

On-Site Sewage Management (OSSM) Policy

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1 OUTCOMES

- 1.1 This policy document outlines how the risks associated with the widespread use of On-Site Sewage Management Systems (OSSMs) are managed within the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) Local Government Area (LGA).
- 1.2 Almost all of the QPRC LGA is part of a catchment supplying drinking water to Sydney, Canberra, Queanbeyan, and local towns such as Bungendore, Braidwood and Captains Flat.
- 1.3 There are currently around 7000 OSSM's in the LGA, servicing dwellings with no access to reticulated sewer. The failure of an OSSM can be a source of serious environmental and public health concern.

2 POLICY

The policy aims to:

- Outline the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders regarding OSSM's
- Guide property owners towards sustainable on-site management of domestic/business/commercial sewage and wastewater (excluding Liquid Trade Waste – see Palerang Council Liquid Trade Waste Policy for details);
- Protect and enhance the quality of public health and the environment in the long term within the QPRC LGA
- Coordinate environmental assessment, data collection and monitoring which is related to On-Site Sewage Management
- Assist Council to prioritise resources for the efficient regulation and monitoring of on-site sewage management systems within its area
- To support water quality objectives in the drinking water catchments; and
- To ensure that all on-site sewage management systems in the QPRC area meet the various water catchment authorities current recommended practices and standards

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 3 This Policy applies to all fixed on-site sewage management systems in the QPRC Council area that are not directly connected to the public sewage system. This Policy applies to all land within the QPRC Local Government Area with the exception of National Parks as outlined in the Department of Local Government Circular 99/59.

4 DEFINITIONS

Absorption: uptake of liquid into soil.

Aerated wastewater treatment system (AWTS): a wastewater treatment process typically involving:

- Settling of solids and flotation of scum;
- Oxidation and consumption of organic matter through aeration;
- Clarification - secondary settling of solids; and
- Disinfection of wastewater before surface irrigation.

Blackwater is defined as wastewater from a kitchen, toilet, urinal or bidet.

Desludging: withdrawing sludge, scum and liquid from a tank.

Disinfection: a process that destroys, inactivates or removes pathogenic microorganisms.

Domestic wastewater: wastewater arising from household activities, including wastewater from bathrooms, kitchens and laundries.

Greywater: For the purposes of these guidelines, means wastewater from washing machines, laundry tubs, showers, hand basins and baths, but does not include wastewater from a kitchen, toilet, urinal or bidet.

Groundwater: all underground waters.

Human waste treatment device (HWT): device for treating human excreta and other wastewater, including a septic tank, aerated wastewater treatment system, septic closet, water closet, humus closet and combustion closet (from the *Local Government Act 1993*).

Land application area: the area over which treated wastewater is applied.

Land application system: system that can consist of pumps, pipes, nozzles, or trenches designed to apply wastewater evenly over a land application area. Includes both irrigation systems and soil absorption systems.

On-site sewage is defined as both greywater and blackwater.

On-site sewage management systems (OSSMs)

Systems that collect, treat, and dispose of sewage on the property. These systems include:

- Septic Tank and evapotranspiration areas
- Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)
- Septic Tank to pump out
- Dry Composting Toilets
- Greywater Treatment Systems
- Wet Composting Toilets

Reticulated water supply: the provision by a water authority of water for potable and non-potable uses to households through a network of pipes

Septic tank: wastewater treatment device that provides a preliminary form of treatment for wastewater, comprising sedimentation of settle-able solids, flotation of oils and fats, and anaerobic digestion of sludge

Sewage: waste matter that passes through sewers. Sewage includes any effluent of a kind referred to in paragraph (a) of the definition of waste in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Sewage management: any activity carried out for the purpose of holding or processing, or reusing or otherwise disposing of, sewage or by-products of sewage.

Soil absorption system: (includes leach drains, drain fields, absorption trenches, seepage beds and seepage pits) subsurface land application systems that rely on the capacity of the soil to accept and transmit the applied hydraulic load

Treated wastewater: (in this guidelines) wastewater that has received treatment via a human waste treatment device

Waterless composting toilet: (humus closet, biological toilet) waterless system that uses the principle of composting to break down human excreta to a humus-type material. The liquid fraction is evaporated or directed to an appropriate management system

Wet composting toilet: treats all household wastewater and putrescible household organic solid wastes such as food waste. Uses the principle of aerobic composting to break down the solid waste; the liquid component is directed to a land application system after passing through the pile of solids.

