



Septic Safe

Fact Sheet 9



On-site Sewage Management Fee

Properties that have an on site sewage management system (eg septic tank, AWTS) pay an annual management fee. This fee will be listed on your Rates & Charges Notice as a single bill.

The on-site sewage management fee covers

- Part of the cost of conducting a survey of on site sewer management facilities to identify defective systems that threaten public or environmental health
- general advice that we provide to owners
- replacement of the need for periodic renewal of approval fees.



Background Information

Following the Wallis Lake hepatitis outbreak 1997, the State Government introduced amendments to the Local Government Act making it an obligation for councils to better supervise septic installations and other on- site sewage management facilities. Council has been obliged to require the owners of non-sewered parcels of land with toilets or other improvements to seek an “approval to operate” sewage management facilities whereas previously only an initial approval was required.

A program was commenced in Byron Shire that has included registering all systems, inspecting them to verify correct operation, requiring correction of defective systems, and determining a risk factor for each installation.

Council has introduced a small on-site sewage management fee to be charged to the owners of un-sewered land to more equitably spread the cost of meeting the continuing obligations under the Local Government Act (General Regulation) 2005. The fee covers in part the cost of carrying out an initial survey of on-site sewage management facilities commenced in 2002 and expected to take around 10-12 years to

complete. A desk-top risk assessment undertaken early in the program is guiding field officers to review systems on the basis of the potential risk to health and the environment of poorly performing or defective on-site sewage management facilities.

The fee paid enables the initial field survey and advice to be provided to the owners of systems without further charge. It will also cover renewals of on-site sewage management approvals to operate.

Recent amendments to the Local Government Act permit a charge to be levied with rate assessments for work associated with on-site sewage management.

The charge outlined above does not cover the initial approval to install or operate a sewage management system, transfer of approval to operate - when a new owner takes over a system, reinspection fees required if a system requires a review, consulting fees, or administration fees applicable to any notices that may have been issued.

It should be noted that the program is still being subsidised from the general rate, on the basis of it being recognised that some benefits of the program accrue to the wider community.

Further Information

Environment and Health Unit

E2017/5435 Jan 2017

