



Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026

Annual
Implementation
Update
May 2024

Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026

Council Plan Objective – Protecting and Enhancing our Environment

- Initiative:

Annual implementation of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DAMP) 2022-2026

| | | | Year 1 – 2022/2023 | |
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| STRATEGY | ACTION | When / Staging | Progress Update | Status |
| 1. Further develop information management systems | | | | |
| Improve the quality and quantity of wastewater related information captured | Identify and collect the appropriate information required for all installed septic tank systems | Ongoing | Historical wastewater permits have been reviewed and completed “permits to use” have been entered into Council’s corporate systems. New procedures have been implemented ensuring new permits are processed within statutory timeframes. | Completed |
| | Data capture processes to be reviewed to ensure efficiency of data entry and appropriate use of data fields for reporting and document processing purposes | Ongoing | Procedures have been reviewed and new ones implemented. All permit data is accurately processed at each of the permit stages. Timeframes have improved for processing which enables more current reporting. | Completed |
| | Develop and maintain partnerships and reporting agreements with service agents to improve reporting accuracy and efficiency | Ongoing | Relationships with stakeholders, builders, plumbers and property owners has significantly improved. A successful business breakfast was held enabling a two- way robust conversation around what was working and what wasn’t, which could be improved. | Completed |
| Better utilise information and Communication Technologies tools to | Maintain a relevant and accurate webpage, with links to/ from relevant external pages | Ongoing | The webpage is being reviewed looking for ways to improve information. Working closely with the communications team to make more user friendly. | On Track |

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| efficiently collect and store wastewater data | Cross reference wastewater licence information with other relevant permit controls, e.g. building or planning permits | 2021/2022 | Introduction of internal team meetings to assess incoming planning referrals for proposed subdivisions and/or development. This has resulted in reduced response times. | Completed |
| | Utilise in the field' data management and communication tools | Ongoing | iPads have recently been acquired for use in the field. Currently assessing suitable programs to implement to improve efficiency. | On Track |
| | Investigate suitable data sources for groundwater levels, soil types, effective transportation rates and treatment ability to identify high-risk areas | Ongoing | Information such as Land Capability Assessments (LCAs) where available are used to evaluate wastewater permits. Other data sources are considered when required such as bore hole locations. This information informs system design for the best environmental outcome from wastewater permits. | Completed |
| | Investigate costs and potential benefits of GIS-based wastewater mapping system including retrospective data entry | Ongoing | Not yet fully assessed but will be part of further system improvement. This action is due to commence in the 2024/25 reporting year. | On Track |
| Investigate and implement an online portal for wastewater contractors to use when submitting information to Council | Develop and implement an incentive strategy to promote the uptake of a Council approved online information management system i.e. a published list of 'Approved Service Agents'. Strategy to be implemented through Council's Wastewater Management Policy. Encourage, through education and incentives, wastewater contractors to adopt approved systems. | 2023/2024 | The Wastewater Management Policy (C78) is currently under review, with a view to looking to include these actions. The policy review is due to be finalised in the 2024/25 reporting year. | On Track |
| Risk Prioritisation | Investigate ways to use Council's corporate information management systems (Pathway/ TRIM/ Intramaps) to record on-site wastewater treatment systems that are known to be failing and causing risks to public and environmental health (low, medium, low-risk rating). | 2024/2025 | Not due to start this action until next year but the team has commenced re-establishing the foundations for corporate systems from which risk identification for properties can be established. | On Track |
| | Develop a procedure to record when risks have been addressed and removed | 2024/2025 | This will be developed in conjunction with the action above. | On Track |

