NORFOLK ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Proposed Changes to Water Resources Development Control Plan on Public Exhibition

We want to hear your thoughts

The Norfolk Island Regional Council currently has proposed amendments to the Water Resources Development Control Plan (DCP No 2) on public exhibition for community comment.

The documents can be found on Council's website here http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/your-council/council-documents/documents-public-exhibition or hard copies can be obtained from Customer Care.

Submission requirements

Submissions close on Monday the 30th of August and must be made in writing (email is acceptable) and delivered to the Council by

1. Email to planning@nirc.gov.nf; or
2. Post to the General Manager, PO Box 95 Norfolk Island 2899; or
3. Hand delivery to Customer Care.

All submissions must reference as the subject 'Submission - Draft Revised DCP 2 Water Resources'. Submissions must clearly indicate the names, postal address or e-mail of person(s) making the submission.

If you have any questions in the first instance please email your query to planning@nirc.gov.nf or phone 23595 or the Waste & Environment Office on 22609

Aim of the proposed amendments

The changes to the DCP has two main focuses;

- Water Security :- to increase the water availability for new developments to reduce the island's reliance on groundwater. This is primarily due to the reductions in Norfolk's long term average rainfall and the reduction in the island's water table.
- Improve Groundwater Quality:- proposed changes to the siting and type of onsite systems for sewege are aimed to protect the groundwater from further contamination. The groundwater and surface waters around Norfolk Island have been known to be polluted for many years. Septic tanks and soakage trenches are a significant contributing factor to this problem. Of particular concern is the degradation of the reef in Emily Bay and Slaughter Bay, the subject of recent research commissioned by Parks Australia. These changes will make an important contribution to protecting the reef.

What will these changes mean for new development?

Water Storage and Roof Catchment

The way the minimum requirements are calculated for water storage and roof catchment is proposed to change, based on the water demand for the proposed development. Once the water demand has been determined, then a minimum tank size and roof catchment will be identified.

These minimum requirements have been tested using the Norfolk Island Rainwater Tank Simulator from the CSIRO to optimise the tank size based on Norfolk Island's conditions. The simulator app can be downloaded using the following link https://nawra-river.shinyapps.io/raintank/.

The proposed change to the DCP includes a scaled assessment based on the number of bedrooms. A one-bedroom dwelling is proposed to need a minimum 120 square metre catchment with a tank size of 32 000 litres. As additional bedrooms are included, each will require a minimum of 40 square metres of roof catchment and the tank sizes will become progressively larger. This progression is shown in the below table.

Number of Bedrooms	Water usage (L/day)	Min water storage requirement (L)	Min roof area requirement (sqm)
1	280	32000	120
2	420	50000	160
3	560	70000	200
4	700	80000	240

Although the minimum roof areas are proposed to increase for the majority of development types, the total catchment can be made up of multiple buildings such as outbuildings, carports or even the roof of your water tank where water saver devices are installed. The calculation for commercial and other non-residential developments will differ depending on the development type. More information is available in the draft DCP.

Onsite Wastewater Management

A rapid evaluation procedure has been developed to determine the most effective on-site system for new developments. The procedure includes 4 stages to guide applicants through assessing site requirements for the treatment and re-use of domestic wastewater at an early stage of the development process.

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

The new DCP will still require all new developments to connect to the sewer where a property is in close proximity to the Water Assurance Scheme. However, for areas of the island that are not serviced by sewer, the procedure will determine the most effective system for a particular land-use or development.

The procedure sets out which system can be used on a particular site based on its proximity to waterways and groundwater bores and the gradient of the portion of land. The following tables shows the proposed allowable systems based on buffer zones to waterways.

Evaluation of suitable treatment options based on minimum waterway buffer requirements (metres)

	Permanent surface waters (rivers, streams & lakes)	**Other Waters (Intermittent waterways & farm dams)**	**Groundwater Bores**
Septic tank	150	80	250
AWTS	100	40	250
Tertiary treatment	50	20	100
Compost. Toilet	50	20	100
Secondary Greywater System	30	30	30
Advanced Secondary Greywater System	10	10	10

Once a system has been decided for the site, then an effluent application area is determined. The proposed DCP has 4 options for effluent application and will be determined based on the type of system being installed. These will be one of the following:

- Surface Irrigation
- Subsurface Irrigation
- Evapotranspiration Trench
- Mound System

Given the impact that absorption trenches or soakage trenches have on the receiving environment due to the high porosity of the island's soil, there will be no provision for these in the new DCP.

Through the local paper and Council's facebook page NIRC will provide information on the different types of systems and effluent application options.

If you are interested in attending a focus group on the proposed changes please contact pj.wilson@nirc.gov.nf to register your interest.

PJ Wilson
Team Leader Waste & Environment

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