

4.3 On Site Sewage Management (OSSM) Program Review

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Delivery Program Environmental and Public Health

Objective Update on progress of On site Sewage Management Program

Background

Councillors may recall a report that was prepared for the Finance Committee Meeting last year on 18 March regarding the On Site Sewage Management (OSSM) Program.

The NSW State Government mandated the role of councils in the supervision of existing OSSM and introduced new legislation requiring this in the late 1990's.

The legislation was introduced following the Wallis Lake hepatitis outbreak where it was established that 440 people had contracted the disease, one of whom died, as a consequence of eating contaminated oysters. The oyster contamination was linked to water quality. The investigation that followed ascertained that there were many failed septic tank systems in the catchment contributing to the water quality issue.

Among other provisions, the amended legislation required that the owners of on site sewage management systems needed to apply for an approval to operate their systems and that this approval was non-transferable. This means that when properties are sold, there is an obligation on the new owner to seek a new approval to operate, within two months of acquiring the property.

Councils are also required to prepare on-site sewage management policies and to undertake risk based assessments within their areas, with a view to implementing targeted audit programs.

Following last year's report the Council resolved to increase resourcing steadily over the next few years in the OSSM area and to commit additional resources to the program.

To date the additional resources have not been engaged due to the timing of the past Section Manager's retirement. The new Section Manager has commenced a review of the Section structure and a review of programs and projects undertaken in Public and Environmental Health.

The need to reinvestigate the resources available in the OSSM area and to assess whether they will be sufficient to sustain a reasonable program for Council into the future has been identified.

Consequently an OSSM Program Review was undertaken prior to deciding on the engagement of any additional resources. This Review has identified where there are deficiencies in the OSSM Program and where improvements are needed. A copy of the review is provided as the attachment to this report.

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In response to the Review, this report is seeking approval to allocate additional resources to enable a permanent full time position (in place of the approved part-time 3 day/week position) to be dedicated to the OSSM Program and to be funded within existing budget allocations and through fee recovery.

Key Issues

- Complexity of the program
- Work demands and current resources available
- Follow up work on notices and orders
- Complaint Investigation
- Backlog of regulatory compliance work

Information

Council adopted its On Site Sewage and Wastewater Management Policy (the Strategy) in 2001 and an OSSM risk map was prepared at this time. The last review of the Strategy was conducted in 2008.

Council's program has now been running for over a decade inclusive of an audit program. Expectations that we might have been able to review the estimated 3,000-3,500 systems in the Shire over a 10-12 year period have not been met due to the sheer enormity of the task.

The OSSM Program has been operating unsustainably due to the overwhelming volume of work that has arisen from applications for Approval to Operate, which have identified a high failure rate of inspected systems.

The current OSSM officer cannot sustain the OSSM Program by conducting new OSSM audit inspections, while also attempting to address a large number of non-complying systems that have outstanding Notices or Orders.

Consequently, a decision was made two years ago to stop new OSSM audit inspections and to only carry out crucial inspections; for example customer requests (complaints), OSSM approvals to operate with sale of property applications, installations and development application referrals.

The numbers of unresolved defective systems have built up over time to a level that has not been able to be managed. It has become an operational necessity that the outstanding OSSM defective systems that have not been actioned for three years (>80 systems) be postponed to be reinvestigated when additional resources have been allocated to the Program.

The recent Review has highlighted 15 key areas that need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Program.

Consequently, the Review has identified that the program requires additional resources, to those the have already committed and funded in 2014/2015 (being funding sufficient to employ a part-time officer for three days per week). The resources required to sustain a minimum service level in the OSSM area is considered to be a full time position five days per week.

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To finance this position it is proposed to increase over the next two years the OSSM annual fee issued on rates notices from the current fee of \$40 to \$50, with a \$5 increment each year for the next two years.

The cost of the additional two days per week is estimated at approximately \$27,000 per annum. For the 2015/2016 period funding is available as the recruitment in 2014/15 did not occur and the position can be funded fully in the first year and thereafter the position may be funded at the required level through the income generated by the proposed increased fees.

The full-time five days a week position is considered to be a good balance in that it will ensure a reasonable level of support to the existing works program and at the same time enable work on the 15 key areas and the recommendations from the OSSM Program Review to be commenced.

Legal / Resource / Financial Implications

The OSSM Program was developed and is based on a risk model to comply with the NSW Government directive for local councils to supervise on site sewage systems in their Shires. Considerable progress has been made through the adopted program however the high level of failure and/or defective systems has resulted in the program not meeting targets as originally set by Council.

Whilst changes can be made through business process improvements to streamline some processes, the significant backlog of regulatory action will continue to require improvements to the program to be deferred unless additional resources are committed.

Council needs to identify additional resources and this can be achieved through the increase in OSSM fees, in particular through the annual management fee placed on rates notices of properties that contain an OSSM system.

