

## DID YOU KNOW? DETERGENTS

Many cleaning products still contain phosphates despite their known impacts on water quality.

If you are connected to the Island's Water Assurance (Sewerage) Scheme, or if you have an onsite septic system, the treated wastewater is discharged to the environment. Phosphorus is a chemical that is not treated and removed at the Island's wastewater treatment plant or in your onsite septic therefore it ends up in the receiving environment. Many laundry liquids and powders, dishwashing liquids and automatic dishwashing powders and tablets contain phosphates. Phosphates are used to bind calcium and magnesium ions to prevent hard-water deposits. Rainwater is naturally soft therefore, here on Norfolk Island, phosphates would not significantly aid in cleaning of your products given that hard-water deposits should not be an issue.

Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plant growth and that is why fertilisers contain phosphorus. When high levels of phosphorus enter a waterway they can cause algal growths that can lead to a reduction in oxygen in the waterways. This becomes harmful to aquatic life.



Next time you are purchasing your laundry detergents look for the NP symbol on the packaging. The NP symbol stands for 'Negligible Phosphorus <0.5%'.

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**TEAM LEADER – WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT**

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