Lithgow CITY COUNCIL

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COMPLIANCE

Policy 5.9

ON SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT

Version 2

5.9 On Site Sewage Management Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the New South Wales Government introduced the *Local Government (Approvals) Amendment (Sewage Management) Regulation 1998* and the "Environment and Health Protection Guidelines – On-Site Sewage Management for Single Households" to assist Local Councils and property owners keep their on-site sewage management facilities working safely and efficiently. This was in response to studies conducted throughout New South Wales which indicated both a failure rate of up to 70% of on-site sewage management systems, and an enormous potential for unsatisfactory cumulative impacts on the environment and on public health arising from the previous ad-hoc management methods. Since 1998, the Regulation has undergone review, and the current legislative requirements are now contained in the *Local Government Act 1993* along with the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

The Lithgow City Council On-Site Sewage Management Strategy was originally adopted in 1999, with subsequent reviews undertaken in 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2022. It has been developed to assist Lithgow City Council assess, regulate and manage the selection, design, installation, operation and maintenance of all on-site sewage management systems within the Local Government Area (LGA).

The On-Site Sewage Management Strategy is an identified activity within Council's Operational Plan and delivery program and is reported on in Council's quarterly and annual reports along with the State of Environment Report.

2. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to:

- All land within the Lithgow City Council LGA **not** provided with reticulated sewerage infrastructure.
- All existing and proposed installations of on-site sewage management systems on residential premises;
- All Development Applications for new or amended/altered works on land not provided with reticulated sewage infrastructure.

This Policy is aimed at outlining the relevant guidelines for residential premises. Commercial and industrial premises require a different approach and will therefore be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this On-Site Sewage Management Policy are:

a) ***Prevention of public health risks*** – untreated sewage and effluent contains pathogens being bacteria, viruses, parasites and other disease-causing microorganisms.

b) ***Protection of surface and groundwater*** – on-site sewage management systems should be selected, sited, designed, constructed, operated and maintained to
ensure that surface waters and groundwater are not contaminated by any flow from the treatment systems or land application areas.

c) ***Protection of land and soils*** – on-site sewage management systems should be selected, sited, designed, constructed, operated and maintained to ensure that land and soils are not contaminated by any flow from the treatment systems, land application areas, effluent, rainfall run-off or contaminated groundwater flow.

d) ***Conservation and reuse of resources*** – the resources in domestic wastewater (including nutrients, organic matter, and water) should be identified and utilised as much as possible within the bounds posed by the other performance objectives. Water conservation should be practiced, and wastewater production should be minimised.

e) ***Protection of community amenity*** - on-site sewage management systems should be selected, sited, designed, constructed, operated and maintained to ensure they do not unreasonably interfere with quality of life. Where possible, such systems should enhance the local amenity. Special consideration should be given to aesthetics, odour, spread of disease, and noise.

4. GOALS

The goals of this On-Site Sewage Management Policy are to:

a) Guide Council's development standards and approval criteria for subdivision, development and building to ensure that appropriate provision is made for sustainable on-site sewage management when residential development occurs in non-reticulated sewage areas.

b) Inspect and maintain a database of all on-site sewage management systems within the Lithgow City Council LGA.

c) Identify additional public infrastructure needed, for example, giving consideration to connecting un-sewered areas of townships to a centralised wastewater management facility.

d) Adopt a partnership approach with households, businesses, and service agents to support continual improvement of on-site sewage management.

e) Ensure that all on-site sewage management systems are regularly inspected by Council Officers or other qualified persons that Council may

engage at intervals that will be determined through the risk assessment process.

f) To cooperate with landholders and businesses to develop site-specific sewage management plans which resolve identified problems.

g) To ensure that suitable and adequate education is provided or is available to all people involved in on-site sewage management, i.e. Council Officers, residents, business owners, and service providers.

5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR APPROVALS AND MONITORING

In implementing this On-Site Sewage Management Policy, Lithgow City Council will take into consideration the following legislation, guidelines, and standards.

In the event the relevant legislation, guidelines or standards are revised or repealed post the adoption of this Policy, the revised or current document is to replace those specified in this Policy.