5 LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND/OR RELEVANT STANDARDS

5.1 This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the latest available editions or revisions of:

- The Local Government Act 1993;
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005;
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979;
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000;
- Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011;
- Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2017; and
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.

To ensure that your system is compliant with legislative requirements you will need to obtain two approvals under the Local Government Act 1993:

- **C5-** Approval Install, construct, or alter a waste treatment device or a human waste storage facility or a drain connected to any such device or facility (issued prior to the installation of the system)
- **C6-** Approval to Operate a system of sewage management (ongoing approval to be reissued as required and maintained for the life of the system)

5.2 Standards Applying to On-site Sewage Management Systems

In implementing the On-site Sewage Management Policy Council will adhere to the following standards:

- All new human waste treatment devices shall be accredited by NSW Health Department;
- AS3500 National Plumbing and Drainage Code;
- AS1546 On-site Domestic Wastewater Treatment Units (part 1 applies to septic tanks);
- AS1547 On-site domestic wastewater management;
- AS4419 Soils for Landscaping and Garden Use;
- AS2698 Plastic Pipes and Fittings for Irrigation and Rural Applications;
- AS3000 Wiring Rules – Electrical Installation – Buildings, Structures and Premises;
- AS1319 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment;

- Department of Local Government - Environment and Health Protection Guidelines: On-site sewage management for single households, (aka 'Silver Bullet') <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Onsite-sewage-management-guide.pdf>
- Water NSW - Neutral or Beneficial Effect on Water Quality Assessment Guidelines <https://www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/catchment/development/norbe>
- Water NSW - Designing and Installing On-Site Wastewater Systems https://www.waternsw.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/58251/Designing-and-Installing-On-Site-Wastewater-Systems-WaterNSW-CRP-2019.pdf
- New South Wales Health Greywater Reuse in Sewered Single Domestic Premises <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/domesticwastewater/Documents/greywater-reuse-policy.pdf>
- NSW Health Advisory Note 3 – May 2006: Destruction, Removal or Reuse Of Septic Tanks, Collection Wells, Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems and other Sewage Management Facility Vessels <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/domesticwastewater/Documents/adnote3.pdf>

6 OSSM PROGRAMS

6.1 Maintenance of OSSM Database

Information provided to Council as part of the application to operate an On-site Sewage Management facility will form the basis of the information database. Information collected during the inspection and information from Council's planning and development processes will be included to provide a comprehensive record of each OSSM.

6.2 Education Promotion

It is important that owners of OSSM understand how their system operates and the possible consequences of a faulty or mismanaged system. Older houses with on-site systems may have been bought and sold a number of times and current owners may not even know where the system is located.

Council recognises its responsibility to provide appropriate information to owners. This will be through Council's inspection program which will include informal education of owners on site and distribution of information and fact sheets when required. Information will also be provided on Council's website.

6.3 Inspection of Existing OSSM's

6.3.1 Inspection Program:

Council officers will audit individual sewage management facilities having regard to the performance standards specified in AS/NZS 1547:2012 – On-site Domestic Wastewater Management, the environment and Health Protection Guidelines for "On-Site Sewage Management for Single Households"

The circumstances in which Council will inspect an OSSM are as follows:

- Periodic inspection of an existing OSSM;
- Re-inspection of an existing OSSM due to failure, modification or upgrade;
- Re-approval of an existing OSSM;
- Initial inspection of a new system; and
- Council becomes aware of a potentially failing OSSM.

6.3.2 Fees and Charges:

Council has adopted the proposal to include ongoing On-site Sewage Management System fees as a rates charge (outlined in QPRC's current Fees and Charges Schedule) which is split over the life of the approval. The fees which are charged are updated annually in accordance with QPRC's Annual Fees and Charges Policy

6.3.3 Notice of Entry

Council are required by Section 193 of the Local Government Act 1993, to give written notice of their intention to enter premises for the purpose of conducting an inspection. Property owners will be notified in writing a minimum of 14 days prior to the scheduled date for the inspection.

Property owners are able to be present for the inspection but are not required to be. The inspector does not require access to any residential buildings on the property. Property owners are to ensure that gates are not locked on the inspection date or gate keys are made available and animals that may pose a risk to visitors are restrained, otherwise arrangements for access are to be previously arranged.

