

River vessel waste disposal stations

General information and
operating instructions



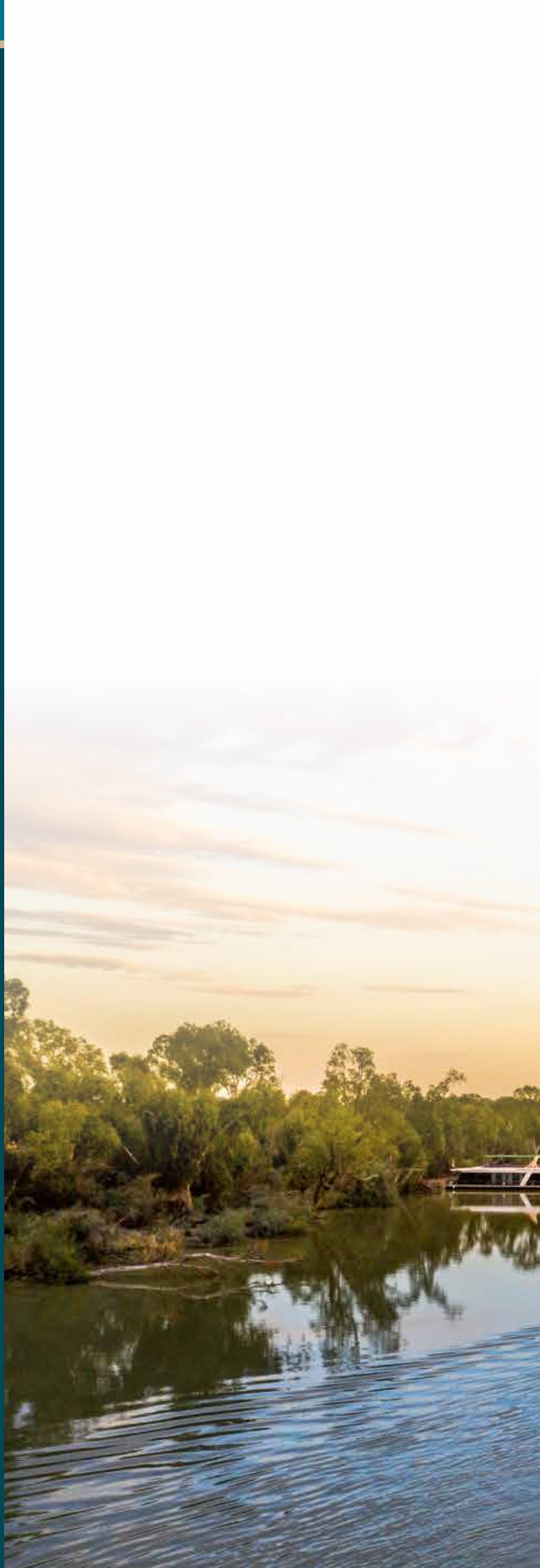
Government
of South Australia
Department for
Environment and Water

Contents

Background	1
Waste from river vessels	2
• Regulatory control	2
• Public river vessel waste disposal stations	2
• Vessel size limits	2
• Private river vessel waste disposal stations	3
Station locations	3
How to dock your vessel	5
Station configuration	6
Operating instructions	7
Portable toilets	9
Garbage	9
Station site maps	10
• Lock 6	10
• Renmark	10
• Berri	11
• Loxton	11
• Lock 3	12
• Waikerie	12
• Morgan	13
• Blanchetown	13
• Swan Reach	14
• Walker Flat	14
• Mannum	15
• Murray Bridge	15
• Goolwa	16
Legislation	17
Inspections and enforcement	17

Published January 2025.

All information is current at time of publishing.
For the most up-to-date information, please visit
www.environment.sa.gov.au/waste-disposal-stations



Background

South Australia is the driest state in Australia, with 96% of the state receiving less than 500 mm of rainfall per year. This makes the River Murray extremely important to the health of South Australia, particularly as it is the main source of essential water for irrigation, industry, domestic and recreational use, as well as for our precious wetlands and floodplains.

River vessels, such as houseboats or river boats, are a wonderful way of experiencing all the River Murray has to offer. However, with many public and private water supply intakes located along the River Murray, waste produced by these vessels poses a risk to river health and local water supplies, and can even result in the spread of infectious diseases.

These dangers can be avoided by properly disposing of houseboat wastewater at any of the river vessel waste disposal stations located along the River Murray.

Much work is being done to protect the river's health and support river communities, and the river vessel waste disposal scheme plays an important role in reducing pollution entering the river.

The Government of South Australia is authorised to control pollution of the River Murray through the *Environment Protection Act 1993* and manages the public river vessel waste disposal stations in line with this authority.



Waste from river vessels

People using or living on river vessels produce 3 types of waste.



Toilet waste

'Blackwater'



Wastewater

'Greywater'

Generated by washing, laundering, bathing or showering, and includes water containing food or beverage waste.



General waste

Garbage, food or galley waste.

With many public and private water supply intakes located along the river, toilet waste is a particular concern. If an onboard toilet is flushed into the river near one of these intakes, it can result in harmful microorganisms entering the water supply, potentially causing illnesses such as gastroenteritis, giardiasis, cryptosporidiosis, viral infections and infections of the skin and eyes.

How vessel waste is controlled

The risks associated with discharging human wastewater into the river can be overcome by treating the waste before discharge, or by retaining the waste onboard for later discharge at onshore treatment and disposal facilities.

Garbage can easily be retained onboard in bins or bags for later disposal.

Regulatory control

Regulatory control of vessel wastewater in South Australia is managed through the *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2015*, specifically the *Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Code of Practice for Vessel and Facility Management (Marine and Inland Waters)*. This policy is authorised under the *Environment Protection Act 1993*.

Further information regarding legislation can be found on page 17.

Public river vessel waste disposal stations

The Government of South Australia has provided 13 public river vessel waste disposal stations at regular intervals along the River Murray in South Australia. These stations are generally located approximately 50 km apart, spanning 650 km between Lock 6 (downstream of the New South Wales border) and Goolwa.

River vessel operators can dispose of their waste at these public stations free of charge. No license or fee is required to use the river vessel waste disposal stations, as building and maintenance costs are covered by the Government of South Australia.

The locations of all public and private stations are shown on page 4.



Vessel size limits



< 20 m

The public river vessel waste disposal stations are designed to cater for vessels up to 20 metres in length, with weight allowances varying between individual stations as below:



< 20 t

Vessels not exceeding 20 tonnes

- Blanchetown
- Lock 6



< 30 t

Vessels not exceeding 30 tonnes

- Mannum
- Morgan
- Murray Bridge
- Goolwa
- Walker Flat



< 50 t

Vessels not exceeding 50 tonnes

- Renmark



< 80 t

Vessels not exceeding 80 tonnes

- Berri
- Loxton
- Waikerie
- Swan Reach

Operators of vessels that exceed these limits are required to contact the local service contractor to make arrangements before attending any of the government stations to discharge their waste. The local service contractor can be contacted on 1800 799 065.

Lock 3 currently has disposal arrangements that vary from the other stations. Please refer to next page for more information.

Private river vessel waste disposal stations

A number of privately owned river vessel waste disposal stations are available to pump waste into onshore holding tanks or treatment systems. The locations and contact details are shown below.

Goolwa

Coorong Quays Hindmarsh Island

Phone: (08) 8555 7300

Murray Bridge

Riverglen Marina

Phone: 0435 801 235

Access to private stations are by negotiation and may incur a fee. Pumping contractors with desludging trucks can also provide a pump-out service for a fee.

Contact the local council for more information.

