



MANSFIELD SHIRE

Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

COMMUNITY HANDBOOK



Contents

1. Purpose of this Handbook	3
2. What is a DWMP?	3
3. Why does Mansfield Shire need one?	3
4. How does the DWMP manage domestic wastewater?	4
5. What are my responsibilities as a land owner or resident?	5
6. How does Council check that people are doing the right thing in maintaining their on-site systems?	6
7. How does the DWMP affect my land?	6
What it means to be in a High Risk area	7
What it means to be in a Medium Risk area	8
What it means to be in a Low Risk area	8
Shire Wide Risk Map	9
Risk Mapping Around Lake Eildon	10
Risk Maps for Townships and Individual Properties	11
8. What other things will Council do to improve wastewater management?	12
9. How do I get more information?	12
10. Some do's and don'ts when it comes to your on-site wastewater treatment system	13
11. Terms used in this Handbook	15

1. Purpose of this Handbook

Council adopted the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) in August 2014. This Community Handbook outlines what the DWMP means for you and how we all need to work together to implement the Plan.

2. What is a DWMP?

The purpose of the DWMP is to scientifically identify areas where there is potentially a high, medium or low risk of domestic wastewater damaging public health, the environment and waterways.

Armed with this information Council has been able to develop, along with its Project Partners, initiatives that will ensure potential risks to your health and the environment are actively managed. The Plan has a five year timespan.

The Plan also outlines how unsewered areas across our Shire can continue to grow while managing any potential impacts of new unsewered development.



3. Why does Mansfield Shire need one?

State legislation says that Council must have a DWMP. We need to meet our legal obligations under legislation. We also need to increase certainty about future development across the Shire as around 95% of our land is located in a declared potable water catchment.

Local water corporations can apply the 1:40 hectare dwelling density rule if we are not implementing a DWMP. This would significantly limit any future development in existing unsewered townships and Rural Living areas.

The adoption of the DWMP means that these areas can continue to grow but everyone, whether a resident, land owner, business

operator or visitor, must play their part in managing the potentially damaging affects wastewater can have on public health, amenity and waterways.

The Shire was assisted by Goulburn Murray Water (GMW), Goulburn Valley Water (GVW), Murrindindi Shire Council, the Environment Protection Authority's North East Region Office (EPA) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in preparing the DWMP.

4. How does the DWMP manage domestic wastewater?

State legislation requires Council to undertake a risk analysis when assessing applications for development in unsewered areas.

Using leading experts we have developed a simple but effective way of assessing risk from a township level down to an individual lot. This means we can identify areas of high, medium and low risk across the Shire.



In this way the Plan provides certainty for land owners by explaining how Council and water corporations will assess the potential impact of new development. It also outlines what information you need to submit to Council when applying for a permit to build in an unsewered area.

All DWMPs must include details about how Council will monitor how land owners and residents maintain their on-site system and comply with permit conditions. Our Plan has a detailed Action Plan that does this.

5. What are my responsibilities as a land owner or resident?

GVW will require people with properties in sewerred areas (i.e. Mansfield township, parts of Bonnie Doon township and the Merrijig to Sawmill Settlement valley) to connect to the reticulated sewerage system.

For the rest of the Shire, which is not sewerred, land owners and residents are responsible for properly maintaining their on-site wastewater management system.

This means:

- ➔ You need to get your system serviced regularly;
- ➔ Sludge at the bottom of the tank should be emptied about every 3 years;
- ➔ If you have an aerated treatment system you need to comply with the service agreement requirements outlined on your permit to use the system; and
- ➔ You must comply with conditions on permits granted by Council.

Council will provide you with information about how to maintain your on-site system, including annual information sessions.

More information about how you meet your obligations can be found in Part 10 of this Handbook.

6. How does Council check that people are doing the right thing in maintaining their on-site systems?

Council must have an inspection program in place to make sure everyone is maintaining their on-site systems and complying with permit conditions. Over the next five years Council will be inspecting every on-site system, with high risk areas being the top priority.