In most cases property owners allow Council staff to enter their properties for the purposes of conducting an OSSM inspection. However, in some cases property owners repeatedly deny access by locking gates. If a property is not able to be accessed on the scheduled inspection date and other arrangements have not been made, the inspecting officer will leave a card requesting contact to be made to arrange another time for the inspection.

If no contact is made, Council may use its power under Section 194 of the Act to enter the property by force. This inspection will be restricted to the part of the land where the OSSM and disposal area are located. The entry is made in accordance with the requirements of Section 200(b) of the Act. Property access will be by cutting chains to allow access and relocking the gate with a split link.

6.3.4 Powers of Authorised Officers

Section 191 of the Local Government Act 1993 allows Authorised Officers of Council to enter premises for the purposes of enabling Council to exercise its functions. These functions include issuing approvals to operate OSSMs in accordance with Section 68 of the Act.

Section 192 of the Local Government Act 1993 describes what Councils can do whilst undertaking inspections. In relation to OSSM inspections, Council Authorised Officers are able to:

- a) inspect the premises and any food, vehicle, article, matter or thing on the premises, and
- b) for the purpose of an inspection:

- i. open any ground and remove any flooring and take such measures as may be necessary to ascertain the character and condition of the premises and of any pipe, sewer, drain, wire or fitting, and
 - ii. require the opening, cutting into or pulling down of any work if the person authorised has reason to believe or suspect that anything on the premises has been done in contravention of this Act or the regulations, and
- c) take measurements, make surveys and take levels and, for those purposes, dig trenches, break up the soil and set up any posts, stakes or marks, and
 - d) require any person at those premises to answer questions or otherwise furnish information in relation to the matter the subject of the inspection or investigation, and
 - e) examine and test any meter, and
 - f) measure a supply of water, and
 - g) take samples or photographs in connection with any inspection.

6.3.5 Inspection Process

During the inspection Council Officers will locate the OSSM on the property either by previously recorded GPS coordinates or visually locating the system. Council officers will examine all aspects of the OSSM including the tank/s, associated pipework and land disposal area.

- The OSSM will be given a risk rating in accordance with Section 6.4.3 of this policy
- Systems which are operating in accordance with relevant standards and requirements will be issued with an approval to operate under Section 6.4 of this policy
- Systems which are not meeting the required standards for an approval to operate to be issued will be dealt with in accordance with Section 6.5 of this policy

6.4 Issuing of Approvals to Operate a System of Sewage Management

6.4.1 Requirements:

Under section 68 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993 approval is required to operate a system of sewage management. QPRC is the approval authority for on-site systems within the QPRC local government area.

Clause 42 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* provides the definition of "operating a system of sewage management". The definition includes all systems that result in the disposal of effluent on site, and systems that hold or process sewage that is subsequently discharged into a public sewer, such as pump out systems.

Clause 44 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* also outlines the performance standards which a system of sewage management must operate in accordance with, prior to the issue of an 'Approval to Operate'. Operating an OSSM does not include any use of sewage or sewage by-products after their discharge into a public sewer (Clause 42 3b).

When a new OSSM is installed, usually associated with a development application for a dwelling, the approvals to install and operate are managed by the Development Services function of Council. Re-approvals are managed by the OSSM Approvals function of Council.

The general process for obtaining an Approval to Operate an OSSM is:

- Council sends a notice of entry letter specifying the inspection date;
- A council officer completes an assessment to determine whether the system is functioning according to relevant standards;
- An approval to operate with a set of conditions is sent to the landowner along with any other relevant information.

6.4.2 Performance Standards:

The Council must prescribe performance standards when determining applications for approvals to install or operate on-site sewage management facilities. Minimum performance standards are specified by the Division of Local Government under s44 Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, the Council cannot approve any application that will not comply with relevant Regulations. These minimum performance standards are listed below.

An on-site sewage management system must be designed, installed and operated to ensure that the following environmental and health performance objectives will continue to be met over the long term:

- The prevention of the spread of disease by micro-organisms;
- The prevention of the spread of foul odours;
- The prevention of the contamination of water;
- The prevention of the degradation of soil and vegetation;
- The discouragement of insects and vermin;
- Ensuring that persons do not come into contact with untreated sewage or effluent in their ordinary activities on the premises concerned;
- The minimisation of adverse impacts on the amenity of the premises and surrounding lands;
- If appropriate, provision for the reuse of resources including nutrients, organic matter, and water.