5.1 The Local Government Act 1993 (sections 68 and 68A)and Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (Division4)

a) Specifies requirements for the design, installation, alteration and operation of domestic on-site sewage management systems under section 68 and section 68A of the Act, and allows for fees to be charged under section 608 of the Act;

b) Provides special provisions for renewals relating to the Operation of Sewage Management Systems under Section 107A of the Act.

c) Specifies information required to accompany an application to operate, install or alter an on-site sewage management system;

d) Clarifies the accreditation roles and responsibilities of New South Wales Health;

e) Describes the minimum performance criteria for the installation and operation of onsite sewage management systems;

f) Allows for Orders to be issued under section 124 of the Act;

g) Allows for Fine Notices to be issued for offences under section 679 of the Act.

5.2 Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act)

The POEO Act provides Local Government authorities with powers to investigate and issue notices. Council is the Appropriate Regulatory Authority (ARA) for activities relating to on-site sewage management systems (excluding Scheduled Premises). Where an on-site sewage management system is detected to be failing, the following actions are available to Council under the POEO Act:

Clean-up Notices – are quick responses to pollution incidents. These notices incur an administration fee set by legislation. If Council spends time and money monitoring the required works, a Compliance Cost Notice may also be issued to recover all costs for environmental protection activities;

Prevention Notices – can be issued where an on-site sewage management system is operating in an environmentally unsatisfactory manner. These notices incur an administration fee set by legislation. If Council spends time and money monitoring the required works, a Compliance Cost Notice may also be issued to recover all costs for environmental protection activities;

Fine Notices (PINS)– can be issued under the POEO Act for non-compliance with Clean-up and Prevention Notices as well as any pollution incidents that may or have occurred.

Any enforcement action undertaken by Council will be guided by the procedures outlined in Council's Enforcement Policy. At all times Council aims to work with landholders to ensure the safe and efficient management of on-site sewage management systems, however some circumstances may require Council to utilise powers under the POEO Act.

5.3 Public Health Act 2010 and Public Health Regulation 2012

All human waste treatment devices must be accredited by NSW Health as listed on the Register of Accredited Sewage Management Facilities.

5.4 National Construction Code and Australian/New Zealand Standards The following must be adhered to in the application of this policy:

NCC Volume 3 (Plumbing Code of Australia) Incorporating AS/NZS 3500.2:2021 Plumbing and Drainage – This standard is highly relevant to the licenced plumbers and installers who conduct repairs or alterations to existing on-site sewage management systems or new installations.
This standard covers the requirements for the design and installation of any plumbing and drainage;

AS/NZS 1547:2012 On-site Domestic Wastewater Management – This standard provides specific details for a range of domestic on-site sewage management systems and land application areas for all persons and agencies involved with on-site sewage management in Australia and New Zealand. This standard provides guidance for:

- System flows up to a maximum of 14,000L per week and population equivalent of up to 10 persons; and
- Site investigation, land application system design, installation, operation and maintenance to achieve sustainable outcomes and public health performance.

AS/NZS 1546 On-site Domestic Wastewater Treatment Units –

- AS/NZS 1546.1:2008 Septic Tanks – This standard is highly relevant to manufacturers of on-site sewage management systems by specifying technical means of system compliance and test specifications to achieve sustainable outcomes and satisfactory public health performance.

- AS/NZS 1546.2:2008 Waterless Composting Toilets – This standard covers the requirements for waterless composting toilets that are intended primarily as standalone units for residential use but may be suitable for non-residential applications.
- AS/NZS 1546.3:2017 Secondary Treatment Systems – This standard sets out the design, installation, operation, maintenance and performance requirements, means of compliance, specification for testing and associated fittings.

5.6 Other Relevant Documents

Council will also adhere to the following standards and documents in the implementation of this Policy:

- AS 4419:2018 Soils for Landscaping and Garden Use.
- AS 1546.4:2016 Domestic Greywater Treatment Systems.
- AS 2698 Plastic Pipes and Fittings for Irrigation and Rural Application.
- AS/NZS 3000:2018 Electrical Installations.
- AS 1319:1994 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment.
- Designing and Installing On-site Wastewater Systems – Water NSW Current Recommended Practice (2019);
- EPA Guideline – Use of Effluent by Irrigation (2004);
- NSW Health Septic Tank and Collection Well Accreditation Guideline (2001);
- NSW Health Sewage Management Facility Sewage Treatment Accreditation Guideline (2005);
- NSW Health Waterless Composting Toilet Accreditation Guideline (2005);
- The Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE) Water Quality Assessment Guideline - Sydney Catchment Authority (2015);
- Relevant Lithgow City Council Policies.

