

# Drainage Sump Issue – FAQ's



## 1 What has happened to the vegetation in and around some drainage sumps in the City of Stirling?

The City of Stirling employed an experienced and licensed contractor in May 2006 to undertake weed spraying around 138 of its drainage sumps.

The combination of the herbicide and the lowest winter rainfall on record resulted in the decline or loss of approximately 400 trees and shrubs some of which were on 49 privately owned properties adjoining these drainage sumps.

The City of Stirling deeply regrets that this has occurred and staff are personally saddened by the loss of vegetation.

## 2 What has the City of Stirling done to rectify the problem so far?

The City of Stirling and its contractor have contacted the 49 affected residents and many have accepted the City's proposal to remove and replace declining or lost trees and shrubs. Those who have done so have been satisfied with the work carried out.

The City will continue its remediation and reinstatement works according to the affected residents' wishes.

In addition the City of Stirling has introduced strict new measures and controls relating to weed control and this will significantly minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

The drainage sumps will be rehabilitated with suitable plantings commencing in the winter of 2008.

## 3 Who is paying for all of this?

The City of Stirling has negotiated an agreement with the contractor that ensures they cover all costs incurred by the City of Stirling as a result of this incident. This includes replacement of vegetation, ongoing testing and independent consultant's reports.

There will be no financial burden on City of Stirling ratepayers.

## 4 Is the City of Stirling only looking after vegetation on public property?

No, the City of Stirling has negotiated an agreement with the contractor that all affected residents will be offered replacement trees and shrubs which will match as closely as possible those lost. This is at no cost to ratepayers.

## 5 Is there a maximum distance from the drainage sumps that houses should be in order to lodge a complaint about declining vegetation?

It is most likely that only residents whose properties are directly adjoining a drainage sump will be affected, however the City of Stirling is interested in all residents who think they have been affected adversely by the spraying.

Residents can contact us by phoning 9345 8555 or filling out the online form on the website by going to [stirling.wa.gov.au](http://stirling.wa.gov.au) > *community* > *Environment* > *Environmental Issues* > *Drainage Sump Spraying*



a sustainable city

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## 6 What can residents do if they live next to a drainage sump and notice trees and shrubs are declining?

If residents think they have been affected please phone 9345 8333 or fill out the online form on the website by going to [stirling.wa.gov.au](http://stirling.wa.gov.au) > Community > Environment > Environmental Issues > Drainage Sump Spraying

## 7 Is the soil safe?

Yes, latest soil tests in and around the sprayed drainage sumps have indicated that the soil is safe, however the City of Stirling will continue to monitor the situation. At no time did the spraying pose a risk to either humans or animals.

## 8 Is the City of Stirling going to continue to use the same herbicide?

No, definitely not. The City of Stirling has changed the way it manages weeds across the City as a result of this incident. Changes include slashing of weeds and mulching sump batters.

## 9 Why did it take so long for the City of Stirling to act?

From November 2006 the City of Stirling officers and resident's started noticing a deterioration of the vegetation in a few of the sumps that had been sprayed earlier in the year. Around this time the contractor also advised the City of trees showing signs of decline. At this stage the majority of the vegetation was in a regeneration phase and so the City of Stirling commenced monitoring rather than removal, as it was considered some of the vegetation could recover.

When the vegetation showed signs of further deterioration the City of Stirling undertook a preliminary survey of all the 138 sumps, and in March 2007 engaged a specialist arboriculturist to investigate and report on the matter. It took a number of months to collate and evaluate scientific evidence as well as to get legal advice, before officers could report the facts to Council. This report was presented to full Council on 19th June 2007 and subsequently a letter was sent to all 49 affected residents between the 2nd of July and 3rd August 2007 to determine individual solutions.

The fact that some of the vegetation is still regenerating has added an additional level of difficulty to an already highly complex matter.

## 10 Is this the same situation as at the City of Joondalup?

The problem has arisen for the same reason as it did at the City of Joondalup (see question 1) however the City of Stirling believes that the problem at Joondalup is more widespread and Joondalup have chosen to handle the matter differently. Please contact the City of Joondalup directly if you have any further questions regarding this.

## 11 What is the City of Stirling going to do about improving the presentation of drainage sumps?

The City of Stirling is currently working on rehabilitation program for all drainage sumps, which will see widespread plantings commencing in winter 2008.

In addition the City of Stirling is also investigating alternative means of managing stormwater as a broader strategy to improve amenity across the region.

## 12 What involvement has the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) had in the matter?

The City of Stirling is working with DEC to undertake testing and monitoring of sites to provide assurance to the community that there are no long-term effects from the spray.

## 13 Will the City of Stirling be changing its tender specification in light of what has happened?

Yes the tender specification has been changed to minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

## 14 Is the contractor still working for the City of Stirling?

Yes the contractor is employed under the current contract until the new specification is put out to tender. It is anticipated that this will occur in late 2007 when a successful tenderer will be appointed.

## 15 Will they be invited to tender again?

All tenders are advertised in accordance with the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations, and being a public tender is open to individuals and companies who can meet the tender requirements. The City of Stirling is unable to pre-empt possible tenderers, but will evaluate all submissions in strict accordance with the advertised criteria.