) or avoided if work is being done on your property.

The house service line can be found using one of the following methods:

- detectable marker tape is buried just above the pipeline and can be located by your builder
- if your builder cannot detect the tape, contact us on 13 2989 and an officer will peg the line for you at a cost.

Extensions to your house

If you are extending your house, you must contact Yarra Valley Water to seek advice on the suitability of your existing pumping unit prior to the commencement of any construction activities.

Moving the pumping unit will be dependent on the layout of your land as all wastewater from your house must gravitate into it.

If we approve your application, the costs associated with moving the pumping unit and

house service line will be your responsibility (a quotation will be provided to you prior to works being carried out). Any changes to the original installation need to be clearly documented and submitted to us to ensure that in the event of an emergency, our maintenance staff can locate the key system components.

Bungalows or other dwellings on your property

It may be possible for your pumping unit to service both the main and additional dwellings on your property, depending on the layout of your land.

Please contact us for advice in relation to this matter.

Landscaping

Landscaping over the house service line is permitted, please bear in mind that if repairs are required, you will be responsible for the costs of any reinstatement works to repair any damage caused.

The storage tank lid and boundary valve kit must not be covered by any landscaping works. You must also ensure that sufficient space is left around each of these components to enable our maintenance staff to access them if required.

Garages, car parks, decking and garden sheds

Garages, car parks, decking and garden sheds should not be built over the pumping unit or house service line without our prior approval. It is likely that if you wish to construct any of these structures, we will recommend relocating the house service line if possible.

In no circumstances can any of these structures be built over the pumping unit or boundary valve kit.

Installing a swimming pool or large spa

Installing a swimming pool or large spa can result in large amounts of water being discharged quickly to the pumping unit during activities such as backwashing filters or emptying.

In some cases, the pumping unit may not be able to cope with this and the alarm may activate or the pumping unit may even overflow.

Please contact us for advice in relation to this matter.



If you are thinking about installing a swimming pool or spa, contact us and we will provide advice on how to avoid potential problems.



If you are extending your house, you must contact us to seek advice on the suitability of your existing pumping unit prior to any construction activities.

What special precautions do I need to take when going on holidays?

Going on holidays

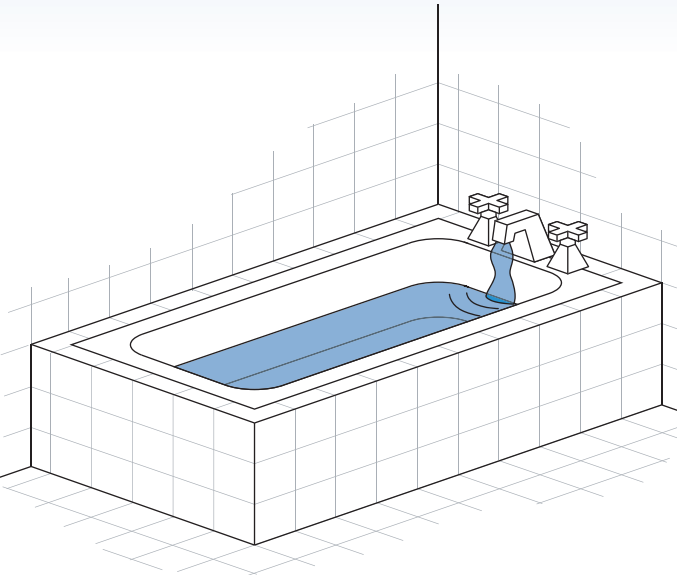
If you are going on holidays for more than three days, your pumping unit will need to be flushed out to prevent potential odour problems.

It is suggested that you complete the following activities before going away:

Flush the system

Run clean water into the pumping unit until the pump activates and runs for about 30 seconds. After that time, turn off the water and allow the pump to run until it shuts off automatically.