| 2. Education and community consultation | | | | |
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| Raise profile of wastewater system operation and maintenance requirements within the municipality and region | Attend the South Gippsland Shire Council Sustainability Festival and other relevant community events to promote wastewater management best practice | 2022/2023 | Officers attend festivals as part of monitoring compliance with food safety standards. Where the festival is taking place in unsewered areas offices take the opportunity to also provide wastewater information. Wastewater information is also provided to our events team to ensure it is included with anyone looking to hold a festival in an unsewered area. | Completed |
| | Implement targeted education campaigns to property owners, occupiers and agents in high-risk areas at appropriate times | 2022/2023 | Applied on an as needed basis to specific properties. Enhanced campaigns to follow for the duration of the plan | On Track |
| | Provide readily accessible wastewater management information in hard copy and web-based format | 2022/2023 | The information is available and will continue to be ongoing | Completed |
| Provide regular opportunities to improve community and stakeholder understanding and support of improved wastewater management projects and programs | Develop and implement an ongoing community education program | Ongoing | Due to commence in 2024/25 | On Track |
| | Provide information on septic tank system best practice to property owners via community outlets and Council publications | Ongoing | Due to commence in 2024/25 | On Track |
| | Liaise with communities and local water authorities to progress community sewerage, where appropriate | Ongoing | Strong advocacy support is provided to sewer all townships such as Fish Creek. Attended a number of meetings with the Fish Creek Community Development Group and will continue as opportunities arise with other townships. | On Track |

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| | Work with the EPA, Water Authorities, Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and other interested stakeholders to achieve shared goals | Ongoing | Attend regular meetings with the EPA, building strong relationships. Council continues to meet regularly with other regulatory authorities. These relationships are important to Council and our stakeholders and will continue ongoing. | Completed |
| Develop and implement a process that will ensure all new property owners are informed about what type of on-site wastewater treatment system is on or available to their property | Section 32 notices to include basic information on property's on-site wastewater treatment system including: → Property on on-site wastewater treatment system indefinitely. → Property in a declared water catchment area. → Any outstanding notices issued on property with respect to on-site wastewater treatment system | Ongoing | Further work is required on this action in consultation with other internal departments. Due for completion 2024/25. | On Track |
| | Develop a process with Rates to be able to add or remove the available details on Section 32 notices as required | Ongoing | Follows on from action above. Due for completion 2024/25. | On Track |
| Disseminate information on landowner/occupier responsibilities and maintenance requirements for residents with on-site wastewater treatment systems when properties change hands | Develop a 'new residents kit' for all new residents who are moving into a property serviced by an on-site wastewater system | 2022/2023 | Requires input from other internal departments. This action has been pushed out to 2023/2024 | Monitor |
| | Upon notification of property transfer, provide new residents with details about their on-site wastewater management system including the type of system, maintenance and service conditions, a copy of the property's wastewater permit and plan (if available) | 2022/2023 | This action has been delayed but will be completed by 2023/24. Ensuring accuracy of historical data has delayed this action. | Monitor |
| Develop education materials for property owners and users of holiday accommodation, particularly those in sandy soils | Develop education materials for property owners who use their property for holiday type purposes (absentee land owners) to educate on matters such as restarting on-site wastewater systems after a period of absence and what to do when you leave the property | 2022/2023 | The educational materials are currently in draft, with collaboration taking place. Communications Team to finalise materials. Due for completion 2024/25. | Monitor |

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| | Develop resources for property owners to provide to guests staying at holiday houses and accommodation serviced by on-site wastewater systems | 2022/2023 | This action planned for 2024 as part of the same educational package for our community | Monitor |
| Develop targeted resources for industry | Develop dedicated education of property agents and owners of short-term rentals regarding management of on-site wastewater treatment systems in holiday rentals in a Communications Plan | 2023/2024 | Educational material currently being developed. | On Track |
| 3. Strategic planning and infrastructure development | | | | |
| Reduce impact of off-site discharges through available mitigation remedies | Investigate health protection measures to address high-risk and accessible contaminated stormwater drains or groundwaters | Ongoing | This action is ongoing – water sampling commencing in 2024. Sampling locations have been identified. | On Track |
| | Seek improved maintenance and development of stormwater drainage in priority townships in partnership with Maintenance and Engineering departments | Ongoing | Through the sampling program Council will be able to better target any interventions required in consultation with our other Council departments. | On Track |
| | Identify funding opportunities to implement improvement options in priority townships | Ongoing | Council continues to look for funding opportunities – e.g. DEWLP grant for improved wastewater management within the Shire | On Track |
| Investigate alternative, community-scale treatment systems for priority townships and availability of funding | Investigate innovative and sustainable community-scale or on-site wastewater treatment and water cycle management solutions in partnership with key stakeholders | Ongoing | In consultation with other stakeholders such as EPA and system designers Council will contribute to the evaluation of new systems, providing they comply with the relevant legislation and codes of practice. This was evidenced in Fish Creek. | On Track |
| Liaise with appropriate departments to ensure that planning and infrastructure proposals adequately address wastewater | Assess existing block density in unsewered townships and investigate options to reduce density to sustainable levels | Ongoing | Where opportunities arise block density is assessed. Wastewater management is a complex science, with everchanging technology and codes of practice, so we need to be agile in responding these changes within Council and with external agencies | On Track |