We will write to land owners in an area before the inspection program starts. The purpose of the inspection is to locate your system so that it can be recorded on our mapping system and to see if there are any obvious signs that it is not working properly.

After the inspection you will receive a letter identifying what maintenance, if any, you need to do and by when. We will then re inspect the property to ensure it has been done.

7. How does the DWMP affect my land?

We have analysed and mapped risk down to an individual lot level in many areas around Lake Eildon. Council and water corporations will use these maps to determine priorities for infrastructure investment, monitoring and inspection programs and requirements for future development.

The following pages will show what level of risk applies to an area and then tell you what it means to be in a high, medium or low risk area.

What it means to be in a High Risk area

Requirements when developing your land or extending your existing house:

- you will need a very detailed land capability assessment prepared by a highly qualified expert, including on site soil testing that proves all wastewater can be effectively treated on land.
- traditional septic tanks may not be able to be used to treat wastewater and so more expensive, complex systems may need to be installed.
- if you need a planning permit to build, local water corporations will need to look at your plans and inform council if they agree or disagree with the proposal.
- there will continue to be strict conditions in the permit about maintaining your wastewater system into the future. Council will be actively ensuring these conditions are met.
- old systems will need to be upgraded to meet as many current day EPA standards as possible, particularly if you are extending an existing house.
- a small lot may mean only a small house can be built.

Inspection and Monitoring Program:

- Council's wastewater system inspection program will generally focus on these areas between 2016 - 18. Lakeside townships will be the first to be inspected.
- Council will be actively monitoring these areas to ensure routine maintenance is undertaken by land owners into the future.

Wastewater and storm water infrastructure:

Lake side townships such as Goughs Bay and Bonnie Doon will be the focus for discussions between Council and water corporations about improving local infrastructure to manage wastewater well into the future.

What it means to be in a Medium Risk area

Requirements when developing your land or extending your existing house:

- You will need a detailed land capability assessment prepared by an expert that meets EPA standards.
- If you need a planning permit to build, local water corporations will need to look at your plans and inform council if they agree or disagree with the proposal.
- There will continue to be conditions included in the permit about maintaining your wastewater system into the future.
- Old systems will need to be upgraded to meet as many current day EPA standards as possible, particularly if you are extending an existing house.

Inspection and Monitoring Program:

These areas are the second priority for Council and water corporations. Onsite systems will be the focus of Council's inspection program in 2018 - 19.

What it means to be in a Low Risk area

Requirements when developing your land or extending your existing house:

