



The Flinders Experience:

How connecting makes a difference

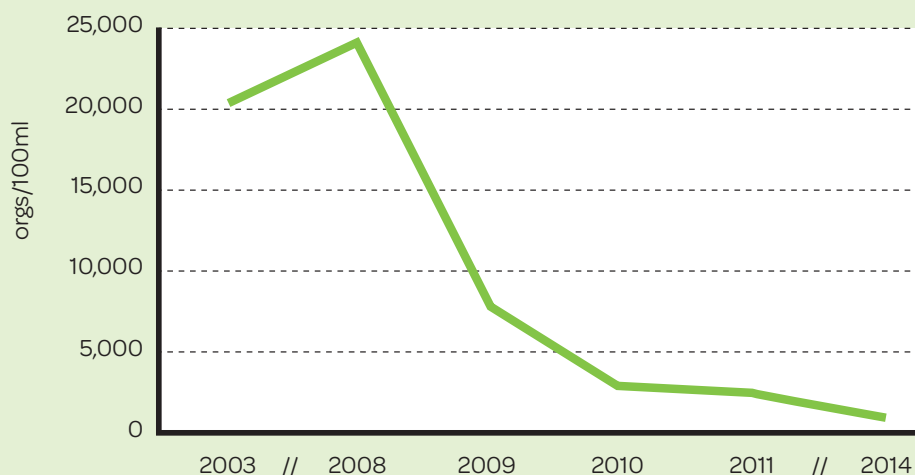
The Westernport Bay township of Flinders became a high priority for connection to a pressure sewer system after waterway testing revealed failing septic tank systems were causing unsafe contamination of creek and beach waters.

Septic pollution indicators, such as *E.coli*, *Enterococci* and ammonia levels, in Dodds Creek and along the foreshore, registered above State Environment Protection Policies (SEPP) guideline levels. The graph below shows *E.coli* levels before, during and after replacement of household septic tanks systems and treatment plants with sewer connections.

In 2008, when just seven per cent of households were connected to the sewer, *E.coli* peaked at a concentration of 25,000 organisms (orgs) per 100 millilitres (ml) – way over SEPP guideline limits for Westernport creeks and rivers (200 orgs/100ml) and safe swimming (150 orgs/100ml).

By 2014 - just six years later – 97 per cent of 667 households of 688 had been connected to the sewer, dramatically reducing *E.coli* contamination to below safe limits.

Flinders *E.coli* levels



Why is *E.coli* important?

E.coli provides a good indication of where faecal matter is reaching the waterway, as this organism is found in the gut of warm-blooded animals.