



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

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New standard for greywater treatment

The EPA has developed the *Code of Practice for Vessel and Facility Management: (Marine and Inland Waters)* to encourage environmental management for marinas, vessel service facilities and vessel operators.

An important component of the code is the phased introduction, over the next three years, of greywater management requirements for all vessels operating on inland waters and marine vessels operating within one nautical mile of land.

Greywater is the waste water from baths, basins, sinks, washing machines, dish washers and contains fats, oils, harmful chemicals, bleaches and germs that affect human health. Untreated greywater can have impacts on water quality and public health through high bacterial loads, nutrient discharge, biological oxygen demand and salinity impacts. Untreated greywater can turn septic if left untreated for less than 24 hours.

An EPA report, in 2004, on the impact of greywater indicated that the contaminant load from untreated greywater discharge into the River Murray was around 200 mega litres annually.

To assist vessel owners and operators, Standards Australia and the South Australian Environment Protection Authority have signed a joint agreement to develop an Australian Standard for greywater treatment systems for river craft. The aim is to protect potential customers by creating an industry accreditation system for greywater and in doing so prevent significant risks posed to the water quality of the River Murray and public health.

Standards Australia is recognised by governments as Australia's peak Standards body. It coordinates standardisation activities and develops internationally aligned Australian Standards.

EPA Chief Executive Helen Fulcher said greywater management options for vessels operating on inland waters like the River Murray are dependent on the type of vessel and include containment or treatment of greywater.

"South Australia is the first State anywhere in the world to introduce the option of treating greywater 'on-board' for all vessels operating on inland waters.

“The new Code of Practice requirements have led to the development of innovative on-board greywater treatment technology in South Australia that has generated considerable interest both nationally and internationally.”

Standards Australia CEO John Tucker said the agreement with the South Australian EPA represents an important collaborative partnership which will deliver significant environmental benefits to Australians living in the Murray River area and other Australian inland water regions.

“Untreated greywater poses significant risk to the surrounding aquatic environment and local communities. The introduction of a uniform Standard to address design, installation and operation of greywater treatment systems for vessels will ensure industry best practices are adopted on all our inland waterways.”

The Standards Australia Committee working on the greywater treatment system standard is meeting at Mannum on the 8 and 9 October where committee members will have the opportunity to see greywater systems being trialled on vessels.

Stakeholders represented on the committee are the South Australian Environment Protection Authority, Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure SA, Australian Marine Industries Federation, Boating Industry Association of SA, CSIRO, NSW Maritime Authority, South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board, Goulburn Murray Water, Houseboat Hirers Association SA and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

There are approximately 2000 vessels operating on inland waters in South Australia.