6. TYPES OF ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

On-site sewage management on a premises may include one or more of the following systems or elements:

- Septic tank and absorption trenches.
- Septic tank and evapotranspiration beds.
- Septic tank and collection well with tanker removal.(pump out)*
- Septic tank and constructed wetland.
- Septic tank and mound system.
- Dry composting toilet.
- Wet composting toilet and subsurface land application area/s;
- Pond system.
- Separate greywater treatment system.
- Aerated wastewater treatment system. (AWTS)
- Any other system designed and approved to treat and dispose of sewage.

*Note: Pump-out systems are not considered a viable on-site sewage management technique and, as such, will only be considered as a last resort option, and generally only on sites where a building entitlement exists but there are significant constraints or other environmental and/or public health risks.

7. ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

7.1 Approval and Assessment of New Systems

a) Applications will be required for all new on-site sewage management systems or significant modifications to existing systems. A significant modification may include the upgrading of a septic tank or disposal area to comply with current standards or the changing of the method of effluent disposal. It does not include the maintenance of any component of an approved existing system.
As part of the development assessment process, an application for installation of an on-site sewage management system, pursuant to Section 68 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (Part C5),* must be submitted to Council. Any approval will be issued subject to compliance with the relevant conditions of approval.
Council will require that inspections are carried out when the on-site wastewater treatment system is installed and when the land application area is being prepared as well as a final inspection to ensure that all conditions of installation approval have been met.

b) **An Onsite Wastewater Management Assessment Report** which includes a preferred system design must accompany an application to install an onsite sewage management system.

c) The Onsite Wastewater Management Assessment Report must contain the following information –

- a land capability assessment (in accordance with the Environment & Health Protection Guidelines – On Site Sewage

Management for Single Households 1998) soil laboratory analysis results if relevant

- on-site soil profile log including soil texture information (of particular importance is the soil texture which is located at a depth of 300-600mm below the base of the proposed effluent disposal system. Soil texture can be determined by field texture analysis or a laboratory particle size analysis may be necessary.
- site plan (scaled drawing [computer drawn/CAD] including site constraints, land slope, property boundaries, existing & proposed buildings, existing dams, watercourses, drainage depressions, impervious areas, proposed effluent disposal area with setback buffer distances shown).
- All appropriate options considered for onsite sewage management with a recommended system design.
- For the recommended system - system details including sizing calculations and design details of the proposed effluent disposal area
- compliance with any effluent management covenant's and/or restrictions as defined on the Deposited Plan and Section 88B Instrument (Conveyancing Act 1919) for the subject property.

d) The Onsite Wastewater Management Assessment Report must be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced Waste Water management consultant such as:

- a member of the Australian Society of Soil Science (Certified Professional Soil Scientist);
- an agronomist with experience in OSSM design and operation
- an environmental scientist or engineer who is recognised by their industry body as being proficient or who has completed a suitable level of training in on-site wastewater management.
- A person with demonstrated extensive experience in the assessment and design of onsite sewage management systems.

e) After the development has been completed, and prior to the development being occupied, an Occupation Certificate must be obtained from the Principal Certifier. Prior to the issue of the Occupation Certificate, Council must undertake an inspection of the completed on-site sewage management system as this cannot be completed by a private certifier. A satisfactory inspection advice must be obtained from Council prior to issue of the Occupation Certificate.

f) The system of On-site sewage management proposed to be installed must be accredited by NSW Health. A copy of the NSW Health Accreditation Certificate must be included with the Section 68 application for installation of the on-site sewage management system.

g) In accordance with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011 (the SEPP), all development applications for, or that include on-site sewage management systems, and which fall

within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment, will be assessed in accordance with Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.* Such applications must demonstrate compliance with the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011.* This may require referral to Water NSW for assessment.

h) After a development has been completed, and following the issue of an Occupation Certificate, Council will issue an Approval to Operate the system. The meaning of "operate a system of Sewage management is defined in Section 68A of the Act

i) The Approval to Operate allows the owner/occupier to operate the on-site wastewater management system on an ongoing basis. Approvals to operate are issued for a 12-month period (1st July-30 June) but are automatically renewed under the same conditions as previously applied unless the approval is revoked by Council, or the conditions are modified at any time. Renewal fees are levied on the rates notice for each property and the approval to operate is considered renewed upon the payment of rates.

j) Each Onsite Sewage Management System is allocated a risk rating based on its potential environmental and public health risk which will determine the level of surveillance that is appropriate under Councils risk based inspection program. The Approval to Operate will outline the risk that the system poses to environmental and public health and will also determine the frequency for Council reinspection. The risk classification system used by Council is outlined in section 7.2.

