



Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef Minister for Science and Youth Affairs

Our Ref: CTS 08601/21
Your Ref: A678822

1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000
GPO Box 5078 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7140
Email environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

17 May 2021

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 27 April 2021 enclosing Parliamentary Petition No. 3439-20 regarding the protection of public and environmental health in the Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

The Department of Environment and Science (the department) administers environmentally relevant activities (ERAs), which are activities with the potential to release emissions that impact on the environment and surrounding land uses. Sewage treatment systems that have a design capacity for 21 or more equivalent persons are defined as an ERA within the Environmental Protection Regulation 2019. Under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, an environmental authority (EA) is required when undertaking an ERA.

On-site sewage facilities treat domestic sewage in unsewered areas. Such facilities treat, store and dispose of sewage generated on the premises. Household on-site sewage facilities are predominantly less than a design capacity for 20 equivalent persons and therefore are not administered by the department.

When installing an on-site sewage treatment plant, homeowners require an approval from their local government. The treatment plant installation and operation must also comply with any local government laws, local planning instruments and the requirements of the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018* (PD Act). Local governments are responsible for administering local laws, local planning instruments and compliance with the PD Act.

It is the responsibility of each local government to determine the service area for a sewage service within its local government area. Under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* it is mandatory for local governments to declare the service areas for reticulated water and/or sewerage. These declared areas provide clarity about who can and cannot be connected to a local government's water and sewage infrastructure.

It is also the responsibility of local governments to manage local government public health risks, such as animals, structures, substances or other things that are likely to become a breeding ground or source of food for designated pests, such as mosquitos, in accordance with the *Public Health Act 2005*.

The matters raised by the petitioners appear to be primarily concerned with the actions and decisions being made by their local government, the Redland City Council. The petitioners may wish to raise their concerns with the Queensland Ombudsman, who has broad powers to investigate the decisions and actions of public agencies, including local councils. Further information about how to make a report to the Queensland Ombudsman is available at www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au.

I trust that this information has been of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Meaghan Scanlon', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Meaghan Scanlon MP

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef
Minister for Science and Youth Affairs