6.4.3 Risk Classification:

New systems shall be given a risk rating at the time of approval and existing sites at the time of the first inspection. The risk rating (known as the OSSM Risk Assessment Matrix) shall determine the frequency of inspections which are:

- High – inspected every two years;
- Medium – inspected every five years.

In determining the risk classification, and subsequently the approval period for each sewage management facility, Council has taken into consideration the following factors:

- Distance from nearest body of water (vicinity of system to rivers, creeks, drainage depressions and dams increase the risk of contamination in the event of failure);
- Area of land (ie residential blocks are higher risk sites than rural properties);
- Soil type (affects moisture absorption ability);
- Distance to downhill boundaries (affects potential for off-site impacts);
- Number of bedrooms/occupants of premises (affects potential load on the system and risk of failure);
- Landfall/slope (affects potential spread of contaminated water);

- Level of groundwater/nearest bore (potential to contaminate groundwater);
- Arrangements for stormwater diversion (whether a diversion bank/drain is installed and the likelihood of stormwater entering the system area);
- Type of system proposed/in use (affects potential for a contamination event);
- Proximity to human activity (closer increases the contamination risk).

Note: See attached OSSM Risk Assessment Matrix

The inspecting officer can provide advice whether the risk level of a system can be reduced through minor improvements, such as the installation of a diversion bank upslope of the tank and effluent disposal areas to prevent overland flow from increasing the soil saturation of these areas. Alternatively, a different system can need to be installed to reduce the risk level.

The risk classification may be reviewed periodically and an OSSM may be reclassified. In the event that a system is reclassified, the approval period and associated fees and charges will be updated and reflected in the Rates Notice for that property in the following financial year.

6.5 Compliance and Enforcement for Failing Systems

OSSM systems that are failing to meet the public health and environmental standards required by the Local Government Act and Australian Standard 1547-2012 pose significant risks to both public and environmental health. Council has legislative obligations which require action to be taken to prevent public health and environmental risks by ensuring that failing OSSM systems are repaired in a timely manner.

In most cases it will be the disposal area that fails, usually due to waterlogging of the soil and absorption failure. The signs of failure are generally as follows:

- Odour associated with effluent is present
- Water is pooling on the surface of the disposal area
- The disposal area is overgrown with vegetation (or noticeably greener than the surrounding area)

6.5.1 Initial Notification of Failure

Property owners with systems that are failing to meet the conditions for a reissue of approval and/or performance requirements will be notified in writing of the failure. This letter will include reasons for the failure. Property owners will be required to consult a licensed plumber for advice on the system and possible rectification options and then, to notify Council in writing of proposed works prior to any work commencing on the system and within 30 days of the date on the letter.

The type of works proposed to be undertaken may require further approval from Council (See Section 6.6 of this policy). This generally applies when a full replacement of the system or disposal area is required. In this case, property owners will be required to lodge an application under Section 68 of the Local Government Act 1993 and provide supporting information including a site plan, geotechnical assessment report and accreditation details of the new system components (refer to *section 6.6* Installation of a new OSSM).

6.5.2 90 Day Reinspection

Council will reinspect failing systems 90 days after the date of the initial failure letter. Systems which have been rectified and are assessed as meeting appropriate performance standards will then be risk rated and an Approval to Operate will be issued in accordance with this rating.

A reinspection of an OSSM will incur a reinspection fee as per Councils Fees and Charges Policy.

Systems which fail to meet performance standards at the reinspection will be issued with a Notice of Proposed Order under the Local Government Act 1993. This notice triggers a legislative process in which Council can assure that required works are carried out. This process will also result in increased costs to property owners as Penalty Infringement Notices may be issued for non-compliance with an order.

6.5.3 Order

Where discussions with property owners fail to ensure that repairs are undertaken to rectify failing OSSM Systems, Council has a number of Options under Section 124 of the *Local Government Act* to order property owners to comply with requirements. Council can issue the following orders that:

- Require action to be taken to bring a sewerage system into compliance with relevant standards or requirements (Order No. 5)
- Require owners or operators to do or refrain from doing such things to prevent environmental damage or repair environmental damage (Order No. 11)
- Require an activity on a premises (such as operating an OSSM) where the activity is or may constitute a threat to public health or safety to cease (Order No. 15)
- Require action to maintain a premises in a healthy condition (Order No. 21)
- Require the connection to a public sewer where the sewer is within 75 metres and available for connection (Order No. 24)
- Require owner or operators to use or not to use a human waste storage facility (Order No. 25)
- Require compliance with an approval (Order No. 30)

Note: In instances where failing OSSM's are polluting waters orders may also be issued under Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997. These notices have an associated administration fee.