7.2 Assessment of Existing Systems and Categories of Risk

All on-site wastewater systems within the Lithgow City Council LGA will be allocated a risk category. The three risk categories are:

- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

The on-site wastewater system is assigned the appropriate risk category if it satisfies **one** or more criteria. In the case where the property may fall within two categories, the **higher** risk category and associated charges will apply.

The risk based system will determine the level of surveillance (inspection) applicable to the system under Councils Onsite Sewage Management Surveillance program.

The criteria for each risk category are outlined as follows:

7.2.1 High Risk Systems

- Land application area less than 100 metres from permanent surface water sources or less than 40 metres from an intermittent waterway, dam, drainage channel or other water source;
- Land application area less than 250 metres from any groundwater bore or well;
- Land application area less than 6 metres (12 metres in the case of an absorption system) from an upslope property boundary;
- Land application area less than 3 metres (6 metres in the case of an absorption system) from a downslope property boundary;
- Land application area less than 6 metres from an upslope swimming pool, driveway or building;
- Land application area less than 3 metres from a downslope swimming pool, driveway or building;
- Land application area less than 3 metres from paths and walkways (surface spray irrigation only);
- Land application area less than 6 metres from an upslope or 3 metres from a downslope human activity*;
- Nil stormwater diversion installed where stormwater impact may be an issue within the land application area;
- Soil erosion is present in or near the land application area;
- Surface water is present in the land application area;
- Property is within 1% AEP flood level;
- All commercial properties (i.e. caravan parks, hotels, mines, industrial complexes, vineyards, recreational facilities etc.);
- Area of property that is less than 1 Hectare in size;
- Slope of land application area greater than 20%; •
- All systems located within the village of Cullen Bullen or any other area that has access to reticulated sewer.

7.2.2 Medium Risk Systems

- Land application area between 100 and 200 metres from a permanent surface water source;
- Land application area between 6 and 20 metres from a human activity*;
- Property is outside 1% AEP flood level;
- Area of property between 1 and 5 Hectares inclusive;
- Slope of land application area less than 20% but greater than 10%;

7.2.3 Low Risk Systems

- Land application area is greater than 200 metres from any permanent surface water sources and greater than 40 metres from an intermittent waterway, dam, drainage channel or other water source;
- Land application area is greater than 250 metres from any groundwater bore or well;
- Land application area is greater than 6 metres (12 metres in the case of an absorption system) from an upslope property boundary;

- Land application area is greater than 3 metres (6 metres in the case of an absorption system) from a downslope property boundary;
- Land application area is greater than 6 metres from an upslope swimming pool, driveway or building;
- Land application area is greater than 3 metres from a downslope swimming pool, driveway or building;
- Land application area greater than 3 metres from paths and walkways (surface spray irrigation only);
- Land application area is greater than 20 metres from a human activity*;
- Property is outside 1% AEP flood level;
- Area of property greater than 5 hectares in size;
- Slope of land application area less than 10%;

* human activity includes children's play areas, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, recreational lawn areas, and other areas where there is significant human activity.

7.3 Inspection and Approval Regimen

Council has developed an inspection program for existing on-site systems to ensure those systems meet environmental and health performance objectives set out in this Policy and in the Environmental and Health Protection Guidelines over the long term. The program involves the monitoring of existing service documentation (AWTS systems) and also programmed on-site inspections.

At present there are approximately 2700 registered on-site sewage management systems in the Lithgow LGA. In order to prioritise and effectively carry out an ongoing inspection program, systems are classified according to risk. Inspections are then carried out at an interval appropriate to the individual systems risk assessment subject to adequate resourcing.