River vessel waste disposal station locations

Lock 3 river vessel waste disposal station - current arrangements

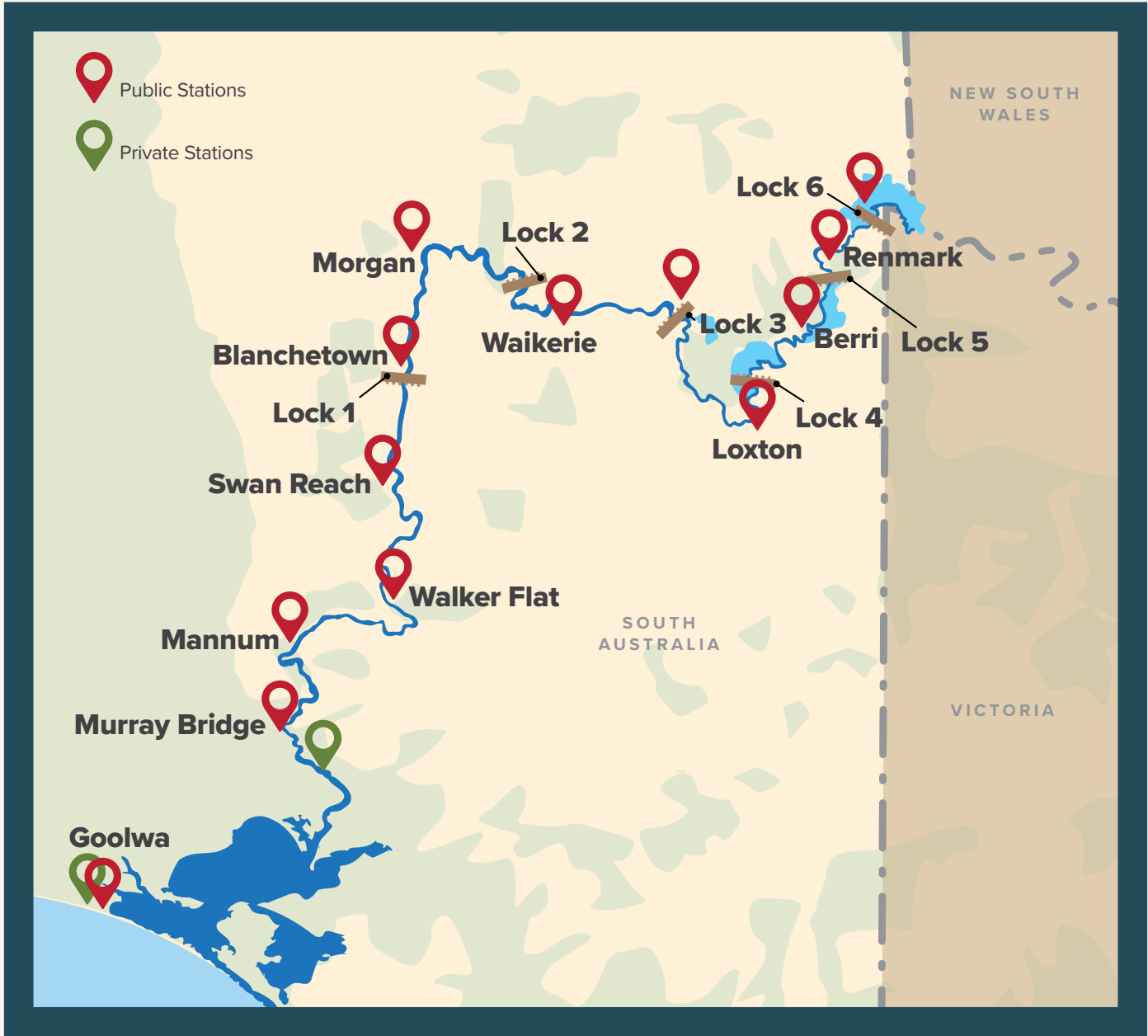
Please note: the station located at Lock 3 is not accessible for wastewater disposal, however, general boat waste (garbage, food or galley waste) can still be disposed of at the facility.

A wastewater pump-out service truck can also be arranged free of charge, by contacting Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners. This service can be scheduled in advance, with 2 to 3 days' notice preferred. Alternatively, the nearest river vessel waste disposal station is located in Waikerie.

Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners

Monday to Saturday, 8am – 5pm (excluding public holidays)
Phone: (08) 8102 0998 or 0412 839 392
riverlandtankanddraincleaners.com.au

Public Stations	Distance from river mouth (km)	Distance between stations
Lock 6	617	
Renmark	566	51
Berri	524	42
Loxton	487	37
Lock 3	432	55
Waikerie	382	50
Morgan	319	63
Blanchetown	275	44
Swan Reach	246	29
Walker Flat	209	37
Mannum	150	59
Murray Bridge	112	38
Goolwa	12	100



How to dock your vessel

There are 3 main factors that can affect the way you dock at a disposal station, they include:



Current



Wind



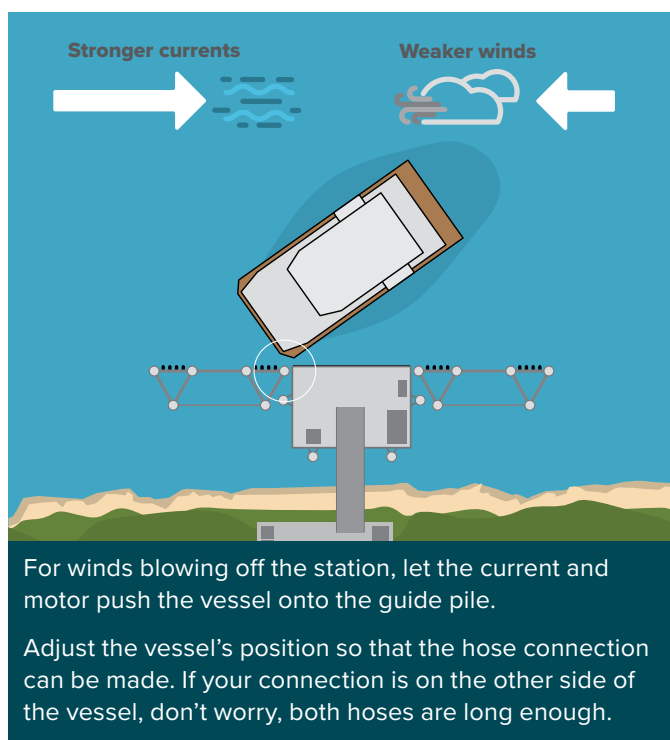
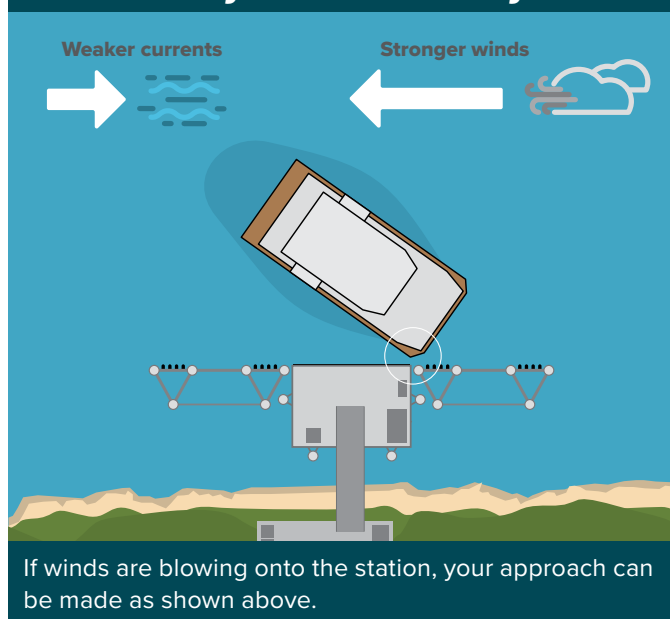
Eddy current

Follow these steps to dock safely and correctly:

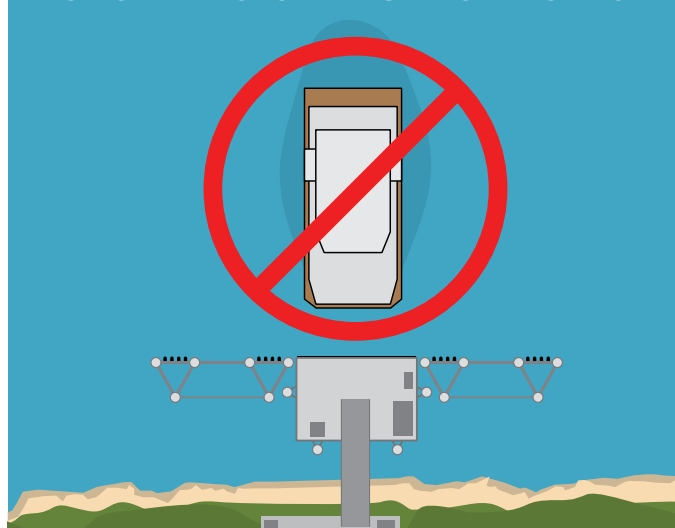
- 1 Do not approach the station front on.**
Before approaching a station, stop in the middle of the river with the motor in neutral and see which way you drift.
- 2 Start your approach to the station.**
- 3 When you are approximately 100 m from the guide pile, slow down** so that you are making little headway, and check the combined effects of wind and current on your vessel.
- 4 Edge your vessel sideways to the station** and gently touch the front corner of the vessel to the forward pile or pile structure and tie-up.
- 5 Allow the vessel to drift back side-on or pull it back with the motor and tie-up.**
- 6 Secure your vessel, fore (front) and aft (rear).**

Tip: Determine if the wind or the current is stronger. Docking will be easier if you are driving into the stronger of the 2.