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| management needs for townships | Develop clear policy guidelines for future developments with unsewered townships and for unsewered allotments within sewerer townships | Ongoing | This action is subject to review of Wastewater Management Policy which is expected to be completed in 2024. Will be commenced 2024/25. | On Track |
| | Review Planning Scheme and other relevant Council policies to identify opportunities for improvements to existing wastewater management clauses and/or policies | Ongoing | This is a continuous process. Every opportunity is taken to review policies. Expert input is regularly provided to planning the referral process as well as specific property issues. | On Track |
| | Continue to investigate and update appropriate design standards for high-risk townships so as to inform any future improvement plans | Ongoing | Council is committed to assessing the implications of standards for the best environmental and health outcome for our communities. | On Track |
| 4. Environmental monitoring | | | | |
| Develop an environmental monitoring program in cohabitation with other agencies | Identify and collate relevant existing environmental data for the South Gippsland Shire to quantify wastewater impacts on waterways, groundwater, public health and water catchments | 2022/2023 | Specific monitoring program is being developed in conjunction with South Gippsland Water. It is expected to be developed through 2024 | Monitor |
| | Design and implement an environmental monitoring strategy in collaboration with EPA, South Gippsland Water and Gippsland Water including industrial areas, high-risk locations and groundwater, for environmental and health contaminants (e.g. nutrients and pathogens) | 2022/2023 | Further consultation in 2024 is required with external agencies. Sampling data will assist informing any future strategy for our townships | Monitor |
| | Identify source locations for environmental monitoring and produce a publicly available map which shows these locations | 2022/2023 | A number of locations have been identified across the Shire to be sampled. Our testing program will commence in the second half of 2024 | Monitor |
| Implement an environmental monitoring program | Implement a comprehensive environmental monitoring program including the collection of water samples from selected locations, and arranging their analysis at a NATA-approved laboratory | 2021/2022 | Monitoring locations have been identified and preparations underway for our wastewater sampling program. | Monitor |

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| | Prepare an annual report outlining the results of the environmental monitoring program and any improvements that have been made | 2021/2022 | Sampling program about to commence, and future reporting will be provided. | Monitor |
| Secure funding for ongoing environmental monitoring program | Seek and source an ongoing funding stream for environmental monitoring sampling and analysis | 2025/2026 | Future years action | On Track |
| 5. Management of commercial properties | | | | |
| Develop wastewater standard conditions for wastewater permits issued for commercial businesses | Develop and include standard wastewater conditions for commercial properties to have pre-treatment (i.e. grease trap), similar to those implemented by South Gippsland Water trade waste arrangements | 2022/2023 | Currently managed on a case by case basis for specific properties. The knowledge gained from our commercial premises wastewater systems will support a consistent application of standards for future business operations | On Track |
| | Update South Gippsland Shire Council Wastewater Management Policy to allow Council to request on-site wastewater treatment system upgrades (i.e. pre-treatment), including where a new commercial premise is established either in a new or existing construction, where a change of use occurs for the land or building, or where a business significantly changes which impacts on the existing wastewater system | 2022/2023 | Policy currently under review – to be completed in 2024 | Monitor |
| Develop specific education for food businesses and on-site wastewater treatment system | Develop education for commercial food businesses in unsewered areas i.e. use of chemicals and impact on on-site wastewater treatment systems | 2022/2023 | Determined that this information was best managed on a case by case basis due to different factors such as to site conditions impacting each site. Information regarding the use of chemicals with wastewater systems is included in certificates to use. | Completed |
| | Link education to other programs already conducted by South Gippsland Shire Council including Food Safety Management activities | 2022/2023 | All education materials developed and provided link to other programs conducted by Council. | Completed |
| Improve the relationship between South Gippsland Shire Council and EPA works approvals | Establish a process for the exchange of information between the Shire and EPA on commercial properties that exceed 5,000 litres per day | Ongoing | A strong relationship has been developed with the Gippsland region EPA and meets regularly to share information. | Completed |