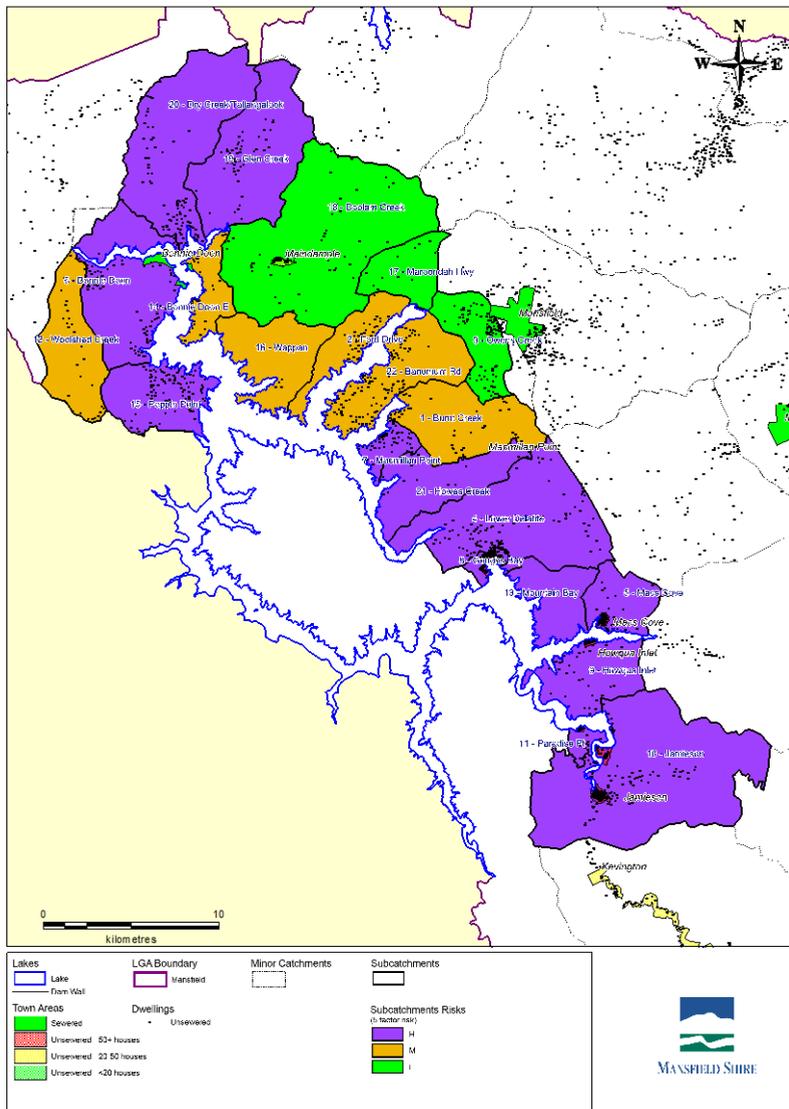
- You will need a land capability assessment but Council's Environmental Health Officer may 'relax' some requirements, where appropriate.
- Planning permit applications may not need to be referred to local water corporations for approval.
- Council may require old systems to be upgraded to meet current day standards when renovating.

Inspection and Monitoring Program:

These areas are the last priority for Council and water corporations. On site systems will be the focus of Council's inspection program in 2019.

Risk Mapping Around Lake Eildon

Council has undertaken a detailed risk analysis of areas around Lake Eildon, where development pressures and potential risks to the environment and water quality are found to be the greatest.



Risk Maps for Townships and Individual Properties

One of our scientific experts, Mr Paul Williams, prepared seven detailed risk analysis maps for areas around Lake Eildon. These maps show a preliminary assessment of whether a lot is high, medium or low risk. Detailed maps are available for the areas known as:

- ◆ Burnt Creek
- ◆ Owens Creek
- ◆ Goughs Bay (see below)
- ◆ Banumum Road
- ◆ Ford Drive
- ◆ Macmillan Point
- ◆ Howes Creek

More maps will be prepared by Council over the next couple of years, with high risk areas being completed first. Below is an example of one of these maps; it is Goughs Bay.



8. What other things will Council do to improve wastewater management?

- ➔ We will work with water corporations, local technicians and land capability experts to streamline approvals processes, this includes changes to our Planning Scheme.
- ➔ We will also support local consultants in meeting new permit application standards through education sessions and providing application templates.
- ➔ We will provide you with education material and information sessions to help you meet your wastewater management obligations.
- ➔ We will work with the State Government and local water corporations to highlight the need for investment in reticulated sewerage infrastructure in Bonnie Doon and Goughs Bay.

9. How do I get more information?

A full copy of the DWMP can be found on Council's website. You will also find other information about wastewater management.

You can find out the risk rating for your property by contacting the Shire. We will need the street address of the property or the lot details from the Title to identify the right property.