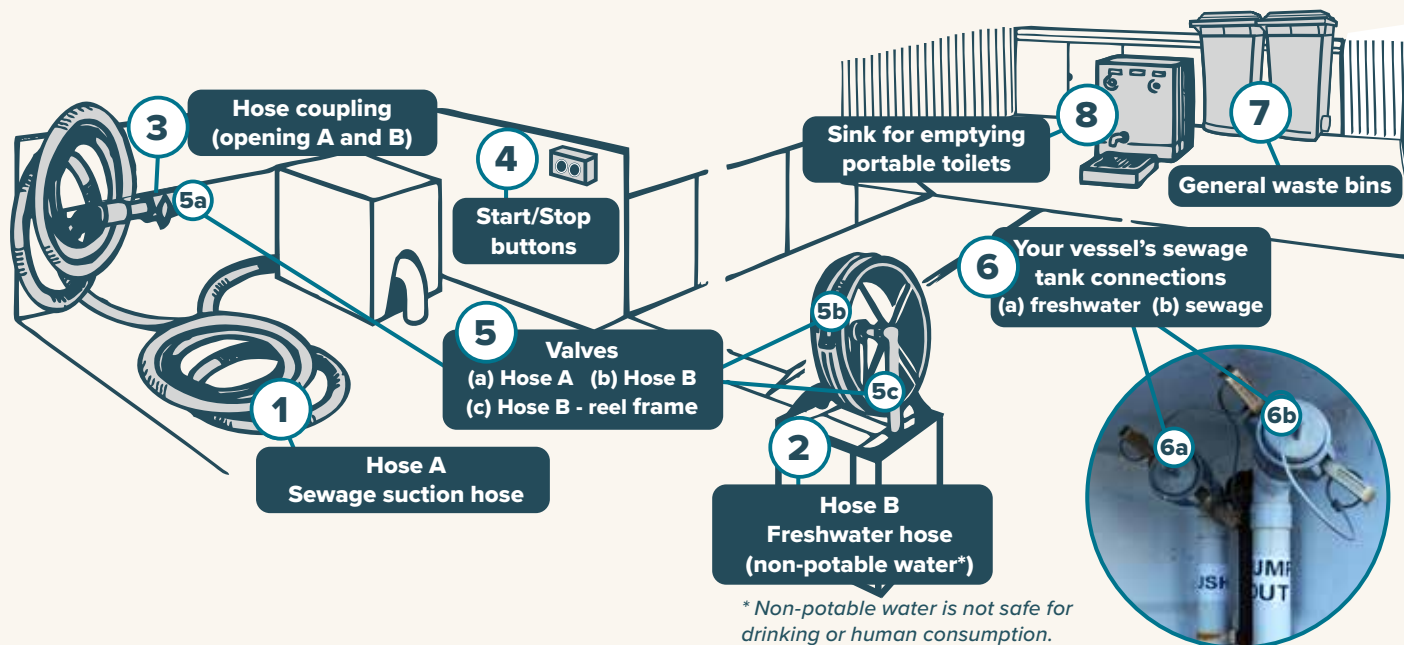
Correct ways to dock safely



DO NOT APPROACH THE STATION FRONT-ON



River vessel waste disposal station configuration



Once you have docked the houseboat safely, there are several items in the pontoon that you will need to use to dispose of waste. These items are shown on the illustration above and listed below:

- 1** Hose A - sewage suction hose
- 2** Hose B - freshwater hose (non-potable)
- 3** Hose coupling with 'Opening A' and 'Opening B'
- 4** Start (green) and Stop (red) buttons
- 5** Three valves:
 - a. Fixed on the end of Hose A
 - b. Located on the reel frame of Hose B
 - c. Fixed on the end of Hose B
- 6** Your vessel's sewage tank connections:
 - a. Freshwater connection (non-potable)
 - b. Sewage connection

On the land-based section of the waste disposal station (at the top of the ramp) you will find:

- 7** bins labelled for recycling and rubbish
- 8** sink for emptying portable toilets.

The use of plastic garbage bags will greatly assist in keeping the station clean when disposing of rubbish.

The stations have been designed for easy operation, reliability and convenience, and are regularly maintained. Operating instructions can be found on the next page, at each station and at environment.sa.gov.au/waste-disposal-stations

River vessels that do not exceed the station size limits (page 3) are permitted to pump-out blackwater and greywater. For most stations, a 500 litre tank takes approximately 6 minutes to empty.

River vessel waste disposal station pipes and pumps have been adequately sized for domestic wastewater but large objects could cause a blockage in the boat or station piping. Therefore, it is important that **no foreign objects are disposed of in the toilet system, particularly sanitary napkins, wet wipes, tampons or nappies.**

If you run into any problems or require further assistance, please make note of which station you are located at then call the **Waste Disposal Service hotline on 1800 799 065** and follow the prompts.

Please note: during periods of high or low river levels, some stations may become inoperable, however, vessel owners/operators should remember that the conditions of the *EPA Code of Practice for Vessel and Facility Management (marine and inland waters)*, regarding the disposal of wastes still apply.

For more information or to watch the step-by-step animation video visit:
environment.sa.gov.au/waste-disposal-stations

Operating instructions

Improper use or breakages may incur fines, so please follow the operating instructions carefully. These instructions are also available at each station and online at environment.sa.gov.au/waste-disposal-stations

Step 1

Clearing the sewage suction hose

To ensure the sewage suction hose (Hose A) is clear of blockages, you will need to flush it with clean water.

- ① Fully unroll Hose A neatly onto the pontoon.
- ② Connect Hose A to the Opening A coupling that is mounted on the railing.
- ③ Pull Hose B out of its reel and connect it to the other end of the coupling (Opening B).
- ④ Open the valve located on the end of Hose A.
- ⑤ Open the valve on the end of Hose B.
- ⑥ Open the valve on the reel frame of Hose B. Water will now start to flow into the hoses.

Now that all valves are open, move to the 'start/stop' button and press the **green start button** to start the suction pump (there may be a 10 to 30 second delay before the pump starts).

- ⑦ Once the pump has started, let it run for at least one minute.
- ⑧ After one minute, stop the pump by pressing the **red stop button**.
- ⑨ You can now close-off the 3 valves in this order:
 - First - the valve located on the Hose B reel
 - Second - the valve at the end of Hose B
 - Third - the valve on the end of Hose A.
- ⑩ Disconnect Hose B from the coupling and reel back in, so it is safely out of the way.
- ⑪ Disconnect Hose A from the coupling and place it on the pontoon ready for the next step.



Step 2

Removing sewage from your vessel

Once you have completed Step 1, you can move on to removing the sewage from your vessel.

- ① Make sure Hose A is fully unrolled.
- ② Locate your vessel's sewage tank connection and proceed to connect Hose A to your sewage connection, and Hose B to your freshwater tank connection.
- ③ Once secured tightly, open the valve on the end of Hose A. Now, you are ready to start the sewage removal.
- ④ Move to the 'start/stop' button and press the **green start button** to start the suction pump.
 - There may be a short 10 to 30 second delay before the pump starts.
 - You will notice a clear window section on Hose A - once the pump is operating, the waste will be visible through this window. It may take up to a minute before a steady flow of waste is visible.
 - The pump will automatically stop after 10 minutes.
 - **Important: make sure you actively monitor Hose A at all times while the pump is operating.**
- ⑤ Once you can't see any more waste flowing through the clear window section of Hose A, the water is running clear and it stops bubbling, open the valve at the end of Hose B and then open the valve on the side reel frame of Hose B (the clean water will help remove the solids that might have been left at the bottom of the tank).
- ⑥ As soon as you don't see any more waste flowing, the water is running clear and the pump stops press the **red stop button**. If waste was still visible through the clear window section when the pumping stopped, more pumping is required.
 - **Important: continuing to pump your vessel's tank after it is empty will cause damage**
- ⑦ You can press the **green start button** again to restart the pumping process if required. Continue to actively monitor Hose A and stop pumping when no more flowing waste is visible through the clear window section.
- ⑧ Once you have completed pumping, shut-off the pump by pressing the **red stop button** and then close both valves.
- ⑨ Disconnect both hoses and neatly place them back on their respective stands, on the pontoon.



