



plumbing maintenance

Background

This info sheet relates to **Building Format Plans BFP** (formerly known as Building Unit Plans BUP) – This style of plan is a subdivision of a building but may also include a private courtyard.

| Building Format Plan <small>refer bottom right corner of the Survey Plan</small> | Building Unit Plan (old name) <small>refer each page of the Building Unit Plan</small> |
|--|--|
|  |  |

Slightly different outcomes happen for **Standard Format Plans SFP** (formerly known as Group Title Plans GTP).

Why is the type of plan important?

The Section 49C of Land Title Act 1994 defines the boundary of lot as being: -

“... the boundary of a lot created under the plan, and separated from another lot or common property by a floor, wall or ceiling, must be located at the centre of the floor, wall or ceiling.”

The lot is really just a “box”. So common property includes the following: -

- Under the slab (below the “box”)
- Above the ceiling ie the roof cavity and roof (above the “box”)
- Outside the walls (outside the “box”)

However, we also need to remember that sometimes lots are not divided by a wall. For example, an outside balcony may form part of the lot and the boundary is simply an invisible plane at the edge of the balcony.

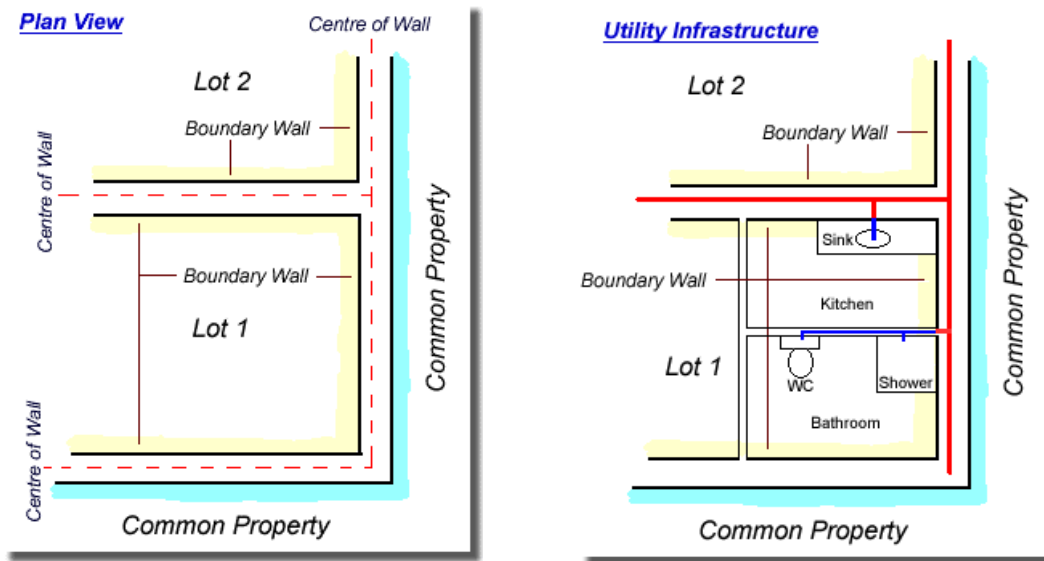
Utility Services

The Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 defines utility service as follows: -

***utility service means**— (a) water reticulation or supply; or (b) gas reticulation or supply; or (c) electricity supply; or (d) air conditioning; or (e) a telephone service; or (f) a computer data or television service; or (g) a sewer system; or (h) drainage; or (i) a system for the removal or disposal of garbage or waste; or (j) another system or service designed to improve the amenity, or enhance the enjoyment, of lots or common property.*

However, Section of 159(3) of the Body Corporate and Community Management (Standard Module) Regulation 2008 effectively excludes utility infrastructure that services only one lot that provides a domestic utility service. For example, hot-water systems, washing machines, clothes dryers, air-conditioners etc