Council will inspect all systems in the LGA in a targeted manner based on resource capabilities and individual systems assessed on performance standards as stated in the EH&P Guidelines. An audit report is completed for each inspection with a copy of the report forwarded to the property owner or designated operator. If changes are made to conditions as a result of the inspection, owners are issued with an amended Approval to Operate (with conditions attached).

Generally, the inspection frequency based on risk is-

- **High risk** – Two (2) years
- **Medium risk** – Five (5) years
- **Low risk** – Ten (10) years or based on complaint only

Note: Additional inspections may be carried out at Council's discretion.

Aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS) will be classified based on site conditions even though they are required to be serviced quarterly as per the manufacturer's instructions by an approved and suitably qualified service technician at cost to the owner.

The disposal areas of AWTS can pose a significant risk to the environment and public health and these are not always inspected by servicing agents whose focus generally is on the operation of the treatment system.

Council does not charge additional fees for inspection.

The OSMS Inspection Process

Item	Criteria
Which Systems?	• All domestic and commercial on-site systems holding an active approval to operate
Exemptions	• Nil
When undertaken?	• In accordance with risk classifications and commensurate with council resource capabilities • If complaint received If requested by owner/operator • Request for pre-purchase inspection (ie impending sale of the property)
Who performs?	• Councils Environmental Health Officers Notification of inspection in accordance with LGA is sent to owners/operators • Signed authority to enter property provided with pre-purchase inspection request
Why inspect?	• To determine operating status and compliance with standards and guidelines • Assess risk to environment and public health
Fee	• No charge for routine inspections • Pre-purchase inspection in accordance with schedule of fees and charges
Records	• Audit sheet is maintained electronically
Pump out Systems (tanker removal)	• Pump out records requested during investigations only. Comparisons made with water usage for property to determine adequate servicing frequencies.

Aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS)	• Servicing records obtained by contractors and entered into electronic database. • Data maintained detailing servicing frequency. Inspections carried out according to assessed risk based on site conditions.
Pump to sewer systems	• Classified as an on-site sewage system in accordance with • regulations. Inspected to determine compliance with Councils specifications as sewer authority

7.3.1 Renewal of the 'Approval to Operate

An existing approval to operate under Section 68 of the Local Government Act 1993 is renewed automatically at expiry under the same conditions unless modified by Council by virtue of Section 107A of the Local Government Act.

Approvals to operate are issued for the period 1 July to 30 June each financial year.

Renewals will not be routinely forwarded to operators each year but are held on Councils database and are available at no cost to the operators of systems on request.

New operators (owners) will be forwarded amended approvals to operate upon receipt of change of ownership information by Council.

7.3.2 Failing Systems

Inspections of on-site sewage management systems are conducted to ensure that systems are installed and operated in accordance with the conditions specified in any Council approval. Beyond system design and installation, those approval conditions relate primarily to the performance standards specified in the regulations and this policy.

System failure is deemed to have occurred when a system fails to achieve prescribed performance standards resulting in adverse impacts on public health or the environment. **Appendix 1** provides a methodology for defining minor and major breaches for treatment systems and disposal areas. The Table in Section 7.3.3 provides a methodology for prioritising identified issues, determining an appropriate response and provides tools that may be used to assist in investigating and addressing the issue.

In the event of failure, an existing on-site sewage management system is to be upgraded (as directed by Council) to ensure that the system is operating in a satisfactory manner. Upgrading may be facilitated through advice and negotiation or through the enforcement processes contained in the Local Government Act1993 or the Protection of the Environment Operations Act)

This action may be taken irrespective of whether the system is being operated under a current Approval to Operate or not.

7.3.3 Complaints Process

Any member of the public is entitled to contact Council should they have concerns regarding the operation or use of an on-site sewage management system. All complaints will be registered as a Customer Request and be subject to administrative protocols in respect to customer service delivery.

Council will investigate complaints relating to system failures irrespective of the prioritisation classification applied to the situation – found in the Table below.

This inspection may replace the next scheduled inspection for any system that is the subject of a complaint and where as a result of that inspection Council requires the owner/operator to take some action. Changes may also be made to the risk categorisation of systems as a result of any complaint investigation.

It is the responsibility of the owner or occupier of the premises to ensure that on-site systems are designed, installed and managed so that environmental nuisance/damage does not occur and there is no risk to public health from the operation of the system.