Step 3

Re-flushing the sewage suction hose

You will now flush the sewage hose again by repeating the process used in Step 1 to clear any possible blockages.



Once you're finished, give your hands a good wash. It is important that you take extreme care and wash your hands thoroughly when coming in contact with wastewater.



Portable toilets

You can empty portable toilet waste in the floor sink on the land-based section of the waste disposal station (at the top of the ramp). Please do not flush sanitary items, wet wipes, paper towels or any garbage. Only flush toilet paper.



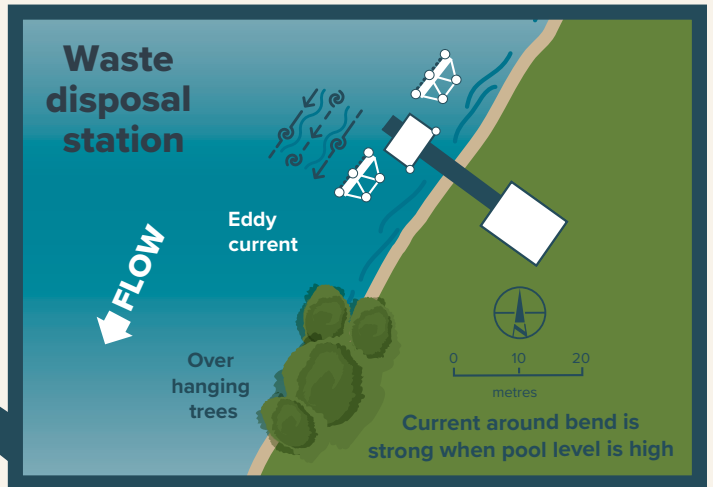
Garbage

Please dispose of garbage in the recycling and rubbish bins on the land-based section of the waste disposal station (at the top of the ramp).

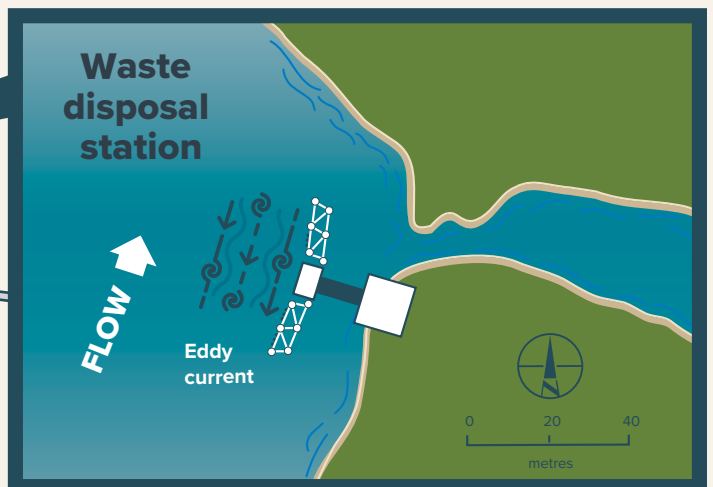
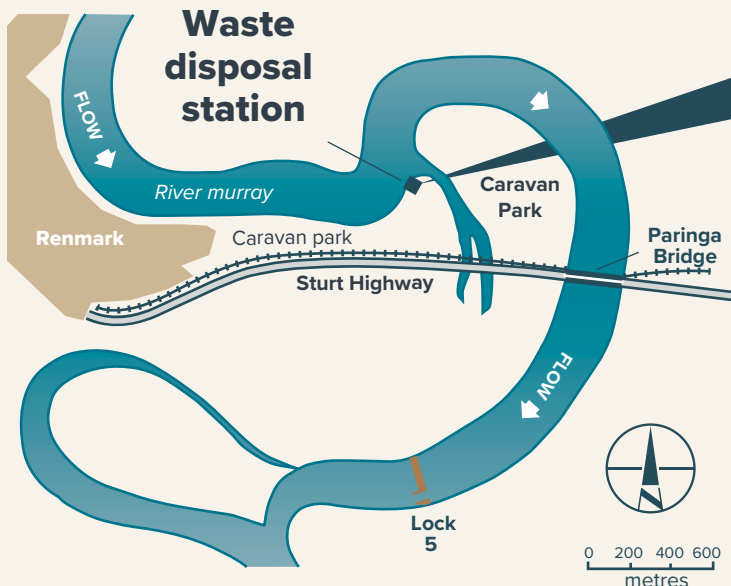