6.6 Installation of a new OSSM or Upgrade of Existing OSSM System

Prior to the installation of a new OSSM or alteration to an existing OSSM, approval must be obtained from Council. The application must be submitted through the NSW Planning Portal (<https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/>)

6.6.1 Maintenance and Repair of Existing Systems

In some circumstances maintenance or repair of existing systems can be undertaken without approval from Council. These repairs are considered minor and include works such as:

- Repairing broken pipework
- Repairing damaged or broken tanks
- Replacement of absorption trenches only

Other minor maintenance works may be permitted without approval and should be discussed with the inspecting officer at the time of inspection

6.6.2 Wastewater Site Assessment and System Selection

This choice of system must be made in accordance with the current version of AS/NZS 1547 Onsite Domestic Wastewater Management and the Department of Local Government's 'Silver Book' following a site assessment by a wastewater consultant. This assessment must recommend a particular combination of a treatment system and land application method. This information must be provided in an on-site wastewater report and submitted as part of the development application.

All treatment systems must be accredited by NSW Health. The current NSW Health Accreditation Certificate for the system is to be submitted as part of the application for a new system.

6.6.3 Application Requirements

All applications to install and alter an effluent disposal management system must be accompanied by a wastewater report that includes the following information:

a) Wastewater Loading:

For residential dwellings (including dual occupancies) design waste water loading based on the number of potential bedrooms (including rooms capable of being a bedroom) and type of water supply as follows.

Number of Bedrooms	Litres Per Day	
	Rainwater	Reticulated/Bore Water
1-2	400	600
3	600	900
4	800	1200
5+	Additional 100L per bedroom	Additional 150L per bedroom

Note: For non-dwelling proposals the wastewater loading must be in accordance with AS/NZS1547:2012 - On-site domestic wastewater management.

b) Site Plan:

The site plan should include:

- The drainage network, water courses, drainage depressions and dams, roadside and other open drains;
- Vegetation and shading/exposure;

- Orientation;
- Any poor drainage/wet seepage areas and springs;
- River flats/floodplains or flood planning level;
- Any ground water bores located within 100m of the effluent management area and their use, Groundwater bores within 100m and if <100m then the site plan must be accompanied by a statement from the owner of the bore that it is not used for potable domestic water supply;
- Existing wastewater management structures and effluent management areas;
- Slope (%);
- General land form;
- Areas of runoff;
- Rock outcrops and geology;
- Stormwater management structures and erosion control measures;
- All existing and proposed structures including buildings, accessways or roads, livestock yards;
- Buffer distances;
- Exposed soil/erosion potential/fill;
- Any environmentally sensitive areas of, any land located within 100 metres of the sewage management facility or related effluent application areas; and
- Any building or facility located within 100m of the proposed effluent management system.

c) Soil Information

Detailed soil information must include soil profiles of up to at least one metre (where possible) taken from the specific location of the proposed effluent management areas consistent with AS/NZS 1547:2000 On site domestic wastewater management. This information must describe:

- the soil texture and structure with depth as per AS/NZS 1547:2000;
- the dispersibility, and
- other relevant chemical or physical characteristics that could impact on sustainable effluent disposal as identified in the Silver Book or AS/NZS 1547:2000.

The information should also consider the following where relevant to the site:

- electrical conductivity/salinity (>8 dS/m is not suitable unless the soil is treated),
- sodicity (>10% is not suitable unless the soil is treated), and
- phosphorous sorption values for permeable sandy or granitic soils where effluent irrigation is proposed.

d) Climate Information- including monthly rainfall and evaporation data

e) Buffer Distances

It is necessary, when installing on-site disposal systems, to ensure that sufficient viable land is left for activities where human contact with land application areas are minimized, for example clothes drying and recreation within the yard of each premises.

Associated with this are buffer zones around the disposal field to minimise impacts on the surrounding environment and to reduce the potential for human contact with wastewater.