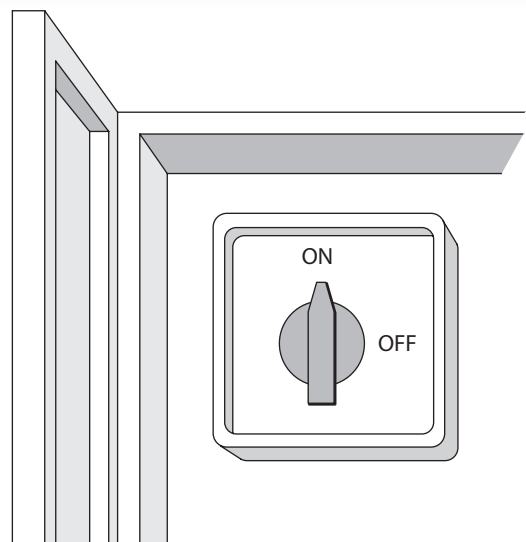
You can do this by filling up the bathtub and then emptying it.



Flush the system by filling the bathtub and then emptying it

Keep the power to the pumping unit turned on at all times

If there are any leaking taps or appliances within your household, there may be a small accumulation of wastewater in the storage tank. If the pumping unit is turned off, it could potentially overflow and there would be no audible or visible alarm to warn you or your neighbours of the problem.



Ensure the pumping unit is turned on at all times



If you fail to clean your system before going on holidays and we have to flush out your storage tank in response to complaints from residents in the area, you may be required to pay for the costs of this work.

Pumping unit repairs and warranties

What happens if my pumping unit needs to be repaired?

Pumping unit repairs are generally simple. In most cases, maintenance staff will be able to make immediate repairs to your pumping unit.

If the problem is more serious, your pumping unit may be replaced immediately and taken back to our workshop for repairs. Repairs and/or replacement of the pumping unit will normally be completed within an hour of our officer arriving at your property.

System part	Action	What will we do?
Pumping unit	Contact us	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• we will carry out repairs to all points of the pressure sewer system• owners will not incur any cost for repairs which result from the normal operation of the system• a replacement pump will be inserted into the storage tank if the existing pump requires significant repairs.
Sewer or pump repairs	Minimise wastewater production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• if repairs are required to the pressure sewer or the pumping unit, you should minimise wastewater production until repairs are completed.
Boundary valve kit repairs	Do not access them yourself. Contact us and wait for our officer to operate valves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• we will operate the valves in your boundary valve kit if required• under no circumstances should owners open or tamper with the valves inside the boundary valve kit.

Pumping unit servicing

The average pumping unit only requires servicing once every eight years.

Please report any pumping unit faults to us.

Pressure sewer bursts

If you notice wet ground or water escaping from your plumbing, it is possible that a burst may have occurred.

Such breaks are rare and are more likely to occur due to other work being carried out near the pipes.

If you become aware of such a fault, please contact us (on 13 2762) immediately.

Following this, try to minimise water usage until the problem is fixed.

Warranties and repair costs

Pumping unit warranty

Only our licensed representatives carry out repairs on the pumping unit.

Work by others that was not authorised by us in writing may void warranties and you may become liable for future costs.

Replacement

If pumping units require replacement, you will not be required to meet any of these costs.

The only exceptions to this rule are if you have:

- emptied substances into the pumping unit which are banned as shown earlier
- accessed the pumping unit. The storage tank lid must remain sealed at all times and warranties are exempt if you open it
- interfered with the house service line or boundary valve kit
- blocked off the vents to the storage tank by covering it over.

Conditions of connection

1. Preliminary

1.1 In these conditions:

you and your refer to the owner of the property connected, or to be connected, to our pressure sewer system.

we, us and our refer to Yarra Valley Water.

1.2 Either our customer charter for residential customers or our customer charter for business customers is incorporated with these conditions. Any of your obligations set out in our pressure sewer system manual are also incorporated with these conditions. If there is any inconsistency with either of them, these conditions prevail.

2. Power

We will arrange for the pumping unit to be connected to the power supply to your property. You must pay the cost of this connection to us. You must also pay for the power used by the pump.