River vessel waste disposal station site maps

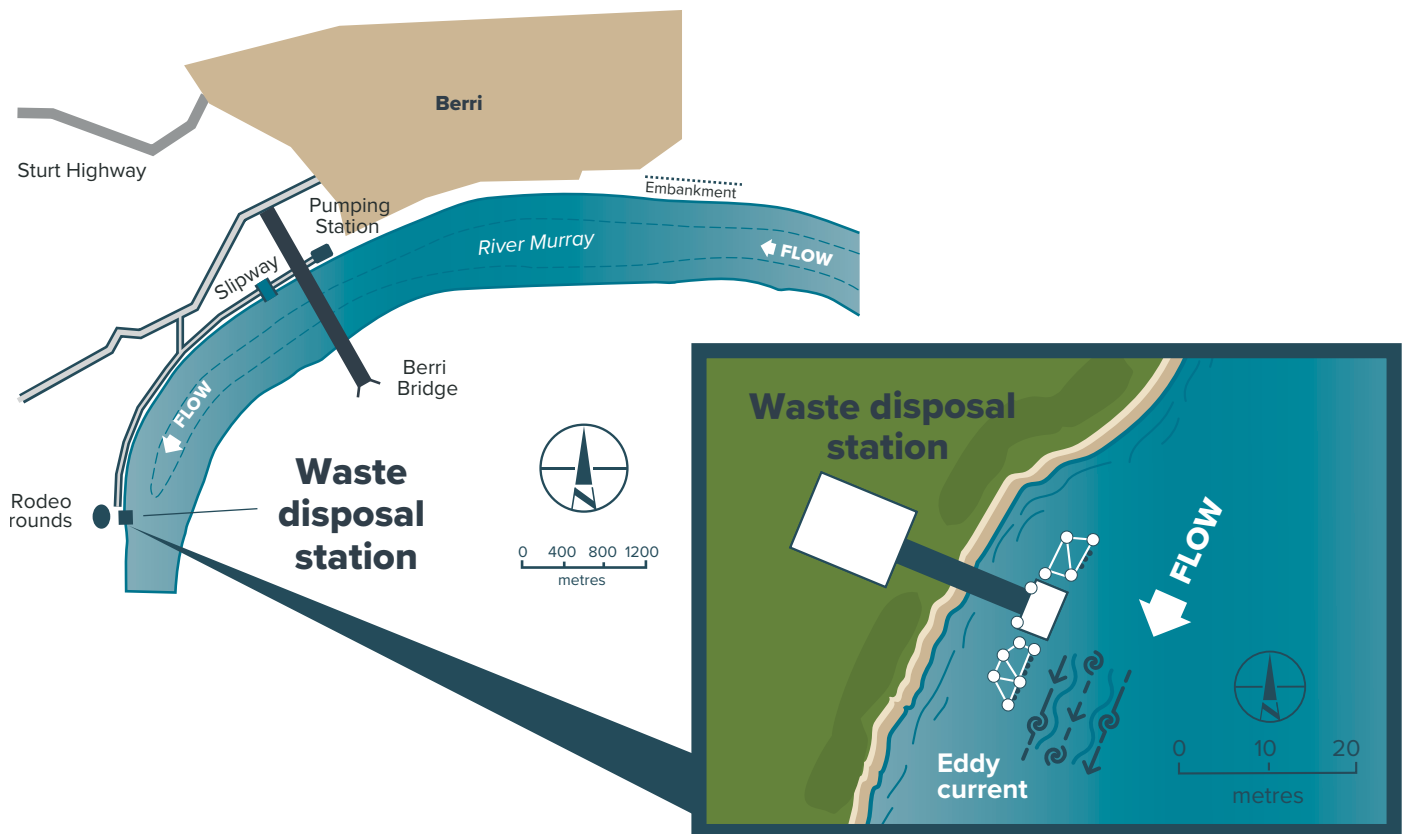
Lock 6



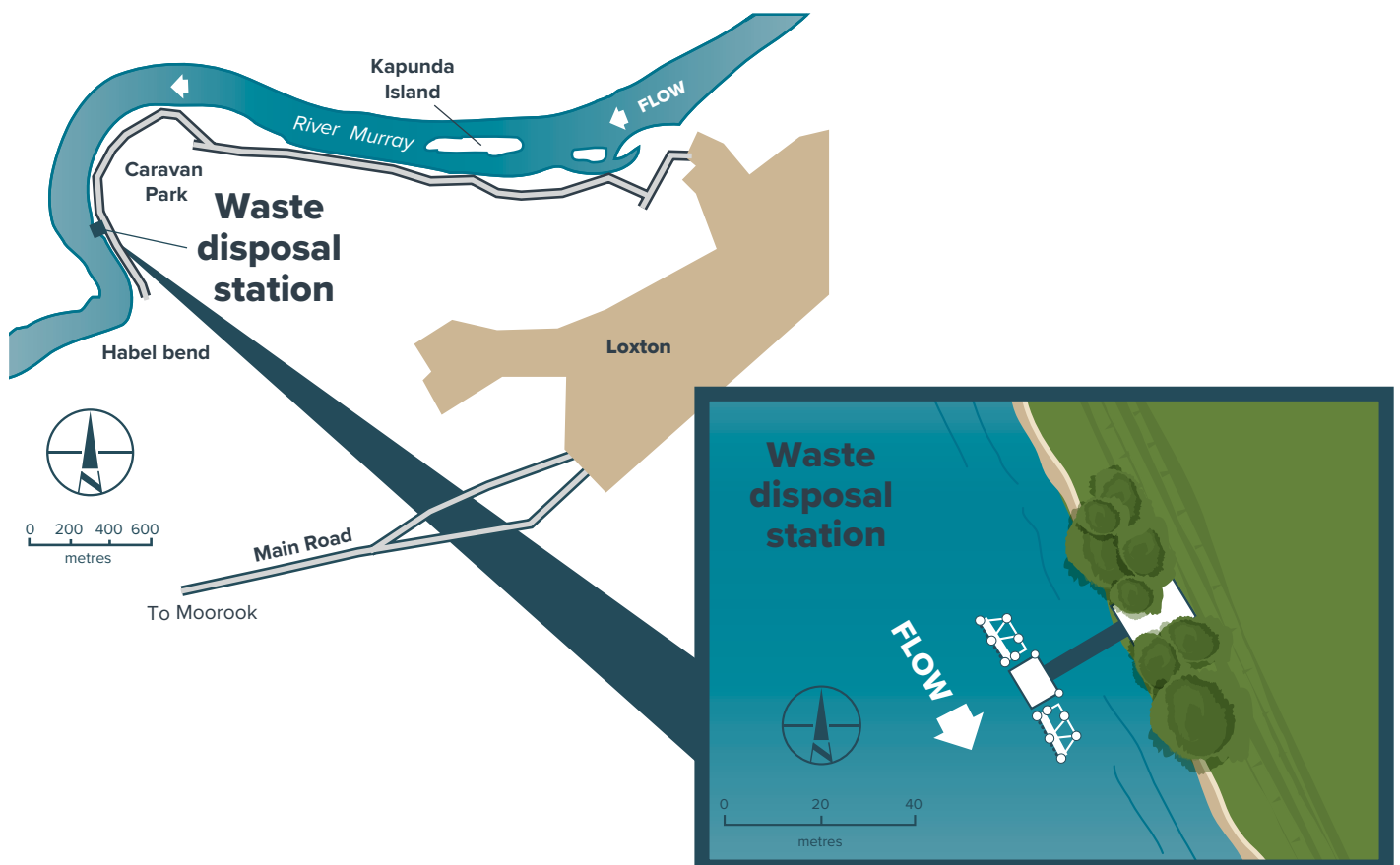
Renmark



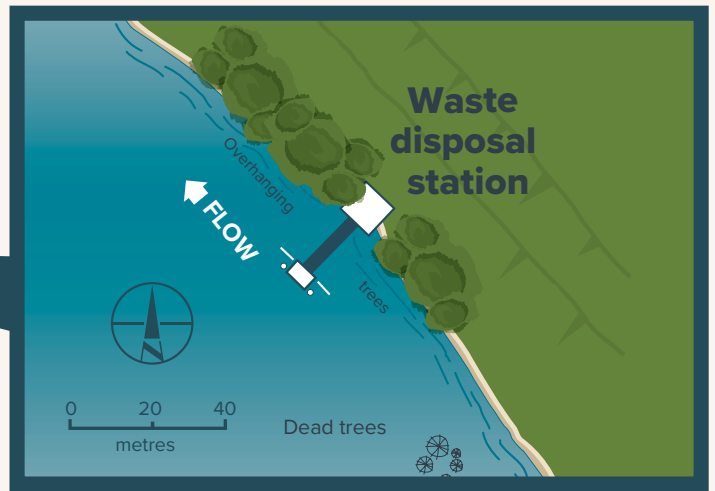
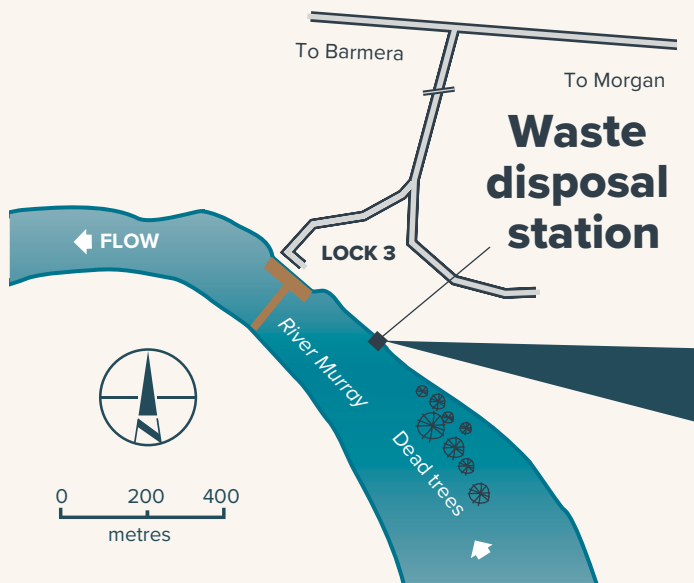
Berri



Loxton



Lock 3



Please note: the station located at Lock 3 is not accessible for wastewater disposal, however, general boat waste (garbage, food or galley waste) can still be disposed of at the facility.

A wastewater pump-out service truck can also be arranged free of charge, by contacting Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners. This service can be scheduled in advance, with 2 to 3 days' notice preferred. Alternatively, the nearest river vessel waste disposal station is located in Waikerie.