Consultation

Consultation has only occurred internally. Comparisons have been undertaken of other local councils OSSM fee structures. This confirms that with the adoption of the proposed fees Ballina Council will be within the range of fees set by other local Councils as at 2015.

Following the increase in the fee that occurred in 2014/2015, minimal concerns were raised by community members, this was unexpected given that the rural community has been previously sensitive and critical of costs resulting from the OSSM Program.

Options

The Council has the following options available to it:

1. That Council endorses the increase in fees over a two year period to enable the progression of the OSSM Program and the allocation of an additional two days per week to the new O.S.S.M. position making it full-time five days per week; or,

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2. That Council endorses the fees to remain the same for 2015/2106 period and acknowledge that the OSSM Program will not advance as per the original Strategy and commence the recruitment process for a part-time three day a week OSSM position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council notes the contents of this report in respect to the progress of the OSSM Program
2. That Council acknowledges the existing resource limitations in respect to the Program and endorses the increase in the OSSM fee over a two year period from \$40 to \$50 commencing 2015/2016 to enable additional resources to be committed to advance the Program.
3. That Council supports the findings of the review of the current Program and the OSSM Strategy and endorses the employment of a full time OSSM Officer from the additional revenue raised.

Attachment(s)

1. OSSM Program Review Report - April 2015

OSSM Program Review – Report



Review by
OSSM Officer – John Bruce
April 2015 – V2.0

OSSM Program Review - Report – April 2015 V2.0

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Purpose:

A review of the On-Site Sewage Management (OSSM) Program is needed to ensure:

- That the Program is achieving its objectives;
- Continual improvement of the Program;
- Operations are effective and efficient;
- Is resourced to perform operations and achieve key performance indicators;
- That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Policy (Strategy) is reviewed as required for each new term of local government.

Scope:

The OSSM Program Review will include an assessment of the on-site sewage and wastewater management strategy, current program operations, and discussions with relevant internal stakeholders.

OSSM Program Review - DEHG Internal Stakeholders:

Position	Officer
DEHG – Group Manager	Rod Willis
Public & Environmental Health – Manager	Kerri Watts
Building Services – Manager	Vince Hunt
Plumbing & Drainage Inspector	Neil McCowan
OSSM Officer	John Bruce

Deliverables:

1. An initial Draft Review is to be completed for the OSSM Program Review and is to be presented to the Development Environment Health Group – Internal Stakeholders, for discussion and assessment.
2. The final report will identify where there are OSSM Program deficiencies and where improvements are needed.
3. The final report will provide recommendations to correct these deficiencies, propose changes to improve the operation of the OSSM Program and will be presented to MANEX for its information and consideration.

OSSM Program Background:

Amendments to the NSW Local Government Act and Regulations introduced in 1998 required Councils to provide improved supervision of on-site sewage management systems.

Ballina Shire Council adopted its On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Policy (Strategy) in 2001 and an OSSM risk map was prepared. The Council's first On-Site Sewage Management Officer was appointed in 2003 and the last review of the Strategy was conducted in 2008.

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OSSM Program Status:

The OSSM program has been operating un-sustainably due to the overwhelming volume of work that has arisen from applications for Approval to Operate, which have identified a high failure rate of inspected systems.

The OSSM officer cannot sustain the OSSM Program by conducting new OSSM audit inspections while still attempting to resolve a large number of non-complying systems that have outstanding “Notices” or “Orders”. Consequently, a decision was made two years ago to stop new OSSM audit inspections and only carry out crucial inspections i.e. customer requests (complaints), OSSM approval to operate - sale of property requests, installation and development application referrals.

The high amount of un-resolved defective OSSM systems has built up over previous years to a level that has not been able to be managed. It is become an operational necessity that the outstanding OSSM defective systems that have not been actioned for three years (>80 systems) be postponed to be re-investigated when additional resources have been allocated.

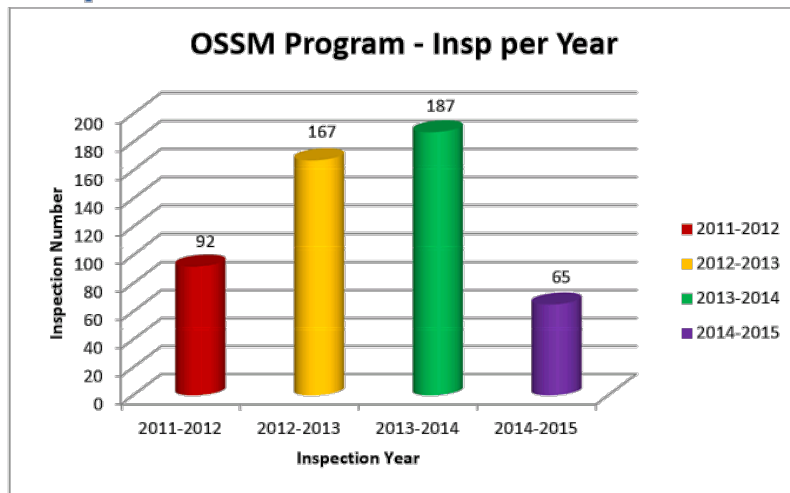
OSSM Officer – Outstanding Authority Tasks – January 2015