Owners should ensure that other occupiers of the premises eg tenants, are aware of the systems operation and maintenance requirements. If a system is defective and cannot be corrected by the proper operation and maintenance, householders should report this to Council so that immediate action can be taken to address the problem.

The following Table provides a methodology for prioritising identified issues, determining an appropriate response and provides tools that may be used to assist in investigating and addressing the issue.

Table: OSMS Prioritisation Methodology

Situation Classification		
Critical	**Major**	**Minor**
Situations Significant failure of the wastewater treatment system or disposal area whether intentional or unintentional	**Situations** Major failure of the wastewater treatment system, component or disposal area Moderate to major threat to the	**Situations** Minor or insignificant problem with the wastewater treatment system, component or disposal area

Significant threat to the environment and public health	environment and public health	Minor or no threat to the environment and public health
Responses • Immediate action by Council is to commence • May need multiple Council staff to respond • May need consultation with EPA staff Same day response where resourcing permits Immediate communication with system owner / operator Definite follow up action by Council staff	**Responses** • Important but not urgent. Action by Council should commence within 5 business days • May need immediate communication with system owner/operator if necessary Would involve follow up action by Council staff	**Responses** Needs attention by owner/operator but is not urgent Minimal intervention by Council staff May be remedied through discussion with owner or operator May need a follow up response to ensure the problem does not escalate. Educational material may be appropriate
Tools • Water and/or soil samples. • Chemical and microbiological testing • Photographic evidence • Detailed notes Interviews with relevant persons POEO – Prevention Notice, Clean-up Notice Legal action if warranted	**Tools** Testing of water and/or soil samples only if necessary. Photographic evidence if necessary Detailed notes Local Government Act Order (s124) if necessary Fine notice if failure to undertake works in a reasonable time	**Tools** Routine inspection Audit report or letter Warning letter if left unresolved
Examples • Significant failure of a wastewater system discharging effluent into a drinking water	**Examples** Failing wastewater system or disposal area	**Examples** Minor problem with a wastewater

supply, waterway or stormwater drainage system	Major unresolved problem with a treatment system component	system or disposal area

8. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

8.1 Responsibility of the Owner/Occupier

It is the responsibility of the owner/occupier of the property to ensure that the on-site sewage management system on their property is maintained and operated in a manner which does not pose undue risk to the environment or to public health.

The owner and/or occupier should be aware of the operation and maintenance requirements for their system and must ensure that the necessary service contracts are in place. Where discernible, the owner or occupier should notify Council of any system failure prior to arranging the necessary repairs or replacement of the system. The approval of Council under Section 68 of the Local Government Act must be obtained in respect to of any proposed significant modifications or alterations to the system, including the effluent disposal area. (Refer to Section 7.1)

8.2 Maintenance of Septic Tanks

Septic tanks shall be de-sludged as required (normally every 3-5 years) by a licenced pump out contractor and disposed of at an authorised facility. Desludging is recommended when:

a) The scum layer is within 100mm of the bottom of the inlet square junction or tee, or the sludge layer is within 200mm of the bottom of the outlet square junction or T piece.

b) The sludge occupies the sludge allowance (1,550 litres) of the septic tank; or

c) The total depth of sludge and scum is equal to one-third of the depth of the tank.

The desludging procedure should ensure:

a) That sufficient water is introduced into the tank after desludging to prevent the tank from being lifted by soil hydrostatic pressure.

b) Caution should be taken during the desludging process to protect the facility from possible collapse or displacement of internal compartments or components.

8.3 Maintenance of Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)

All AWTS require servicing and maintenance at quarterly intervals (or other intervals as specified in the NSW accreditation for the system), therefore:

a) The owner must enter into an annual service contract with a suitably qualified and experienced service provider;
b) The service contractor is required to check or test all the mechanical, electrical and functioning parts of the AWTS (including irrigation systems) in accordance with the NSW Health Certificate of Accreditation for the specific system;
c) At the completion of each service, a service report should be completed with a copy provided to Council within 14 days of the completion of the service;
d) Any desludging of the primary chamber of the AWTS should be completed as per section 8.2 of this Policy.

8.4 Maintenance of the Effluent Disposal Area

It is the responsibility of the owner or occupier to ensure that the effluent disposal area is managed in accordance with the relevant regulations and standards, the 'Approval to Operate On-site Sewage Management System', and conditions of the original Approval to Install issued by Council.