Water pipes



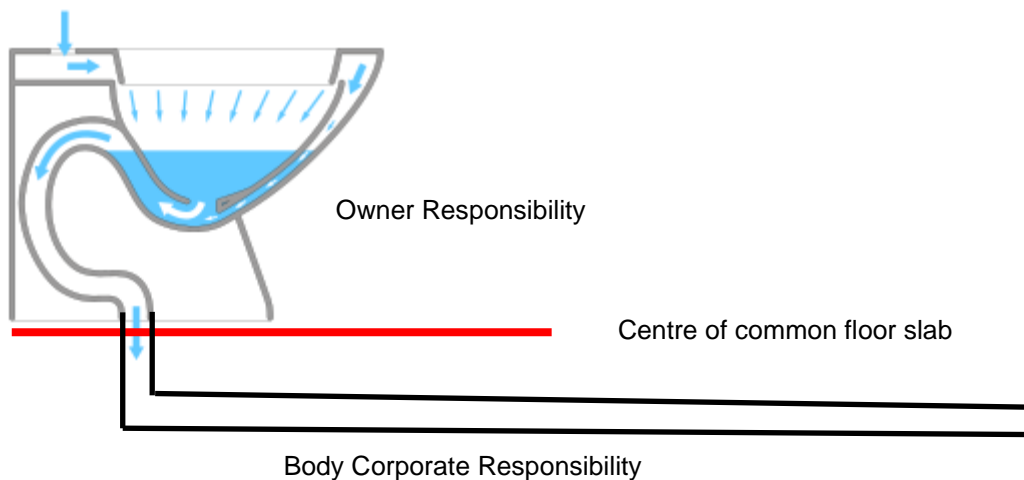
The body corporate

- The cold-water pipes or cables shown in **red** on the utility infrastructure plan above, as they are located within a boundary structure.

The lot owner

- The cold-water pipes or cables shown in **blue** on the utility infrastructure plan above, as they service Lot 1 only, and are located within an internal wall and not a boundary structure.
- A hot-water system, including the associated pipes and wiring, supplying the service solely to the lot, whether or not the system is located on common property.
- Bathroom sink, toilet and shower (including shower combination).

Sewer and drainage systems



So generally, the body corporate is responsible the sewer pipes as they leave the unit. This changes if the occupier deposits something into the toilet that is not intended to be put down the sewer that blocks the drains below the toilet eg a nappy.

Normal use can still result in a blockage that cannot be attributed to the occupant.

Common reasons for sewer blockages (not the responsibility of the occupier)

The Plumbing Code of Australia defines the minimum fall of sewer pipes: -

- 1.65% fall (1:60) minimum fall – below this the sewer is more prone to blockage – due to lack of fall
- 2.00% best practice fall
- 5.00% too steep – above this the sewer is more prone to blockage – the water gets away without taking the solids

Lack of fall is a large problem but this is made worse by changes to toilets over the years to make them “water wise”.

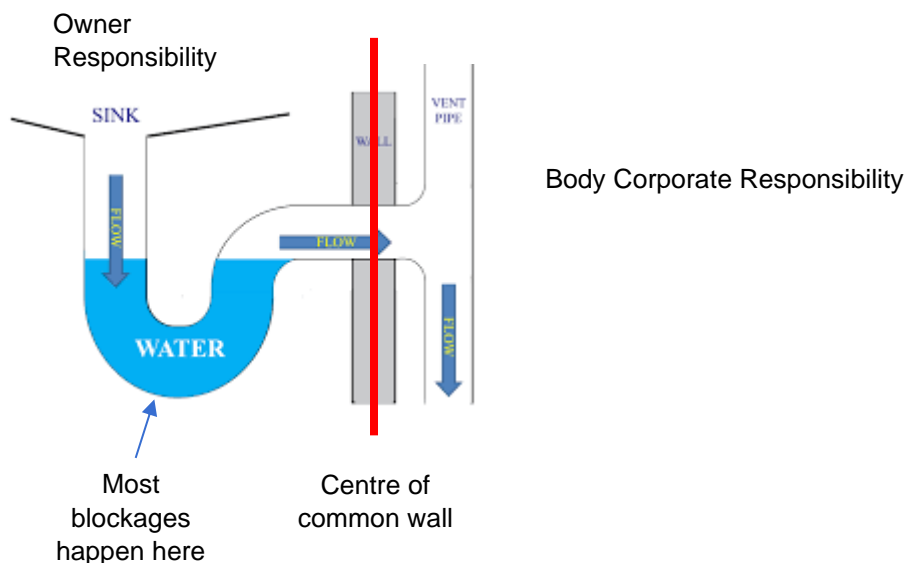
- 9 litre flush - old style toilet 20+ years ago
- 6 litre flush – toilets from 10+ years ago
- 4.5 litre flush – modern toilets using a full flush
- 2 litre flush – modern toilets using a half flush

As the volume of water decreases the likelihood of blockage increases. This is made worse if a section of sewer line receives little or no other water flow other than one or two toilet flushes a day. Also, calcium build-up happens more if urine is not sufficiently diluted with water.

It is generally impossible to change the fall of sewer pipes without significant inconvenience and cost. A simple (but not fail-safe solution) is ... **DOUBLE FULL FLUSH ONLY!** Yes, this solution uses more water but the trade-off is less blockages.

Another common reason for blockage is tree root invasion.

Sinks



In a similar way to toilets, as the waste pipe leaves the unit responsibility changes. However, cleaning any hair trap remains the responsibility of the owner or occupant.

Other Common Plumbing Items that are the responsibility of the owner

- Shower trays, shower units, shower screens and hair traps – owner
- Shower combinations – owner
- Water proofing floors including showers – owner
- Bathroom tiles – owner
- Taps and Fittings – owner
- Sinks – owner
- Toilets – owner