The screenshot shows a web dashboard for 'a'UTHORITY. It includes a navigation bar with 'Dashboard' and 'Sitemap' links. The main content area features a 'Tasks' table and an 'Internal Phone Book' search bar.

	Overdue	Due in 7 days	Due 7+ days
Customer Request Management	6		
Development - Building - Private Stormwater/Sewer	1		
Complaints			
Health Environmental - On Site Sewage Management	5		
Orders Register	16		5

Below the table is an 'Internal Phone Book' section with a search bar labeled 'Name' and a 'Search' button.

OSSM Inspections Performed – 2011- 2014



Note:

- 2011-2012 – New OSSM Officer was appointed, only 10 months of year in attendance;
- 2014-2015 – Statistics only up to end of November 2014, officer on leave in December.

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OSSM Program Review:

The method used for the Review is to highlight specific areas within the OSSM Program that need attention and then include recommendations for each of these areas.

1. Council's Role in OSSM Approval to Install Applications

Council's role in approving OSSM applications needs to be clarified and a section included in the revised Strategy.

Recommendation:

Include a section in the Strategy with the following key points.

- Advice that Council's role is to ensure that the applicant provides to Council the necessary information as prescribed in Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - Section 26, Council's On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy, and any additional information that may be needed to enable council to make a determination of the OSSM application;
- Council is not the applicant, designer or installer nor is it responsible for the roles that these people perform;
- Council will, in general, communicate with the applicant/owner/designer/installer and other parties as needed about further information requests, application assessment or the issuing of approval documentation;
- The applicant/installer/owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with the approval conditions;
- The Installer is required to certify that the installation has been carried out in compliance with the OSSM approval and conditions; and
- The distinction between each person's role and responsibilities is needed to ensure that there is no confusion and a satisfactory outcome is achieved.

2. Key Performance Indicator

There are approximately 2600 OSSM systems installed within the Ballina Shire. Since the OSSM Program inception the rate of OSSM non-compliance has remained at approximately 40-50%. There are a few hundred properties within the Shire that haven't had an initial Council OSSM inspection to determine if their system is performing satisfactory or to set a corresponding OSSM risk level.

The OSSM Program has a key performance indicator of 250 inspections to be performed each year with quarterly status reports provided to council.

There have been three significant factors impacting on the workload of the OSSM Officer that make this key performance indicator un-achievable.

- 1) The creation of a Development Compliance Section, which now has two officers, has increased the workload on the OSSM Officer due to the amount of referrals for non-complying development/buildings in non-sewered areas that have an associated non-complying OSSM system;

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- 2) The Rous Water – Emigrant Creek Drinking Water Catchment Area Project, which fast tracked the OSSM inspections within this area and provided funds for an additional OSSM officer for a limited period. Unfortunately the additional OSSM officer could not finalise all the non-complying OSSM systems identified during this project timeframe and subsequently there has been numerous outstanding actions to be completed by the permanent OSSM officer;
- 3) The key performance indicator, of 250 inspections per year, only indicates that the OSSM inspections have been performed but it does not indicate that the non-complying OSSM systems have been rectified. Consequently, this approach has created an accumulating number of un-resolved defective OSSM matters. This is neither a sustainable process for current resources nor an indicator presenting a true reflection of the Community Strategic Plan Themes & Outcomes.

Recommendation:

- That the key performance indicator/s and OSSM strategies be changed to have a clear link back to the Community Strategic Plan – Themes and Outcomes and have realistic sustainable target/s set for appropriate OSSM activities, focus on education and customer satisfaction (nominate a couple KPIs only).

See Table 1 for the OSSM Program relationships with Council's Community Strategic Plan Themes and Outcomes.