8.5 General Maintenance Considerations

When an on-site sewage management system is:

a) Due to be serviced.
b) In need of repair.
c) Requiring replacement.
d) To be installed; or
e) To be altered, modified, or attended to in terms of operational adjustment.

All works may only be carried out by a person who is a qualified service technician or licenced tradesperson where required. Written approval must be obtained from Council prior to the commencement of any works, modifications, or alterations to the system. Any replacement work must comply with the manufacturers specifications and the NSW Health accreditation for the system.

9. FEES AND CHARGES

The fee schedule has been designed to provide Council and users of on-site sewage systems with a cost-effective, user pays monitoring program that provides an efficient mechanism to ensure the long term environmental and public health objectives of this Policy. The fee structure is aimed at minimising the contribution of Council general rate revenue to providing this program.

The fees are levied under s608 of the Local Government Act, 1993. These are debts on the owner / occupier rather than on the land.

Fees are revised annually.

OSMS Fees

Fee Name	Details
Application to install, alter or construct a waste treatment device or human waste storage facility	• The installation of an OSMS incurs an application fee in accordance with s80 of the Local Government Act. • Fees are set in accordance with the schedule of fees and charges.
Approval to Operate	• An application for an initial approval to operate is incorporated into the application fee for installation of an OSSM, in accordance with the schedule of fees and charges.
Approval to Operate Renewal	• The annual approval fee is levied on all owners of on-site systems in the Lithgow LGA to cover costs of the On-site Sewage Management Program. These costs include work by clerical staff, monitoring of service documentation, inspections, complaint investigations and the provision of educational and system management advice. • The fee is levied on an annual basis and is included as a separate item on the land rates notice. Renewal fees are the same for all types of systems and risk categories
Routine/Programmed Inspections	• Routine inspections do not incur a fee.
Re-inspections	• Situations involving more than one re-inspection may incur a charge in accordance with the schedule of fees and charges. • This is at the discretion of the Council officer in consultation with management.

Extraordinary Costs	• May include testing of water and • soil samples. Charged on a cost recovery basis.

10. RESOURCING

The OSSM program is performed by the Development and Building Team (assessment of applications for approval to install and initial approval to operate) and the Environmental Team for ongoing functions.

Core functions include:

- Assessment of applications to install and operate.
- Complete programmed inspections
- Initiate action for upgrading and maintaining systems.
- Renewal of approvals to operate.
- Provide education and guidance to the community, staff and Council.
- Provide advice relating to OSSM in relation to Development proposals for the subdivision of land.
- Monitor and assess data and reports for systems.
- Undertake continuous improvement of the program.
- Keep abreast of latest technologies and learning through attendance at regional forums and training as appropriate

11. EDUCATION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

An important part of this Policy is to ensure that all parties involved in the installation operation and maintenance of on-site sewage management systems are aware of their responsibilities and have enough information to carry them out. The level of knowledge required will depend on the type of sewage management system and what the stakeholder needs to do.

Householders need to have a full knowledge of:

- System operation and maintenance requirements.
- Responsibilities under the legislation.
- System selection and design of effluent application areas.
- Health risks of effluent and chemicals.
- Emergency contact numbers.
- Waste and water minimisation principles and techniques.
- Environmental impacts of wastewater.

Council will take an active role in the provision of this information to the householder and help in the development of individual management plans through this information and the approvals and inspection process. Information will be made readily available from Councils website, emailed or posted if requested or included with an inspection report.

12. REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed every term of Council.

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITION OF "MAJOR AND MINOR" BREACHES

Treatment System "Major" Breach – the failure, malfunction, collapse, omission, deterioration or breakdown of any treatment system component, tank, internal vessel or chamber, segregating baffle, control panel, power supply, chemical, aerating device or mechanical pumping device that is:

- Not currently under repair, or
- Has not been reported to an appropriate service provider in a timely manner,

And that:

- **Has** the potential to prevent the normal operation of the system.
- **Has** the potential to significantly reduce the quality of effluent from expected levels.
- **Has** the potential to impact on the natural environment, human health or public amenity.
- **Has** the potential to cause a significant public safety risk.

