

sewage management



onsite sewage management



In unsewered areas, choosing an appropriate method for the onsite treatment and disposal of household wastewater is critical in preserving the health of the public and the environment.



◇ what is onsite sewage management?

Onsite sewage management systems are used on properties with no access to sewer mains for the treatment and disposal of wastewater generated within the household. The four most common types are:

Septic Tank and Absorption Trench

Wastewater passes through the septic tank and is gravity-fed or pumped to sub-surface trenches.

Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)

Wastewater is aerated and disinfected before irrigated onto gardens and lawns.

Composting Toilet System

Generally, all solids are removed from the wastewater stream and are transformed into compost by micro-organisms.

Pump-Out System

Wastewater passes through a septic tank into a holding well and is collected by a tanker on a regular basis.

◇ changes to regulations

In response to concerns about the impact of failing sewage management systems on public health and the environment, the NSW Government made changes to sewage management regulations in March 1998. These changes now mean that residents must take greater responsibility for maintaining their systems, and must apply to Council for Approval to Operate.

◇ approval to operate

The Approval to Operate issued by Council has three major purposes:

- To allow Council to maintain a register of systems throughout the Shire;
- To commit owners to operating their sewage management system in accordance with the Conditions of Approval; and
- To contribute vital information to allow Council to develop education programs and assist in identifying the future direction of onsite sewage management within Hornsby Shire.

The Approval is free of charge.

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◇ seeking approval to operate

Within 2 months of purchasing a property, the new owner/s must apply for an Approval to Operate by filling out the relevant application form and submitting it to Council. An Approval will be issued to all property owners with an Operation and Maintenance Manual specific to the system type.

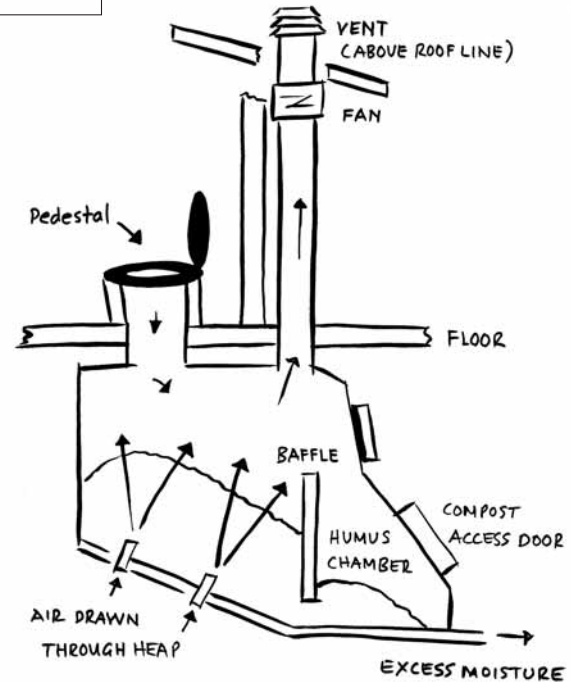
◇ inspection program

Council is inspecting systems throughout the Shire to ensure compliance with the following performance standards:

- The prevention of the spread of disease by micro-organisms;
- The prevention of foul odours;
- The prevention of contamination of water;
- The prevention of the degradation of soil and vegetation;
- The discouragement of insects and vermin;
- Ensuring that persons do not come in contact with untreated sewage or effluent; and
- The minimisation of any adverse impacts on the amenity of the premises and surrounding lands.

Systems are assessed by Council officers using a standard review form, and given a risk rating according to performance. Systems owners will be given 40 days to complete any required works.

Council's Inspection Program presently focuses on High and Medium Risk areas within the Shire. These generally include the village areas of Galston, Glenorie and Cowan and the coastal areas of Brooklyn, Dangar Island, Berowra Creek and Milsons Passage. All Medium and Low risk areas will be inspected in the near future.



onsite example: **dry composting toilet**

◇ onsite sewage management strategy

Council's Onsite Sewage Management Strategy outlines Council's approach to sewage management within the Shire over the next 8 years, and was developed in consultation with the community. The Strategy will be reviewed every three years to reflect changing priorities and any alterations in legalisation or standard practice.

◇ further information

Department of Local Government 'SepticSafe Program'
- www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/dlg_home.asp

Local Government (Approvals) Regulation 1999
- www.austlii.edu.au

Approval to Operate Application Form
- www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au



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FURTHER INFORMATION

General information on onsite sewage management can be obtained from the Environmental Health & Protection Team on **9847 6829**.