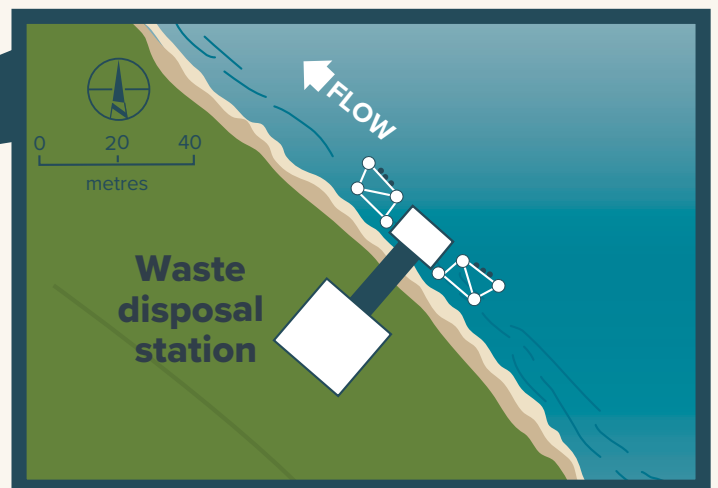
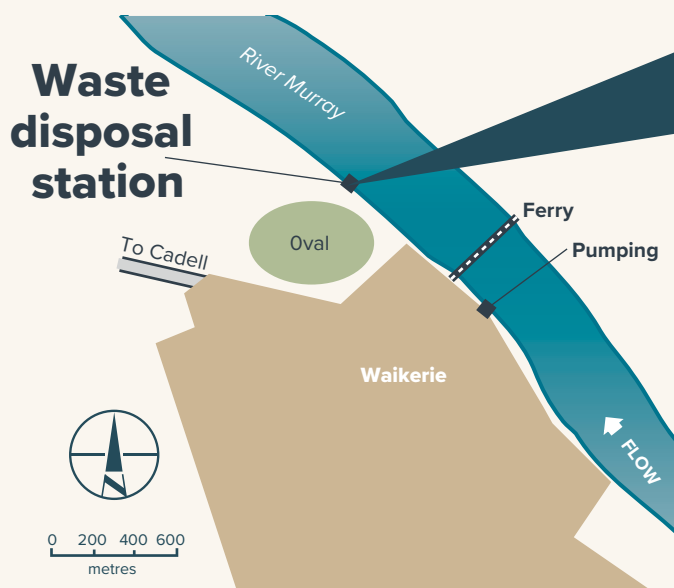
Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners

Monday to Saturday, 8am – 5pm
(excluding public holidays)