Table 1: Examples of Treatment System Major Breaches

Treatment System Type	Major Breach Description (To be considered in conjunction with definition)
Aerated Wastewater Treatment System	Inoperable aeration blower causing significant effluent quality problems
	Inoperable irrigation pump with effluent overflowing
	Fused/damaged control panel
	Internal baffle that has separated from the side wall allowing mixing of treated and untreated water
	System not being serviced, and effluent quality significantly deteriorated
	No disinfection system (ie. Chlorine, ultra-violet, etc) in operation
	Tank lid that is significantly damaged. Potential safety risk, odour problem
Septic Tank	Excessive sludge levels (<200mm below outlet invert)

	Excessive water levels (above top of inlet/outlet junctions) or overflowing
	Structurally unsound tank - damaged below water level and is leaking effluent to ground surface/groundwater
	Tank lid that is significantly damaged. Potential safety risk, odour problem
Septic Pump well	Inoperable irrigation pump with effluent overflowing
	Tank lid that is significantly damaged. Potential safety risk, odour problem
Effluent Pump-out Tank	Effluent levels excessive with overflows visibly occurring
	Tank lid that is significantly damaged. Potential safety risk, odour problem
Wet Composting System	Structurally unsound tank - damaged below water level and is leaking effluent to ground surface/groundwater
	Tank lid that is significantly damaged. Potential safety risk, odour problem

Treatment System "Minor" Breach – all other areas, components or adjustments of the treatment system not captured under major breach definition and that:

- **Does not** have the potential to prevent the normal operation of the system.
- **Does not** have the potential to impact on the natural environment, human health or public amenity.
- **Does not** have the potential to significantly reduce the quality of effluent from expected levels.
- **Does not** have the potential to cause a significant safety risk.

Table 2: Examples of Treatment System Minor Breaches

Treatment System Type	Minor Breach Description (To be considered in conjunction with definition)
Aerated Wastewater Treatment System	Skimmer not operable
	Irrigation filter not in place
	Missing primary chamber inspection cap
	Minor odour
	Floating media blocks
	Floating scum in clarification chamber
Septic Tank	Moderate sludge levels (>200mm below outlet invert)
	Minor elevated water levels (above invert of outlet pipe but not above top of junctions)

	Tank that is cracked above water level and cracks are hairline only
	Tank lid that has minor cracking (hairline cracks)
	Missing inlet/outlet junctions
	Tank lid at ground level
	Missing inspection caps
Septic Pump well	Missing inspection caps
	Tank lid at ground level
Effluent Pump-out Tank	Missing inspection caps
	Missing standpipe cap

Land Application (Disposal) Area "Major" Breach – the observed failure of the land application area to adequately dispose of or contain effluent during normal annual climatic conditions that potentially may result in risk to the environment, public health or public safety. The failure of the land application area to operate within expected design limits. Land application area includes but is not limited to absorption trenches, evapo-transpiration beds, mounds, surface irrigation areas and sub-surface irrigation areas.

Table 3: Examples of Disposal Area Major Breaches

Land Application Area Type	Major Breach Description (To be considered in conjunction with definition)
Surface/subsurface Irrigation	Inadequate maintenance of irrigation hardware that results in the surface ponding of effluent
	End-of-pipe disposal
	Inadequate size of disposal area that results in significant saturation of soils
	Location of disposal area within prescribed buffer zones and environmentally sensitive areas
	Location of disposal area within observed recreational areas
Absorption/Evapo-transpiration	Observed ponding of effluent on the disposal area surface. Effluent must be confirmed via colour, clarity or odour. End of pipe disposal

Land Application (Disposal) Area "Minor" Breach – all other areas not captured under major breach definition and that are unlikely to result in environmental harm, risk to public health or risk to public safety.

Table 4: Examples of Disposal Area Minor Breaches

Land Application Area Type	Minor Breach Description

	(To be considered in conjunction with definition)
Surface/subsurface Irrigation	Missing warning signs
	Some spray heads inoperable
	Irrigation line not buried
Absorption/Evapo-transpiration	Overgrown vegetation
	Infrequent livestock access
	Damp/soft underfoot but no visible signs of effluent

Maintained by Department	People and Places	**Approved By:**			
Reference	Policy Register	**Council Policy Number**	5.9	**Effective Date**	
Minute Number		**Version Number**	V2	**Review date**	
Attachments					