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| | Develop a better relationship between Council and the EPA to allow better sharing of information, particularly with regards to wastewater systems with EPA works approvals | Ongoing | As per action above. | Completed |
| Audit commercial businesses in identified high-risk areas | Conduct an audit for all commercial businesses located in the 'high-risk' locations identified in this plan to assess adequacy and to identify any immediate public or environmental health risks – every three years | 2022/2023 | Action commence but will take longer than first predicted. Will now be completed in the later years of the plan following improved information and data collection to inform any audit. | Monitor |
| 6. Continue to develop and implement compliance management | | | | |
| Implement an education program to assist property owners to understand and comply with their legal responsibilities for monitoring and maintaining their wastewater systems | Utilise web-based and hard copy information to promote correct maintenance of wastewater systems. | Ongoing | Maintenance of wastewater systems provided as part of certificate to use. Information also available on website and in hardcopy when requested. | Completed |
| | Public contact lists of appropriate servicing agents. | Ongoing | Details of service agents continuously updated and provided on request. | Completed |
| | Send reminders to all owners requiring annual service contracts or three-yearly de-sludging of primary systems | Ongoing | Reminder letters being sent as part of a broad education program. Currently reviewing the letters being sent and how often they are sent. | On Track |
| Improve electronic data capture and storage to maximise administrative efficiencies and assist in appropriate targeting of resources | Update existing hard copy records onto Council's electronic database. | Ongoing | Over 1000 service reports have been updated into Council's system. | On Track |
| Develop South Gippsland Shire Council wastewater installation guidelines | Implement a system to follow-up on owners who fail to maintain service contracts. | 2022/2023 | System has been implemented but issues have been identified. Looking at ways to improve the process as it is labor intensive. | Monitor |

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| | Review service reports and follow-up any outstanding failures. | 2022/2023 | Service reports reviewed and outstanding failures followed up. | On Track |
| | Implement an audit program to confirm accuracy of service reports and wastewater treatment system performance. | 2022/2023 | Audit program has been delayed. Has proven to be more difficult than expected. | Monitor |
| Review South Gippsland Shire Council Wastewater Management Policy | Review South Gippsland Shire Council's Wastewater Management Policy in line with recent legislative changes (Environment Protection Act 2020). Policy update to also include: → Major/ minor alterations and a clear definition of each; → Pump-out systems and the conditions in which they will be approved; → Council's domestic bore position and investigation process; and → Any other matter identified in the review. | 2022/2023 | Wastewater Management Policy review underway, anticipated to be finalised late in 2024 | Monitor |
| Develop a wastewater compliance and enforcement policy and associated procedures | Develop robust wastewater compliance processes including procedures for managing non-compliance | 2022/2023 | Compliance processes link to existing policies and procedures managed by the team. The Wastewater Management Policy will include specific compliance processes. | On Track |
| 7. Regulatory management | | | | |
| Advocate to government agencies and other stakeholders to improve the regulatory framework within which Council operates | Seek the development and implementation of improved wastewater management legislation and guidelines. | Ongoing | Ongoing as opportunities arise. The Health Team provide feedback to our legislators when requested from regulators. | On Track |
| | Influence government agencies to better coordinate wastewater and water supply policy and legislation. | Ongoing | Ongoing as opportunities arise. The Health Team provide feedback to agencies when requested. | On Track |
| | Work with EPA Victoria to facilitate improved designs for high-risk areas, such as coarse sand and heavy clay. | Ongoing | Ongoing as opportunities arise. Health staff meet regularly with EPA where system design are considered for compliance and improvement | On Track |

