

Inspection of on-site wastewater management systems

As you may be aware a number of reports have been commissioned over the past decade outlining water quality issues within the catchment area of Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA). Many of the recommendations from these reports have sought Norfolk Island Regional Council (Council) and the former Administration of Norfolk Island to investigate the source of contamination entering the KAVHA catchment including recommendations to audit onsite septic systems in the upper catchment.

In 2021, the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS) conducted a study detailing the impacts of land-based pollution to the reef ecosystem. In 2020, Bligh Tanner prepared a report presenting various options to attenuate the damage to the reef receiving stormwater runoff from the upstream catchment. These reports can be found at: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/news/norfolk-marine-park-managers-update-reporting-on-emily-and-slaughter-bay-reef-health/>.

Based on the recommendations put forward in these reports, NIRC will commence inspection of on-site wastewater (and greywater) management systems and disposal areas to assess the likelihood of these systems contributing to groundwater and surface water contamination. Items that are commonly assessed during inspections are site topography, septic tank size and integrity, absorption/evapotranspiration trench size and integrity, irrigation area for greywater systems, evidence of stormwater intrusion and proximity to bores or creeks etc.

Officers from the Waste and Environment Section of the Norfolk Island Regional Council will conduct these inspections, provided for under the *Environment Act 1990 (NI)*. Inspection efforts will initially focus on properties in the Watermill and Town Creek catchments, followed by properties across the broader island. Council will send letters to property owners over the next month to arrange access and to carry out an assessment of effluent management facilities.

The process is an important step in improving water quality in the KAVHA Catchment, which will reduce the public health risk to the Norfolk Island community and visitors, and minimise impacts to the delicate marine ecosystem in Emily Bay and Slaughter Bay.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Waste and Environment Section on 22609 or email pj.wilson@nirc.gov.nf.

Phil Reid

MANAGER PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

11 November 2021