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8.5 **Policy (Review) - On-Site Sewage Management.DOC**

Table 1: - OSSM Program Relationship to Community Strategic Plan - Themes & Outcomes

Community Strategic Plan - Themes	Community Strategic Plan - Outcomes	OSSM Relationship to Themes & Outcomes – (Actual and/or Proposed OSSM Strategies & Actions)
Connected Community (CC)	CC2 We feel connected to the community	OSSM educational & communication plan to be developed and implemented.
	CC2.2 Create events, strategies and activities that promote interaction and education, as well as a sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct OSSM Forums with local wastewater industry, designers, plumbers, manufacturers; • Develop OSSM homeowners education course – work with TAFE or RTO to deliver course, budget funding required, commitment;
Healthy Environment (HE)	HE1 We understand the environment	On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy, Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines, Desktop Study Information i.e. Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas, Drinking Water Catchment Mapping, Soil Maps etc
	HE1.2 Promote initiatives that improve our natural environment	OSSM risk based audit inspections for compliance, education of stakeholders on application requirements etc.
	HE2 We use our resources wisely	Inspections performed based on the OSSM risk level in designated local areas for effective and efficiency reasons.
	HE2.1 Implement total water cycle management practices	Ensure water conservation measures/facilities/taps conditions are applied for all applications (inc existing dwellings) and installed within dwelling before any OSSM approval to operate certificate issued.
	HE3 Our built environment blends with the natural environment	On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy
HE3.2 Minimise negative impacts on the natural environment	OSSM audit inspections, compliance enforcement process, education of all stakeholders on application requirements and responsibilities.	
Engaged Leadership (EL)	EL1 Our Council works with the community	Community & stakeholders given opportunity to comment on OSSM Strategy revisions,

8.5 Policy (Review) - On-Site Sewage Management.DOC

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Community Strategic Plan - Themes	Community Strategic Plan - Outcomes	OSSM Relationship to Themes & Outcomes – (Actual and/or Proposed OSSM Strategies & Actions)
	EL1.1 Facilitate and develop strong relationships and partnerships with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSSM stakeholder group established to provide input into Strategy; • Partnership with TAFE for education course/s;
	EL1.2 Involve our community in the planning and decision making processes of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSSM stakeholder group established to provide input into Strategy;
	EL3 We are all valued citizens	Customer service satisfaction
	EL3.1 Provide prompt, knowledgeable, friendly and helpful advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPIs for correspondence responses, telephone calls; • Continual training of officers in technical aspects and customer service delivery;
	EL3.2 Deliver responsive and efficient services	Customer satisfaction surveys to be conducted, council marketing section to be involved, KPIs' on service and satisfaction.

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3. Administrative Support

There are inefficiencies in the utilisation of the administrative support resource and how it is provided to the OSSM Program. The inefficiencies have been or are as follows:

- Previously, administrative support has been sent emails or hard copy paperwork documents requesting that an admin officer prepare OSSM correspondence (letters/notices/orders, certificates), book inspections, record inspection results, and other general duties. This was (and is not) an effective and efficient way to utilise resources as it is double handling of a task, which can (and is) being performed by the OSSM officer effectively, efficiently and via a paperless process;
- There is no administrative support utilised by the OSSM Program as the process of writing correspondence, booking and recording inspections etc can be carried out by the OSSM officer, via the Authority Program, in a professional manner, saving time and resources;
- Telephone calls are a double handling of a task and cause an interruption to the officer's workflow and effectiveness. Streamlining this process is needed.

Recommendation:

- To train administrative support officers to perform alternative services that are not double handling of processes e.g. process & issue OSSM Approval to Operate Certificates and being responsible for this task, permanent Quality Control officer, link new parcel numbers, created by subdivisions to old numbers in registers, education & communication assistance, administer customer satisfaction surveys etc;
- Telephone enquiries as a first port of call are to go to the main switch then the relevant officer's phone message bank (if not in office), bypassing the need for admin officers to take technical officers' telephone calls. The call is then responded to by the technical officer at a specific time of the day, along with other telephone enquiries e.g. 3:00 – 4:00pm. Unless the administration officers' are going to be trained to handle OSSM enquiries then this is an additional step that is not needed.
- Training of fellow DEHG staff/sections so double handling & inefficiency is identified and rectified so that administrative support resources are available to all sections.

4. OSSM Hard Copy Documents Archived or Destroyed

Over the years there has been a profuse amount of hard copy OSSM archival documentation placed in boxes and filing cabinets at the Administration Centre. A significant amount of these boxes & cabinets have been reviewed and relevant information recorded in TRIM and non-relevant information destroyed. However, several boxes still remain and need to be reviewed, recorded or destroyed.