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| Alternative or innovative uses of existing legislation provisions to enhance wastewater management processes | Investigate options for applying controls to bore installation and use in sandy soil townships. | 2022/2023 | Action not yet commenced though consultation is conducted with Southern Rural Water on specific properties. This action will be advanced in late 2024 | Monitor |
| | Review wastewater management controls for temporary or seasonal use facilities (building sites, festivals, camping on private land) | 2022/2023 | Completed review of wastewater for camping on private land and building sites as part of General Local Law Review. New code introduced. | Monitor |
| Update the existing South Gippsland Shire Council Wastewater Management Policy | Review and update Council's Wastewater Management Policy in line with the new Environment Protection Act 2020 and the Environment Protection Regulations 2021. | 2022/2023 | Policy review underway. Working closely with the EPA. Anticipated completion late 2024 | Monitor |
| Develop Council's Wastewater Management Policy through evidence-based investigation | Identify funding opportunities to undertake Land Capability Assessments of priority townships and implement findings into Council's strategic policy and statutory programs | 2022 to 2025 | Continuously look for funding sources to undertake LCAs of unsewered townships. | Monitor |
| | Where appropriate, standardise guidelines and processes with neighbouring Councils and water authorities. | 2022 to 2025 | Policy Review underway – anticipated late 2024 | On Track |
| | Conduct targeted monitoring of stormwater systems, surface waters and groundwaters in high-risk areas. | 2022 to 2025 | Monitoring locations identified, sampling to commence in the second half of 2024 | On Track |
| 8. Reporting, audits and review | | | | |
| Annual internal review (with amendments as required). | Conduct an annual review and assessment of the progress achieved in the previous year of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan implementation and action plan | 2022/2023 2023/2024 2024/2025 2025/2026 | Annual review completed in 2022/23 however there was a delay in presenting to Council. Future reviews will be presented to Council in December each year. | On Track |
| | Prepare a report for Council and make publicly available: → Annual review to identify and allow for any major changes in wastewater legislation and industry – particularly as the implementation of the Environment Protection Act 2020 is implemented | 2022/2023 2023/2024 2024/2025 2025/2026 | Council report to be prepared to reflect these reviews and report made publicly available. | On Track |

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| | Conduct an audit to assess and report on the progress of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan implementation and action plan every three years and publish the report on Council's website | 2024/2025 | Audit to be conducted within nominated timeframe | On Track |
| Five-yearly review and report of this plan | Review and update the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan every five years as required by the State Environment Protection Policy: Waters. | 2026 | DWMP review will be conducted as required by the applicable legislation, noting SEPP - Waters no longer applies | On Track |
| Develop and strengthen external stakeholder relationships and collaboration | Identify shared water/ wastewater objectives and strategies with external water authorities and stakeholders. | Ongoing | Strong relationships have been developed with external stakeholders. | Completed |
| | Work with Southern Rural Water to develop a domestic bore installation process, including developing accurate mapping of bores within the Shire and providing property owners/ occupiers with information about the risks of using bore water and how to safely use that water around the home | Ongoing | There are challenges associated with bores being managed by an external agency often with conflicting outcomes. Further work with Southern Rural Water is required to have effective bore location information available to our stakeholders. | Monitor |
| | Promote and facilitate ongoing coordination of internal resources into wastewater management strategies and projects | Ongoing | Internal resources are required to deal with day to day operational management of wastewater and other statutory functions. A recent structural change to the team has resulted in improved response to wastewater issues. | Completed |
| Community engagement | Conduct community engagement every five years in line with the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan five-yearly review process | 2021/2022 2025/2026 | Community engagement was conducted to develop the 2022-2026 DWMP. Further engagement will be undertaken as part of the development of any future DWMP. | Completed |
| Advocate for and contribute to reform of the wastewater legislative framework | Advocate for improvements to legislative framework. | Ongoing | Ongoing as opportunities arise. Council works closely with external agencies such as EPA. | Completed |
| | Provide input into proposed legislation and standards pertaining to domestic wastewater. | Ongoing | Input provided as opportunities arise | Completed |