3. Property drain

We will arrange for the installation or alteration of your property drain. You must pay the cost of that work.

4. Installation

We will arrange to install the pumping unit control panel, electrical cables, and the pipes on our side of the pumping unit, and will meet the cost of such work.

5. Maintenance

5.1 You must arrange to maintain your property drain and keep it in good working order. Any work on your property drain must be done by a licensed plumber. You must pay for such maintenance.

5.2 We will maintain the pumping unit, the control panel, electrical cables and all pipes on our side of the capped inspection opening (27A). We will arrange for and pay for such work.

5.3 You must notify us promptly on our Emergency and Faults telephone line (132 762) when you discover anything wrong with the pumping unit (including any power failure), the control panel, electrical cables, or the pipes on our side of the pumping unit.

6. Damage

6.1 If you, or someone else for whom we are not responsible, damages the pumping unit, the control panel, electrical cables, or pipes on our side of the pumping unit, we will arrange for repairs to be made. You must pay us the cost of any such repairs.

6.2 If we, or someone for whom we are responsible, damages your land or anything on it while carrying out work referred to in the above items, the legislation under which we operate requires us to compensate you for the damage.

7. Our contribution to your costs

7.1 Should connection to the pressure sewer system be made after the original system is installed, a remobilisation fee will apply. This fee represents the actual additional cost incurred by Yarra Valley Water as a result of having to perform a one-off installation.

8. Pools and spas

8.1 If you have a pool or spa which discharges water at more than 0.5 litres per second when it is emptied or the filter is backwashed (this should be specified in your pool or spa user manual), you must limit the flow to the pumping unit by installing either:

- (a) an intermediate holding tank
- (b) a duplex pump arrangement
- (c) flow limiting valve

The installation must be done by a licensed plumber.

8.2 You must meet the cost of purchasing, installing and maintaining the holding tank, flow limiting valve, or duplex pump unit including any work (installation or maintenance) performed by a licensed plumber.

9. Restricting water use

Whenever you discover anything wrong with the pumping unit (including any power failure) or your property drain, you must restrict as much as possible the amount of water that is sent down your property drains.

This will reduce the amount of wastewater generated from your property while the fault persists thereby helping avoid an overflow at the tank unit.

10. Pressure sewer system manual

10.1 You must ensure that a copy of the pressure sewer system manual is kept at the property at all times, even if the property is leased or rented.

10.2 You can obtain further copies of the pressure sewer system manual from our website at www.yvw.com.au.

11. Decommissioning old systems

When our pressure sewer system is installed, you must arrange for a licensed plumber to decommission your existing wastewater system, in accordance with EPA requirements for such work. You must pay for this work.

12. Selling your property

When we provide any information statements about your property (for example, to a potential purchaser) it will state that the property is in a pressure sewer area and that special conditions of connection apply to it.

13. Costs and charges

13.1 If you are in a backlog area, you must pay the relevant backlog sewerage connection contribution once a connection point to your property is provided. This contribution is payable in quarterly installments over five years.

13.2 If your property is in a backlog area and was provided with a sewerage connection point after 1 July 2008, you are eligible for a backlog sewerage connection contribution rebate provided you connect within 12 months.

13.3 If you are not in a backlog area, you must pay the full costs associated with supply and installation of the pumping unit as well as any required network extensions or augmentations.

13.4 You must also meet the sewerage service and usage charges which apply to all residential or business properties.

Further information

For more information contact Yarra Valley Water

Telephone: **13 2989**

Email: enquiry@yvw.com.au

Web: www.yvw.com.au

Emergencies and faults telephone: **13 1762**

Language assistance telephone: **13 1450**



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General Enquiries:

Tel: 13 1721 TIS: 13 1450 Email: enquiry@yvw.com.au Web: www.yvw.com.au

Yarra Valley Water Ltd, Lucknow Street, Mitcham Victoria 3132



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