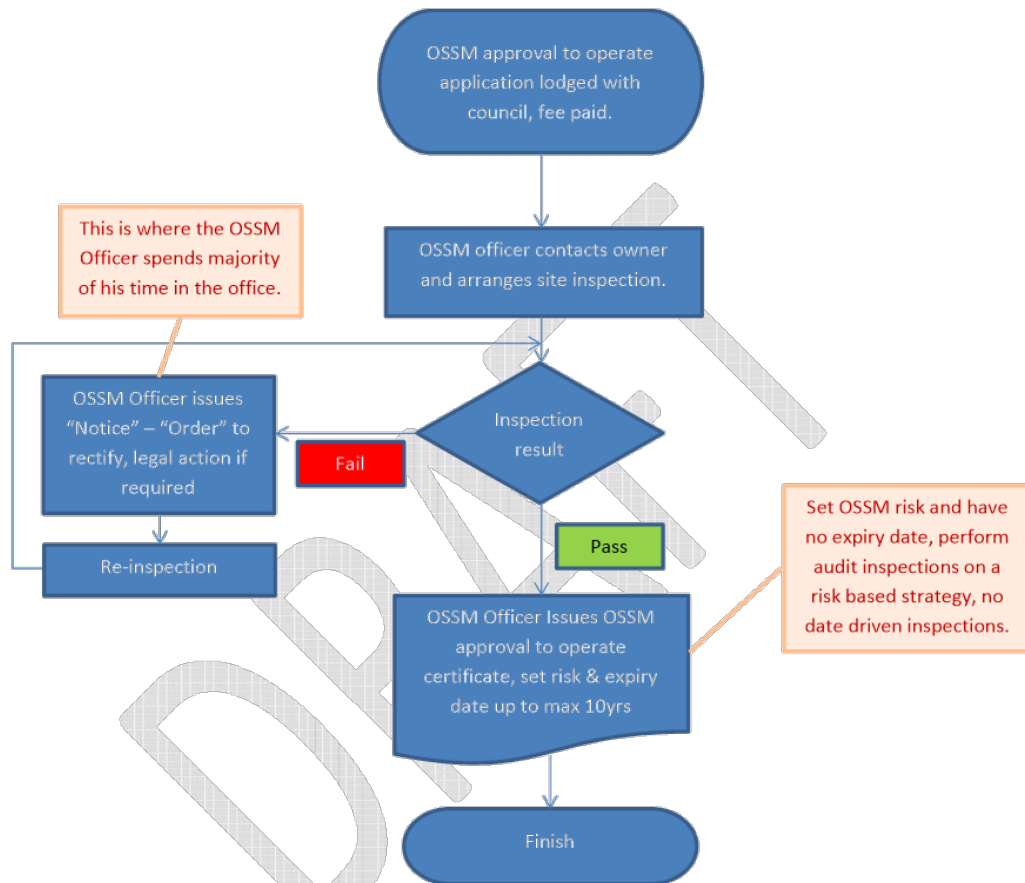
Recommendation:

- An administrative officer is to be trained to review the OSSM documentation contained in these boxes and relevant content recorded in TRIM or, if it is non-relevant, destroyed.

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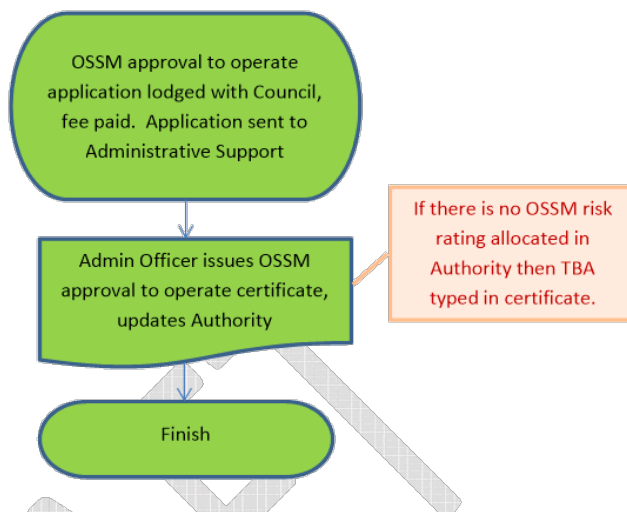
5. OSSM Approval to Operate Application - Current Process - (sale of property applications)

In general the current OSSM approval to operate process operates is as set out below:



Note: This process & particular application is created when a sale of property has occurred, which is the majority of OSSM approval to operate applications. The development, plumbing & drainage applications and compliance matters that involve an OSSM have a separate approval process and that process does not need to be changed other than by removing the expiry date from the certificate.

6. OSSM Approval to Operate - Proposed New Process - (sale of property applications)



Recommendation:

- That the proposed new OSSM approval to operate application process (sale of property applications) be implemented and that administrative support staff allocated and be trained to take responsibility for performing this task;
- That no expiry date is included in the OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate or in Authority. Or, alternatively, state that the OSSM approval to operate is renewed each year, which occurs for all property owners' via the payment of the OSSM Program fee at rates time (no need for inspection or to issue a new certificate until change of ownership occurs, the payment of fee confirms renewal);
- The OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate template be modified to suit this new process and procedure;
- All OSSM audit inspections are to be performed based on a risk based strategy and available resources. The inspections are not to be a date driven requirement or sale of property request. Prior to the sale of a property homeowners' or purchasers are to arrange for pre-purchase inspection with an appropriate professional. Council to educate stakeholders of this important step and possibly include this as a mandatory requirement in the revised Strategy.

