

Decommissioning of your Septic System

Hunter Water will soon be announcing the commissioning of the Ellalong Millfield Priority Sewer Scheme. The conditions and requirements for connection to the reticulated sewer will be outlined by Hunter Water.

Council recommends that all properties connect to the sewer, there are two (2) options available to ensure the safe decommissioning of your on-site sewage management system, as detailed below.

You are requested to advise Council when your property has been connected to sewer and the tank has been decommissioned. Upon receiving this advice Council will remove the operational fee from your rates.

OPTION 1: Decommissioning of Septic Tanks

This is to ensure that the redundant tank(s) do not cause any future public health, safety or environmental problems.

Procedure for decommissioning:

- (a) All effluent and sludge is to be removed from the redundant septic tank(s) by an approved contractor, utilising approved tanker vehicles and approved dump sites.
- (b) Once the tank(s) are pumped out they are to be treated with Agricultural Lime to disinfect and neutralise the tanks.
- (c) Following the lime treatment, a hole or holes adequate for drainage purposes should be provided to the bottom of the tank(s).
- (d) The concrete lids and portion of the tank walls are to be broken to ground level or below ground level.
- (e) The tank(s) are to be filled with solid, non putrescible fill, with the ground surface being made good. If settling of the fill material occurs over time, it may be necessary to make good the ground surface with further fill.



OPTION 2: Re-Use of Septic Tanks as a Storm Water Storage and Irrigation Tank

When existing premises are connected to the sewer most redundant septic tank(s) can be used on-site as storm water storage and irrigations tanks. This relates to non-drinking, or non potable uses only, and all tanks must be recommissioned using the procedure detailed overleaf.

To ensure that the redundant tank(s) do not cause any future public health or environmental problems, and meet the department of health guidelines council will undertake an audit of the tank conversion.

In accordance with Council's adopted scale of fees and charges, a fee of \$90.00 (Fees and charges 2009-2010) will be charged when submitting the audit application.

Procedure:

- (a) Submit to Council an audit application for the reuse of wastewater tanks for water storage purposes.
- (b) All effluent and sludge is to be removed from the redundant septic tank(s) by an approved contractor, utilising approved tanker vehicles and approved dump sites.
- (c) The tank sides, lid, baffle (if fitted and square junctions should be hosed down with water as the waste is being removed).
- (d) The tank should then be refilled with water and disinfected to a minimum concentrations of 5mg/L of free residual chlorine (refer Table 1). Mix the disinfectant in a plastic bucket - in the open air before adding it to the tank. Mix it as thoroughly as possible with the tank water and allow it to stand for a minimum of 30 minutes. Allow the Chlorine to dissipate naturally. The chlorine is readily accessible from most pool shops.

Table 1

Type of Chlorine	Concentration of Chlorine Required	Volume/Weight of Chlorine required per 1000 Litres of Water
Sodium Hypochlorite (Liquid - 12.5% available chlorine)	5mg/L	40 millilitres
Calcium Hypochlorite (Granulated - 75% available chlorine)	5 mg/L	7 grams

- (e) The inlet(s) and outlet(s) may be sealed to utilise additional storage volume. Pumps and other fittings may then be installed and connected to an irrigation system as required.
- (f) The tank must be mosquito proofed and fitted with a suitable strainer to prevent the introduction of coarse materials.
- (g) The tank is to be clearly marked with adequate signage as containing "water unfit for human consumption".
- (h) Non-standard water pipe fittings must also be used for the irrigation system. No connection is to be made with any potable water supply or any means which may be likely to contaminate any potable water supply.
- (i) Any overflow is to be directed to a storm water discharge point or a storm water device constructed in accordance with Council requirements.
- (j) Call Councils Environmental Health Section on 02 4993 4100 to arrange for an inspection of the system conversion. Following this inspection Council will advise on the suitability of the conversion in accordance with the department of health guidelines.

!!WARNING!!

Care should be taken when using Lime and Solid or Liquid Chlorine. It is recommended that appropriate precautionary steps be taken such as using personal protective equipment (skin protection, eye protection and respiratory protection). A copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for chlorine should be on hand. It is recommended that only properly qualified persons should be employed to perform any procedures using chemicals.