



# Septic Safe

## Fact Sheet 12



## OnSite Sewage System (OSMS) Management Fee

Properties that have an on site sewage management system (e.g. septic tank) pay an annual fee that is listed on your rates notice once per year. The fee helps us help you protect human and environmental health.

The on-site sewage management fee allows council to fund the following services:

- To engage with owners, particularly new owners of properties with septic system so they have an understanding of how to look after a septic system.
- To identify defective systems that threatens public or environmental health.
- To provide general advice to owners of properties with on site sewage management.

**Note:** septic systems include compost toilets, grey water diversion and grey water management systems.



### Why is this fee required?

There are more than 4000 on site sewage systems in the Byron Shire, more than the number of households that are connected to one (of four) council sewage treatment plants. Collectively and individually they have high potential for negative impacts on human health (you, your family, tenants, visitors and neighbours) and the general environment that we all enjoy.

This fee funds the OSMS management program whilst minimising the impact on council's general fund.

### Background Information

Following the Wallis Lake incident in 1997, where more than 400 people became ill contracting hepatitis A after eating oysters contaminated with human effluent, the State Government introduced amendments to the Local Government Act and regulations requiring Councils to implement strategies and guidelines to better supervise septic system installations and operation.

### The changes require:

- all owners to register their systems with council and manage their systems consistent with the requirements of their approvals.
- Councils to keep a register of all systems
- Councils to provide services relating to septic systems.

Council has introduced a small on-site sewage management fee for owners of un-sewered land to more equitably spread the cost of meeting the continuing obligations under the Local Government Act (General Regulation) 2005.

### Council services include

- Routine inspections: are based on the potential risk to humans and the environment.



- Pre lodgement advice: if you are planning to upgrade because of home renovations, new dwellings or the system needs an upgrade (they don't last forever) you can contact Councils Environmental Health services team for consultation before lodging your Section s68 application (see below).
- Independent advice: if you are unsure of the advice being provided by a tradesperson concerning your septic system you are free to engage with us.

## s68 Applications

A Section 68 application is a requirement of the [Local Government Act](#). It requires property owners and or plumbers to make an application to council before making alterations to or installing new septic systems. Penalties can be applied for not obtaining that approval and the works may need redoing. So work with council to avoid unnecessary cost and potential penalties, we are here to help you.

Environment Health Services

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