7. Quality Assurance/Control - Documentation, Processes & Procedures

The OSSM officer has developed and upgraded application & certification forms, created educational facts sheets, provided desktop information for OSSM designers', procedure flow charts and OSSM webpage upgrades etc. Quality control is critical to ensure a minimum standard is achieved and maintained for the OSSM Program and to provide an effective and efficient service e.g. reducing the

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time in assessing applications and the number of non-complying applications. The continual improvement and quality control of documents is a significant on-going process.

There have been high level processes and procedures documented for the OSSM Program and user friendly flow charts created for a number of the OSSM Officer duties (e.g. applications and DA referrals).

Recommendations:

- Review & complete all OSSM Officer processes & procedure flow charts;
- Quality control of all documentation, formatting etc;
- Resources for permanent Quality Control officer, who carries out or assists in creation of work processes and procedures, updates documents for financial year changes and conducts reviews/audits to ensure the procedures are being followed and amended when necessary.

Note: Currently Public and Environmental Health Officers' perform the majority of their own changes to document templates due to the limited availability and priority given for this resource and service. Web helpdesk provides a service (webpage updates, formatting forms and fact sheets etc) but this service is limited in its scope and resource and falls short of a total quality control program.

8. Communication & Education

A wastewater industry forum was conducted in January 2013, which was well supported by the industry and requests have been made by the industry for more forums to be conducted in the future. Unfortunately it is not possible to perform additional forums at present due to the considerable time and effort needed to organise these events, the current focus of operational strategies and limited resources.

Recommendation:

- Develop an OSSM Program communication and education plan and implement;
- Operational strategies be amended to include this plan;
- Resources to be allocated to deliver the plan activities;
- Section budget to make allowance for appropriate funds to deliver the plan;
- Council marketing/communication officer to be utilised.

9. OSSM Model – Sizing Effluent Land Application Areas

Currently Ballina Shire Council's On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy has effluent land application sizing tables to provide guidance to designers on sizing these areas based on wastewater volumes and Ballina's specific soil landscapes. Council needs to be cautious of the information that it provides so that it is not placed in a potential liable position in regard to these sizing tables.

Neighbouring councils such as Lismore, Byron and Clarence have engaged the services of suitably qualified professionals to develop an effluent land application sizing software model for their

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particular conditions. If Ballina Shire Council is to provide any effluent land application sizing assistance then it should follow its neighbouring Councils' approaches.

Recommendation:

- Remove current effluent land application sizing tables from the Strategy;
- Allocate funds to develop a Ballina Shire Council OSSM effluent land application sizing software model program. (Cost estimate \$15,000), or; alternatively, require water balance & nutrient balance calculations for each report, the parameter which equates to the largest area is to be nominated and a suitable effluent land application system designed to suit;
- BOM Climate data for the Ballina area to be included in the revised Strategy, we would need coast, north, south and plateau data.

Note: We need to discuss and determine if water balance is to be the critical factor in sizing effluent land application area/s and if a nutrient balance buffer (additional land only, no trenches or irrigation, provided around the effluent land application area or downstream of area) will suffice and be an acceptable risk. This decision could reduce the overall cost of an OSSM system for the homeowner, in most cases, as less trenching and irrigation areas are usually required for water balance only calculations compared to installing these systems over the total nutrient balance area.

10. Resources

Council has approved an increase in the OSSM Program yearly fee from 27\$ to \$40 per year, which will enable the employment of an additional resource - OSSM Officer on a part time basis (i.e. 3 days per week).

Recommendation:

- That the position description be developed for the part time OSSM Officer, consider objectives, strategies, activities, roles and responsibilities, communication and education etc;
- That the advertising of the part time OSSM Officer is to be carried out as soon as possible, once the position description is completed;
- That staff location, desk, phone, inspection tools, equipment, etc. be obtained & confirmed;
- Administrative support roles and responsibilities for the OSSM Program to be clarified and provided.

Note: If council is to employ a part time officer and that officer shares duties in another council role to make up full time employment then the allocation of time to each position will need to be clear and monitored.

