

Septic Tank Systems: Education and Compliance Program



*South Gippsland
Shire Council*

What is Council Doing?

In 2016 the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan was adopted, this outlined the risks posed by septic tank systems across the shire and defined some initiatives to better control those risks.

Since adoption of the plan Council has implemented many of the initiatives, one of which is an education program for the general public and ensuring that property owners with septic tank systems are getting them serviced.

Why is Council Doing This?

Council adopted the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan and committed to its initiatives in order to:

- Protect public health from poor performing systems
- Protect the environment from untreated wastewater, which carries high levels of nutrient and bacteria
- Protect drinking water as more than one third of South Gippsland is in declared water supply catchments
- Enable ongoing development within the Tarwin Catchment, which otherwise would be limited to one house per 100 acres

What does this mean for Property Owners?

Many property owners have been actively maintaining their septic tank systems, having a licensed plumber inspect the system at three month, one year or three year intervals, depending on the system type. When requested, these owners can simply send in evidence of having the last scheduled service.

Property owners who haven't been servicing their systems regularly that receive an evidence request letter will need to contact a licensed plumber. The plumber will attend on site, inspect all the components of the system and complete the provided service report.

Property owners who have not received a letter but are planning to proactively have their system serviced can contact Council to have the service report form for their property sent to them.

Common Misconceptions

Council is not:

- Asking for a pump out, these do not assess overall function and can temporarily mask other issues
- Requiring older system be upgraded provided they are still functioning
- Requiring unnecessary repairs; any repairs specified by plumbers are only to ensure the ongoing operation of systems, preventing future costly or dangerous outcomes