



LOCAL APPROVALS POLICY – CONVERSION OF SEPTIC TANKS FOR RAINWATER STORAGE

Dungog Shire Council

2023

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide for the safe, hygienic and environmentally sound decommissioning and conversion of existing septic tanks to rain water tanks for the purpose of rainwater storage and use, after premises are connected to the sewerage system or these tanks become redundant.

The objective will be achieved if at the time of inspection:

- a) The approved decommissioned septic tanks were converted in a manner as to not become the subject of any health risk, cause a reason for complaint or any environmental degradation.
- b) Any person wishing to re-use their decommissioned septic tanks for storage of rainwater is able to do so within the parameters of the policy statement.

2 PRINCIPLES

1. When the sewer is available, all premises must be connected to the system with septic systems decommissioned.
2. Property owners should be permitted to utilise an existing resource (septic tanks).
3. Use of the septic tanks for rainwater storage and then irrigation purposes is consistent with water conservation principles.
4. The method of conversion of septic tanks to water storage vessels should be carried out so as not to cause any nuisance, pollution or environmental concern.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

The property owner is to make written application to Council for approval of the conversion, and all work is to be done in a tradesman-like manner and may be subject to inspection by Council's Environmental Health Officers at any time. A fee will be charged to cover the cost of considering the approval and inspection.

4 CIRCUMSTANCES FOR EXEMPTION FROM OBTAINING APPROVAL

There are no circumstances under which a person would be exempt from the necessity to obtain an approval from the Council.

5 CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROVAL

- a) The septic tanks are to be completely emptied by an Approved Effluent Removal Contractor. The owner will be required to produce a receipt from Council's Contractor as proof that the tanks have been emptied and that the effluent and sludge has been properly disposed.

- b) The tanks must be cleaned and disinfected in an approved manner such as super chlorination. Super chlorination is best achieved using standard pool chemicals such as calcium hypochlorite or sodium hypochlorite. Recommended doses are 100mg per litre of water. Recommended dosages for standard sized septic tanks and holding wells are detailed below.

TANK VOLUME	AMOUNT OF CHLORINE REQUIRED
2050 litres	205 grams
4600 litres	460 grams

- c) The tanks must be protected to prevent access by insects, particularly mosquitoes and the lid must be adequately sealed and fixed to prevent child access.
- d) The water stored in the tanks must be used solely for irrigation purposes and all taps and lines that are associated with the irrigation system must be provided with clearly legible signs stating that "Water is not for Drinking Purposes".
- e) All irrigation pumps and associated electrical works are to be installed by Licence Contractors and meet relevant standards.
- f) Cross connection with the town water supply is not permitted under any circumstances.
- g) The connection of sullage wastes (laundry and kitchen waste waters) to the tanks **is not permitted**.
- h) The tanks are to be provided with adequate overflow provisions so as no nuisance is caused to neighbouring properties. The overflow from the system is to be directed via a sealed PVC pipeline in such a manner as to convey water to:
- i. The existing rainwater system;
 - ii. Disposal trenches situated at least 3 metres from any building;
 - iii. Council's kerb and gutter;
 - iv. an inter-allotment drainage system.

6 FEES

A fee is to be charged for receiving the application for approval and considering the application and inspecting the works. This fee will take into account the administrative time required to register the application and inspection time required to ensure that all work is done in accordance with the requirements of this Local Approvals Policy. The amount of the fee will be determined on an annual basis in accordance with Council's adopted Fees and Charges.

7 POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Responsible Officer: Director Planning and Environment
Council or Council
Management:
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