11. On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy

The Strategy is due to be reviewed and considerable changes are proposed for example:

- The aims, objectives and strategies of the "Strategy" are to be consistent and show a direct link with the Community Strategic Plan;

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- Streamline the Strategy so that the main content provides information on the OSSM approval process, design information and the OSSM Audit Program operations. All education information is to be removed from the main body of the document and provided in appendixes or separate document/s. All sizing tables and technical drawings are to be removed. If any sizing and technical drawing information to be provided then reference be made to Australian Standards or other Industry accepted documents for this information and inclusion;
- OSSM Program audit inspections are to be risked based not expiry date driven, further development of risk mapping required, methodology to determine inspections, notification (advertising, letter to owners' etc);
- The OSSM Program emphasis should be on a proactive educational Program and less on reactive compliance to provide more value for the resources available and more impact in achieving compliance. Currently The majority of the officer's time is spent in front of computer and on phone following up a small number of defective systems;
- Include new sections in Strategy for >10EP OSSM systems (application info, in-situ effluent quality testing validation and verification, operation and management requirements etc) and priority oyster aquaculture areas requirements. Fact sheets already exist for these items but they need to be formalised in the Strategy. Refer to Interim NSW Guidelines for Management of Private Recycled Water Schemes for guidance on >10EP systems;
- Include a section for effluent land application area minimum setback distance requirements from site features, which are to comply with the AS/NZS 1547 (latest version). When setback distances do not comply then the designer is required to utilise the AS/NZS 1547 Appendix R as a guideline/method for justifying a lesser setback distance. Also the viral die-off calculation can be used to further support the nominated setback distance;
- Refer to Sydney Catchment Authority – Designing and Installing On-Site Wastewater Systems Manual for OSSM effluent land application techniques, technical design requirements, and construction installation information. Also consider adopting this manual's installation and inspection checklists. We already have a link to the document on Council's OSSM webpage (Note: Manual states that you must have professional indemnity insurance to do work in Sydney Catchment Authority);
- Benchmark the Ballina Shire Council's On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy with the Victorian Land Capability Assessment Framework January 2014 and neighbouring Councils' OSSM Strategies for site & soil assessment process, designing, sizing and selecting an OSSM.

Recommendation:

- That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy is reviewed and appropriate time and resources are allocated to perform this task. Timeframe for the review e.g. six months – i.e. 30 days to prepare draft (benchmarking other councils', revision of current document, stakeholders group created), 30 days to finalise document – workshop with stakeholders and make necessary changes, 42 days from first exhibition of document (advertisement) to allow for public feedback, 60 days to make any final changes and prepare report to Council for adoption of revised Strategy, then communicate to the industry & stakeholders the revised Strategy;
- A stakeholder's consultative group is to be established to assist in the Strategy review, input and feedback. This is needed to ensure that the document becomes best practice and

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accepted by industry and to satisfy the intent of Community Strategic Plan Themes & Outcomes;

- Request assistance from Council's communication officer with the revised Strategy advertising and promotion etc.

12. List of OSSM Designers' and AWTS Services Agents

The creation of a list of suitably qualified persons' to design OSSM systems was instigated over three years ago, but unfortunately this initiative was withdrawn as it was not supported by the local plumbers & drainers. It is time to re-visit this initiative as I believe it is an essential strategy. The withdrawing of this initiative was due to misinformation and misunderstanding and with further explanation the support from the plumbing & drainage fraternity may change.

There is a clear need to provide a list of suitably qualified people to homeowners', real estate agents, solicitors etc. It is a common request received by council for this information.

Recommendation:

- That a list of suitably qualified people/firms to design OSSM systems and service aerated wastewater treatment systems be proposed to the plumbing & drainage and wastewater industry;
- If supported, then a list of suitably qualified persons be created for designing OSSM systems and servicing aerated wastewater treatment systems and made available at customer service, Council website etc.

13. Monitoring the Servicing Intervals of AWTS

It is unknown if the Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS) installed within the Ballina Shire are being serviced at the required intervals as determined by their accreditation from NSW Ministry of Health.

To overcome this situation the Authority system needs to be updated to include the appropriate fields to record the AWTS servicing history and provide a reporting mechanism to identify systems that are overdue with their compulsory servicing requirements. An appropriate officer would need to enter AWTS servicing data, run reports at appropriate intervals and issue letters/notices to property owners' that are overdue with servicing their system.

Recommendation:

- That Authority system is updated to include the appropriate fields and reporting mechanism to identify systems that are overdue with their AWTS servicing requirements;
- That appropriate resources (i.e. administrative support) are provided to perform these additional functions of reviewing service reports, entering servicing data, running reports, issuing letters/notices etc.

14. Development Services - DA Referrals

The OSSM Officer receives Development Application (DA) referrals from planning officers when a development is proposed in non-sewered areas i.e. subdivision or boundary adjustment. This

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process needs to be reviewed, clear responsibilities determined and application requirements stipulated.

It is common to receive consultants' reports where they have not inspected the existing OSSM system/s on the subject property and determined if it is performing satisfactory nor have they confirmed if the existing OSSM system needs to be upgraded and if the proposed development or boundary adjustment will or will not be affected by any upgrades.