You can contact us by:

Telephone: Environmental Health on 5775 8555

E-mail: Environmental Health: council@mansfield.vic.gov.au

10. Some do's and don'ts when it comes to your on-site wastewater treatment system

A traditional septic system

Do

- ✓ Get your system checked by a suitably qualified person at least once a year to make sure it is working properly. They should:
 - check the sludge level to see if it needs emptying
 - ensure the irrigation pipes are working properly
 - give you a report on the inspection outcomes
 - submit an inspection report to Council
- ✓ Get the sludge in your tank emptied around every 3 years
- ✓ Clean your grease traps out regularly
- ✓ Remember to use biodegradable detergents that are suitable for septic tanks.

Don't

- ✗ Use lots of harsh chemical bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners etc. as large quantities of these chemicals can cause your system to fail
- ✗ Put anything other than toilet paper down the toilet (e.g. feminine hygiene products or anything containing plastics)
- ✗ Pour fats and oils down your kitchen sink - soak them up with kitchen paper and bin it instead.



An Aerated system

Do

- ✓ Get your system serviced according to your service plan (ie every few months) by a suitably qualified person. They should:
 - check the sludge and scum levels in each tank
 - see if the irrigation pipes are working properly
 - check if your disinfection chamber is working
 - decide if you need more disinfectant added to the system
 - give you a report on the inspection outcomes.
 - submit an inspection report to Council
- ✓ Get the sludge in your tanks emptied regularly
- ✓ Clean any grease traps out regularly
- ✓ Remember to use biodegradable detergents that are suitable for septic tanks
- ✓ Ensure your system is used regularly to keep water flowing through it
- ✓ Check your system is working properly after an interruption to power supply (an alarm should be sounding to tell you something is wrong with the system).

Don't

- ✗ Turn off the power supply to the system
- ✗ Use lots of harsh chemical bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners etc. as large quantities of these chemicals can cause your system to fail
- ✗ Put anything other than toilet paper down the toilet (e.g. feminine hygiene products or anything containing plastics)
- ✗ Pour fats and oils down a sink. Instead soak them up with kitchen paper and bin it.



11. Terms used in this Handbook

Aerated treatment system: a multi chamber wastewater system that relies on electricity to mix air with the wastewater so that micro-organisms can break down the waste. These systems are more complex than a septic tank because wastewater is processed several times before purified water is discharged onto your land through small underground pipes.

Background Report: the report that outlines the legislation Council and policies must comply with. It also analyses development trends, the declared catchments within the Shire and the location of existing reticulated sewers and on-site systems. It identifies the key issues to be addressed by the DWMP.

DWMP: the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan.

EPA: the Environment Protection Authority, who is responsible for overseeing compliance with wastewater legislation. They set standards for land capability assessments and for the design and installation of on-site wastewater systems across Victoria.

DELWP: the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, which contains the Office of Water, who are responsible for policy development relating to drinking water and the health of waterways across Victoria.

GMW: Goulburn Murray Water, who is responsible for the management of Lake Eildon and Lake Nillahcootie. They provide raw water supplies to GVW for treatment.

GVW: Goulburn Valley Water, who is the retailer of reticulated water to households and the operator of several water treatment plants and storages across the Shire. GVW are also responsible for managing and planning reticulated sewerage to parts of Mansfield, Bonnie Doon and properties between Merrijig to Sawmill Settlement.

Land Capability Assessment: an assessment undertaken by a qualified professional to ensure your land can contain the wastewater you generate. The expert will assess things like the number of bedrooms, bathrooms, the type of soil on your land, location of waterways and the like. These assessments are then submitted to Council's Environmental Health team for approval.

Reticulated sewerage system: Goulburn Valley Water's underground sewerage system that collects wastewater from houses within a township and pipes it to a central wastewater treatment facility. Treatment facilities are located at Bonnie Doon, Mansfield and Merrijig.

Septic tank: a wastewater system comprising of a large concrete tank into which wastewater from the house is collected. Organisms then break down the waste and liquid by-products are distributed across your land through small underground pipes.

Wastewater: water from kitchens, showers, toilets, sinks and laundries. You may hear people talk about **black water**, which is water from toilets. **Grey water** is water from showers, kitchens and laundries.