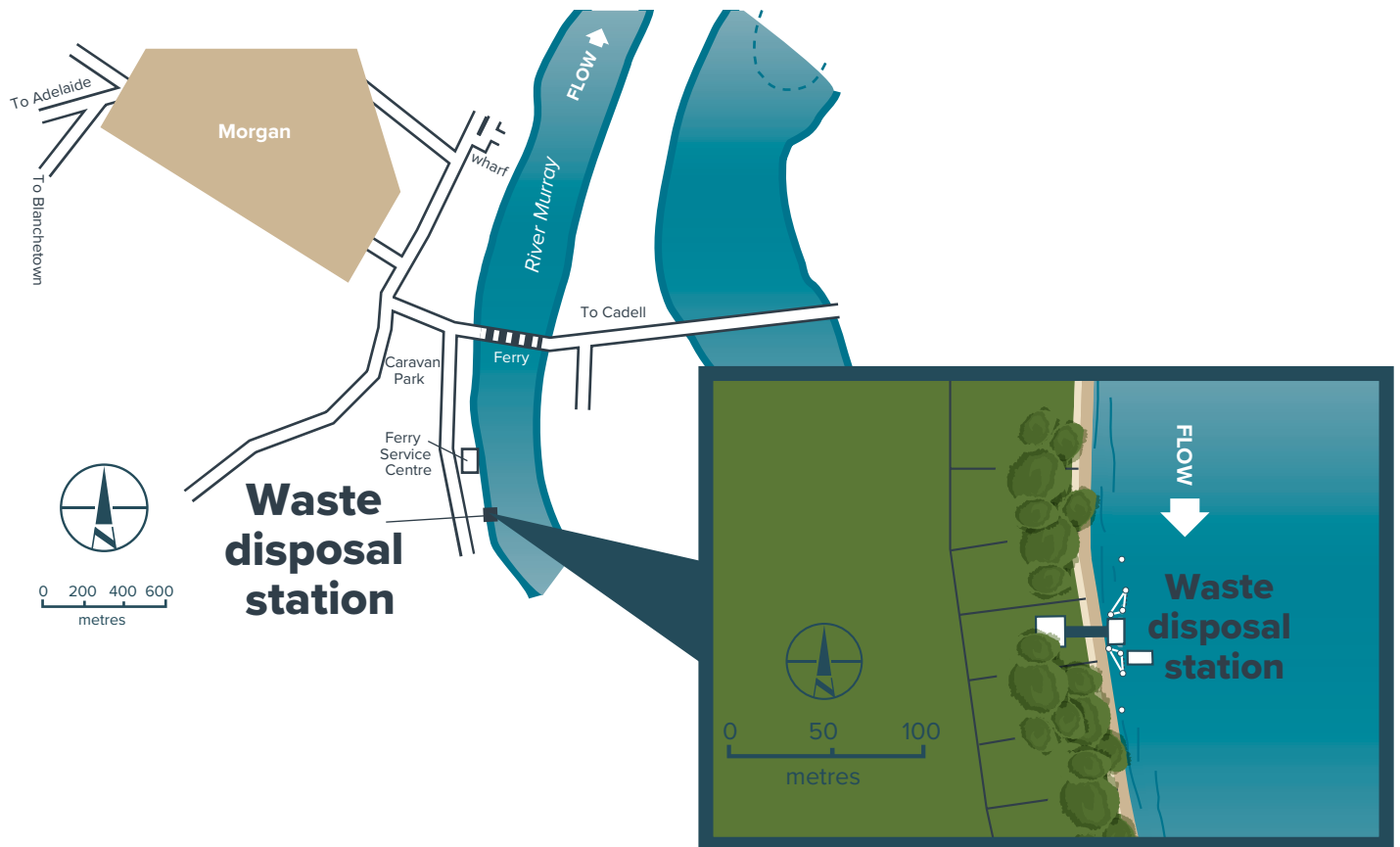
Phone: (08) 8102 0998 or 0412 839 392

riverlandtankanddraincleaners.com.au

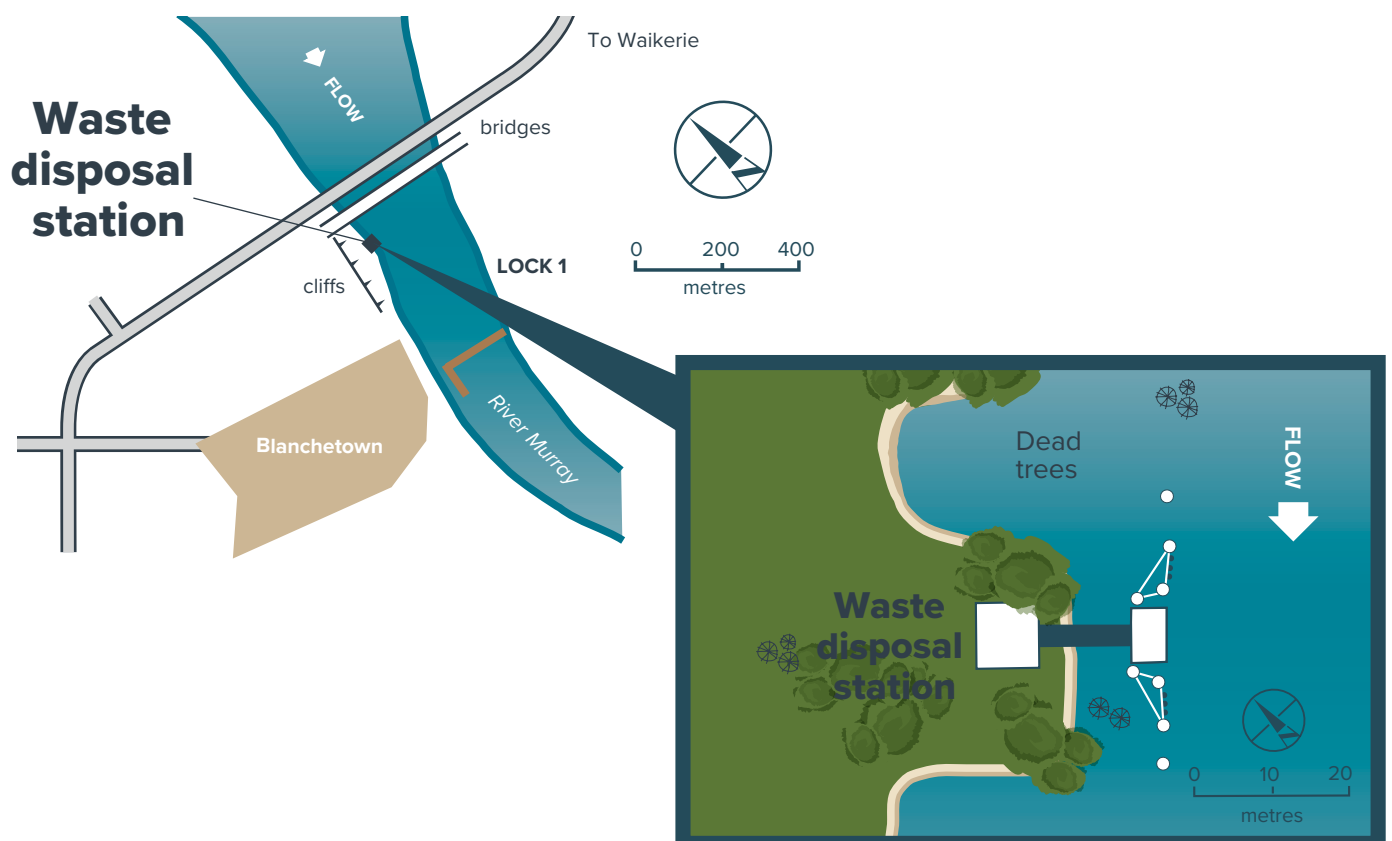
Waikerie



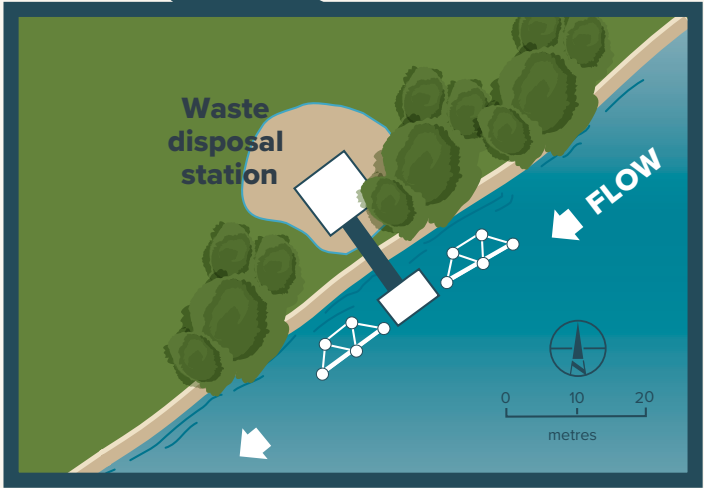
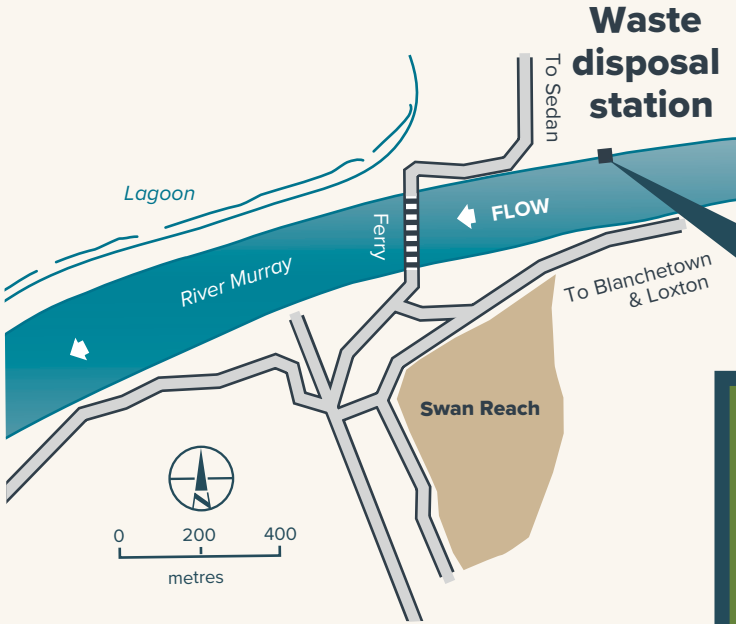
Morgan



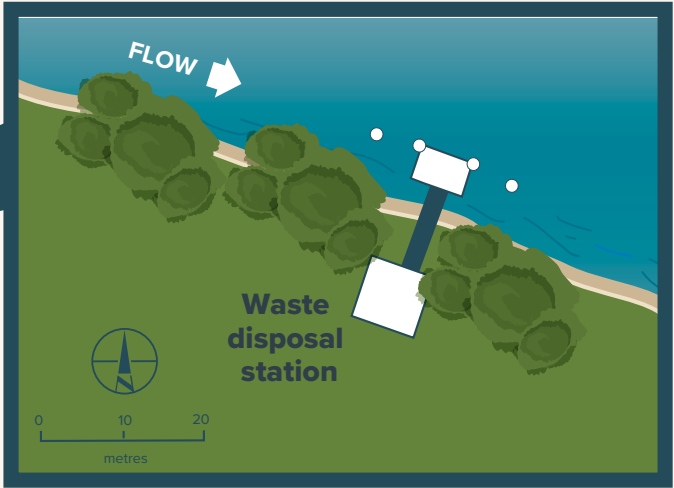
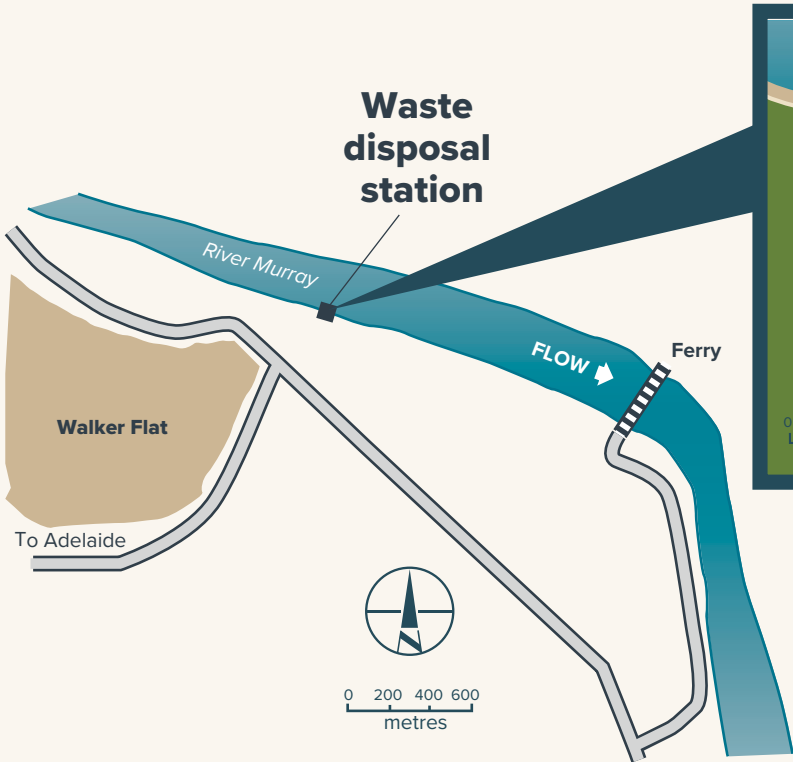
Blanchetown



