



MEDIA RELEASE

ARE YOU PLANNING AN UPGRADE TO YOUR SEPTIC TANK?

If you are planning to alter your septic tank or onsite wastewater management system you may require Council approval. Alterations such as upgrading your tank, retrenching or changing the type of system you use on your property, all require approval. This is a requirement under the *Environment Act 1990 (NI)* which states '*the construction, erection or alteration of a permitted sanitary facility requires approval.*'

The Application to construct, erect or alter a permitted sanitary facility form can be found on Council's website using the following link:

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/council/council-documents/planning-and-building>

The form will need to be lodged at Customer Care with all relevant documentation and the Waste & Environment Department will respond within 10 working days.

All applications will be assessed against the rapid evaluation procedure (attached to the form) that has been developed specifically for Norfolk Island to determine the most effective on-site system for land outside the area covered by the Water Assurance Scheme.

The procedure helps determine constraints to achieving ecologically sustainable on-site wastewater management (OSWM) through evaluation of site limitations and minimum assessment and design criteria.

All use and development that generates wastewater that is within 75 metres of the Norfolk Island Gravity Sewer Mains must connect to the sewer.

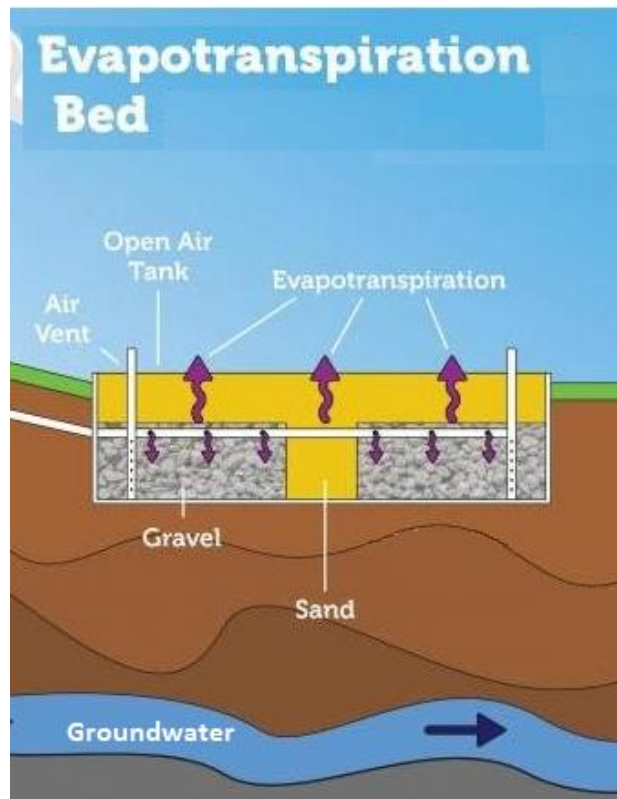
What is the main change for existing development?

Council prepared a revised Water Resources Development Control Plan (DCP) which was approved by the Administrator as the Minister's delegate. The revised DCP, known as DCP 2 – Water Resources 2021, is now in effect and is available at <http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/planning-and-development-planning-instruments>

The new DCP has a much more stringent approval process for new developments than previously required on Norfolk Island with the aim to bring the island in line with best practice, to ensure better environmental outcomes, and reduce public health risks to the community.

Existing developments are required to seek approval to ensure future work is as compliant as practicable with the new DCP. The main focus of these approvals will be the distance of effluent disposal areas to waterways and groundwater bores and to ensure that traditional adsorption trenches are no longer constructed.

If a trench is going to be used for the dispersal of effluent, it must be an evapotranspiration trench. These are much shallower and dispose of wastewater through evaporation from the soil surface and transpiration by plants, without discharging wastewater to the surface water or groundwater aquifer.

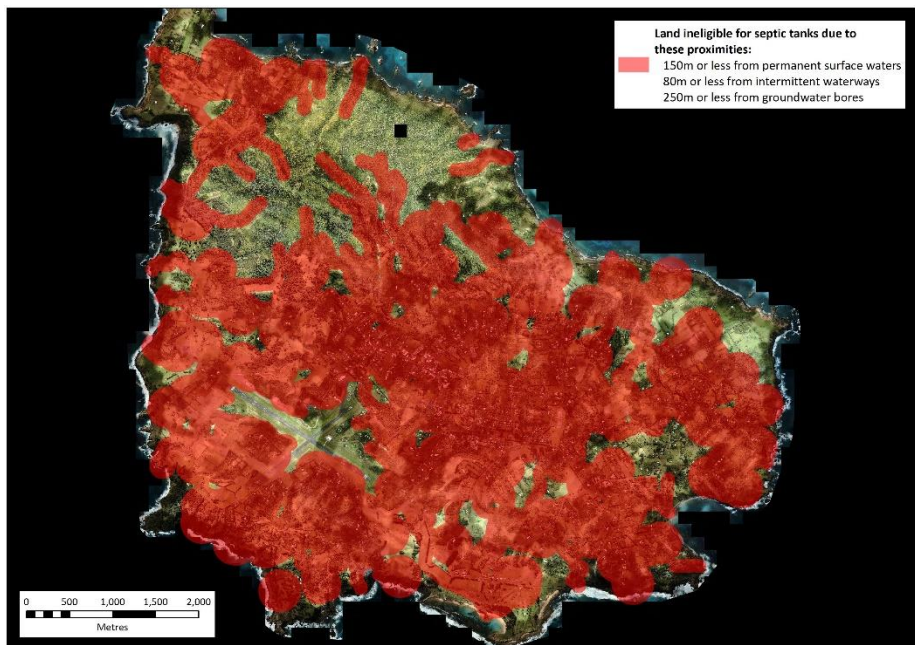


The need for change

It is well known that the impact of human activity on the island poorly placed and managed septic tanks, is having a detrimental impact on the receiving environment. The high nutrient loads from soakage trenches and livestock is now severely degrading the reef in Emily Bay which is showing signs of significant coral death and algae growth. Faecal contamination from these sources also poses a risk to human health, with swimmers and other bay users exposed to the risk of infection during run-off events.

Norfolk Island is not unique in this situation with many other Pacific islands and coastal regions experiencing severe degradation of their marine ecosystems.

The below figure shows in red the areas of the island where a septic tank would be prohibited under NSW environmental standards with consideration only to distances from waterways and groundwater bores. The figure alone highlights the need for change. If you have any queries, please contact Customer Care on **local free call 0100** or via email



customercare@nirc.gov.nf

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Scan QR code