The standard buffer zones under the guidelines for all systems are:

System	Minimum buffer distances
Treatment/Storage Tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 metres if tanks are upgradient and 3 metres if tanks are downgradient of below ground potable water tanks • 3 metres from land application system • 1.5 metres from dwelling
All land application systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 metres to permanent surface waters (river, stream, lake etc) • 100 metres to domestic groundwater well or bore • 40 metres to other waters (farm dams, intermittent waterways and drainage channels) • Located outside of the dripline of any tree as determined by Council as being required to be retained by a tree plan
Surface spray irrigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 metres if area upgradient and 3 metres if area downgradient of driveways and property boundaries • 15 metres to dwellings • 3 metres to paths and walkways • 6 metres to swimming pools
Surface drip and trickle irrigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 metres if area upgradient and 3 metres if area downgradient of swimming pools, property boundaries, driveways and buildings
Subsurface irrigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 metres if area upgradient and 3 metres if area downgradient of swimming pools, property boundaries, driveways and buildings
Absorption system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 metres if area upgradient and 6 metres if area downgradient of property boundary • 6 metres if area upgradient and 3 metres if area downgradient of swimming pools, driveways and buildings

f) Effluent Irrigation

Subsurface irrigation will be required if the:

- Average annual rainfall exceeds 1200mm,
- Neighbouring dwellings are within 100m of the proposed effluent management area,
- Effluent management area slope is greater than 7%,
- On-site Sewage Management System is to be located within an unsewered residential area.
- The effluent irrigation area needs to be regularly mowed to maintain a maximum height of 100mm to remove nutrients for long term sustainability.

Where surface irrigation is proposed, moveable hoses, including semi fixed systems will not be acceptable

7 SYSTEM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Existing Pit Toilets

Pit toilets (or cess pits, long drops) have historically been used as a low-cost form of sewage disposal, particularly in remote areas. However, they pose a potential to contaminate groundwater and surface waters and are not considered appropriate. Council will conduct a survey of existing pit toilet locations and encourage landholders to upgrade systems in accordance with the level of use of the land. New pit toilets applications will not be accepted in QPRC area.

7.2 Requirements for AWTS Systems

7.2.1 Servicing and Maintenance:

AWTS Systems are required to be serviced and maintained in accordance with the conditions of their NSW Health Certificate of Accreditation. At a minimum service agents should check all mechanical components of the system, check the irrigation/disposal area and test effluent qualities for parameters such as pH, dissolved oxygen and free residual chlorine.

7.2.2 Quarterly Reporting:

All AWTS are required to have quarterly services from an appropriately qualified service contractor with all reports and documentation held together on site and copies submitted to Council. These can be posted, emailed or delivered to the front counter of any QPRC office, with clearly marked addresses, property number and OSSM number provided to you by Council in documentation related to your system.

7.3 Decommissioning Existing and Abandoned OSSM's

OSSM's contain untreated wastewater which if abandoned and incorrectly decommissioned, can leak contaminants into the soil and groundwater. This can include bacteria, viruses, parasites and nitrates which can cause diseases or other health or environmental problems. This has the potential to contaminate the soil and groundwater and pollute local watercourses.

Septic tanks that have not been correctly decommissioned may also pose a safety hazard. There have been serious injuries and even deaths caused by a fall into an abandoned septic tank when the lid collapsed.

A septic tank may need to be decommissioned under the following circumstances:

- If the tank is irreparable and requires replacement
- If Council requires the Septic to be decommissioned
- There may be other reasons triggered by development application assessment or change of land use.

If a septic tank is to be decommissioned, the property owner is required to notify Council in writing including the proposed date and the reason why the tank is being decommissioned. This must then be carried out adhering to the following Advisory Note: NSW Health Advisory Note 3 – May 2006: Destruction, Removal or Reuse Of Septic Tanks, Collection Wells, Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems and other Sewage Management Facility Vessels <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/domesticwastewater/Documents/adnote3.pdf>

7.4 Unacceptable Practices

The following systems will not be acceptable:

- Trench system longer than 200m;
- Absorption systems where soil is medium or heavy clay;
- Absorption systems where there is less than 0.75m of soil;
- Trenches more than 20m long except where they are made of 2 separate inline trenches with a central feeder or where trenches are pressure dosed from a pump well;
- Amended soil mounds with slopes of more than 7%;
- Solar powered systems where continuous power is required for normal operation such as aerated wastewater treatment systems;
- Reed bed systems except in exceptional circumstances;
- Pump out systems for domestic use.

8 REVIEW

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier as necessary if:
- a) legislation requires it, or
 - b) Council's functions, structure or activities change