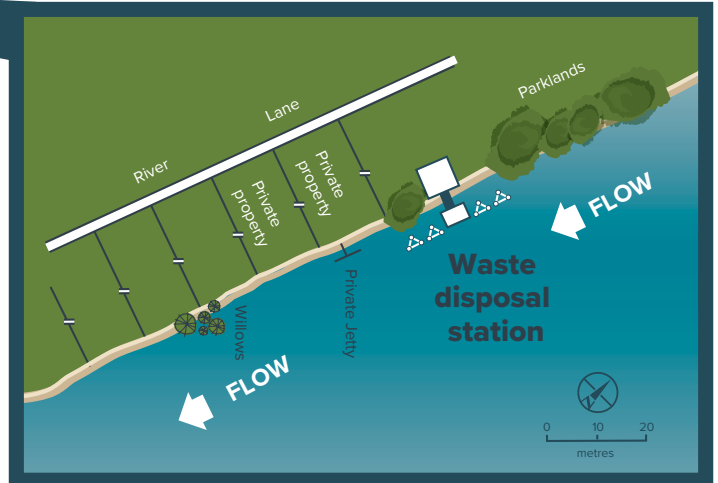
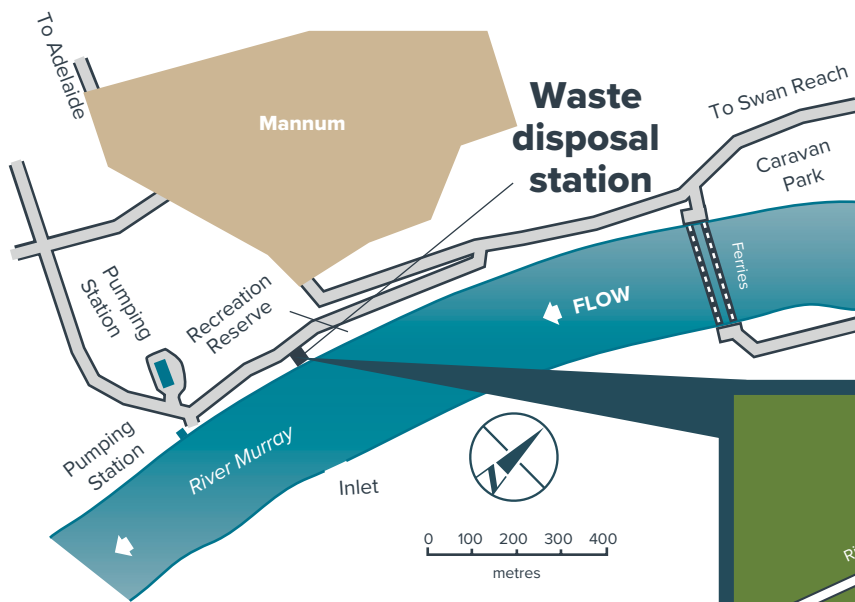
Swan Reach



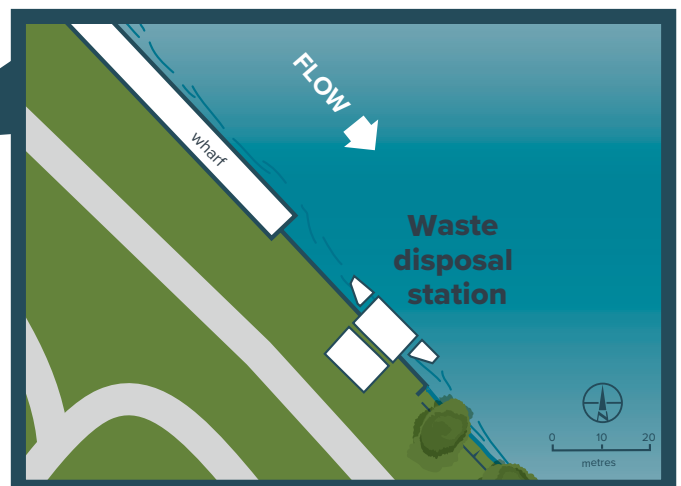
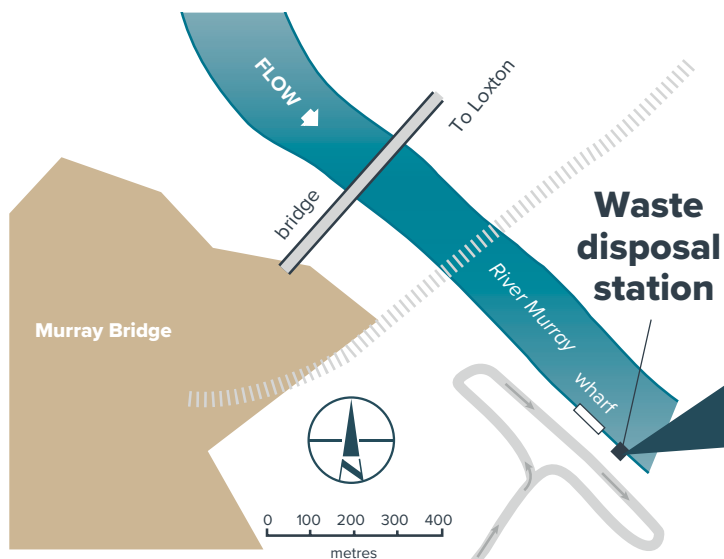
Walker Flat



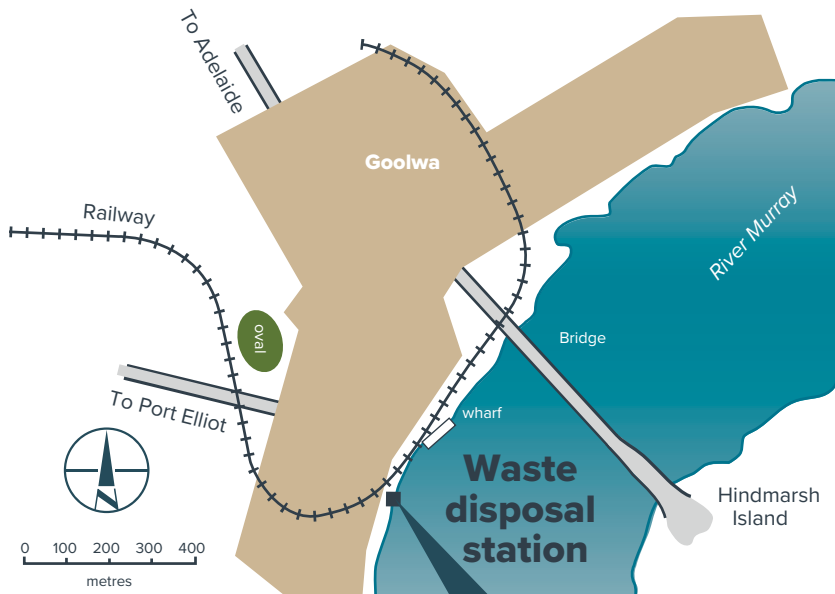
Mannum



Murray Bridge



Goolwa



Legislation

The *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2015*, authorised under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* regulates waste disposal from river vessels on all inland state waters.

Useful links

www.legislation.sa.gov.au

- *Environment Protection Act 1993*

- *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2015*

www.epa.sa.gov.au

- *EPA Code of practice for vessel and facility management (marine and inland waters)*

Inspections and enforcement

There are no legal requirements for approval or inspection of wastewater management systems for privately owned vessels. However, privately owned and commercial vessels are required to adhere to EPA regulations.

Vessels will be subject to inspection regimes for compliance with wastewater management requirements, and may be subject to enforcement where compliance is not met. Vessel operators who are experiencing difficulties in achieving compliance should contact the EPA on (08) 8204 2004 or 1800 623 445 (non-metropolitan callers) as soon as possible, outlining the circumstances that will result in the non-compliance.

Mandatory provisions of the *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2015* may be enforced on vessel owners and operators in the following ways:

- Environment Protection Order (EPO) to gain compliance with the policy
- expiation notice (on-the-spot fine) of \$300 for a breach of a mandatory provision
- EPO as well as an on-the-spot fine for a breach of a mandatory provision
- on-the-spot fine for failing to comply with an EPO
- prosecution through the court (max penalty \$30,000).

Officers from the EPA, local councils and other government authorities are authorised to enforce the *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2015*.

More information and assistance:



If you are at a waste disposal station and need further assistance, please note the name of the station and **phone our hotline on 1800 799 065**.



For more information or to watch the 'River vessel waste disposal stations' step-by-step animation, visit environment.sa.gov.au/waste-disposal-stations



With the exception of the Piping Shrike emblem, other material or devices protected by Aboriginal rights or a trademark, and subject to review by the Government of South Australia at all times, the content of this document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence. All other rights are reserved.

More information

Further information, technical advice and assistance regarding the river vessel waste disposal scheme is available online at environment.sa.gov.au or by contacting the Department for Environment and Water at DEW.rmio@sa.gov.au or sa.gov.au

© Department for Environment and Water

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission obtained from the Department for Environment and Water. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001.

Disclaimer

This document is correct at the time of publication.

The Department for Environment and Water, its employees and servants do not warrant or make any representation regarding the use, or results of use of the information contained herein as to its future correctness or accuracy. The Department for Environment and Water, its employees and servants expressly disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person using the information or advice contained herein.

© Crown in right of the State of South Australia | 2025 | FIS 1028406