Recommendation:

- That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy document includes a section for DA referrals and stipulates requirements for applications in non-sewered areas and application information;
- Ensure strategic planning documents are reviewed and updated if needed with the latest OSSM information, document references & requirements;
- Clarify the Council internal referral roles and responsibilities between sections and to the development industry, consultants etc;
- Address the issue of creating new parcel numbers, when a new subdivision is approved, and the need to update Authority registers (linking to the old parcel numbers with the new numbers). Resources & responsibilities for this task are required.

15. Dwelling Alterations & Additions - Existing OSSM Systems

Council receives development and/or plumbing & drainage applications to carry out dwelling alterations & additions in non-sewered areas, which have an existing OSSM system. There is confusion as to what is required for these particular scenarios, this needs to be clarified both internally with Council officers' and externally to the public.

Recommendation:

- That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy document include a section for dwelling alterations & additions involving existing OSSM systems;
- There will be a requirement to provide a report from a suitably qualified person to assess if the existing OSSM system is operating satisfactorily, confirm what the wastewater volume the existing OSSM system was designed and installed to treat, indicate if there is any potential increase in wastewater volume with the proposed alterations & additions and assess if the existing OSSM system cope with this increase. If there is an increase in wastewater volume and the existing OSSM system was not designed and installed to treat this increase in volume then the existing system will need to be upgraded in accordance with current requirements. The same upgrade requirements will apply for failing systems, whether there is an increase in wastewater volume or not.

Outcomes

- That there is unanimous support from the Development Environmental Health Group - Internal Stakeholders for the OSSM Program Review Report & recommendations;
- That all of the recommendations are adopted;

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- That Development Environmental Health Group - Internal Stakeholders support the resources & funding required to deliver the recommendations;
- That time and resources are provided to allow the OSSM Officer to revise the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy as soon as possible.

Table 2 – Summary of OSSM Program Review Recommendations

OSSM Items	Recommendations
1. Council's Role in OSSM Approval to Install Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's role is to ensure that the applicant provides to Council the necessary information as prescribed in Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - Section 26, Council's On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy, and any additional information that may be needed to enable the Council to make a determination of the OSSM application; • Council is not the applicant, designer or installer nor is it responsible for the roles these persons perform; • Council will, in general, communicate with the applicant/owner/designer/installer and other parties as needed about further information requests, assessments or the issuing of approval documentation; • The applicant/installer/owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with the approval conditions; • The Installer certifies that the installation has been carried out in compliance with the OSSM approval and conditions; • The distinction between each person's role and responsibilities is needed to ensure that there is no confusion and a satisfactory outcome is achieved.
2. Key Performance Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the key performance indicator/s and OSSM strategies be changed to have a clear link back to the Community Strategic Plan – Themes and Outcomes and have realistic sustainable target/s set for appropriate OSSM activities and customer satisfaction (nominate a couple KPIs only).
3. Administrative Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To train administrative support officers to perform alternative services that are not double handling of processes e.g. issue OSSM Approval to Operate documentation and being responsible for this task, permanent Quality Control officer, link new parcel numbers, created by subdivisions, to old numbers in registers, education & communication assistance, customer satisfaction surveys etc; • Telephone enquiries as first port of call are to go to the main switch then the relevant OSSM Officer's phone message bank (if not in office), bypassing the need for admin officers to take technical officers' telephone calls. The call is then responded to by the technical officer at a specific time of the day, along with other telephone enquiries e.g. 3:00 – 4:00pm. • Training of fellow DEHG staff/sections so double handling & inefficiency is identified and rectified so that administrative support resources are available to all sections.
4. OSSM Hard Copy Documents Archived or Destroyed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An administrative officer is to be trained and task allocated to review the OSSM documentation contained in these boxes and relevant content recorded in TRIM or if it is non-relevant destroyed.
5. N/A	N/A
6. OSSM Approval to Operate – Proposed New Process – (sale of property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the proposed new OSSM Approval to Operate Application process (sale of property applications) be implemented and that administrative support staff are to be trained to take responsibility for performing this task; • That no expiry date is included in the OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate or in Authority. Alternatively state that the OSSM Approval to Operate is renewed each

8.5 Policy (Review) - On-Site Sewage Management.DOC

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OSSM Items	Recommendations
applications)	<p>year, which occurs for all property owners' via the payment of the OSSM Program fee at rates time (no need for inspection or to issue a new certificate until change of ownership occurs, the payment of fee confirms renewal);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate Template be modified to suit this new process and procedure; •All OSSM audit inspections are to be performed based on a risk based strategy, available resources and are not be a date driven requirement or sale of property request. Prior to the sale of a property the homeowners' or purchaser are to arrange for a pre-purchase inspection with an appropriate external professional. Council to educate stakeholders of this important step and possibly include this as a mandatory requirement in the revised Strategy.
7. Quality Assurance/Control – Documentation, Processes & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review & complete all OSSM Officer processes & procedure flow charts; •Quality control of all documentation, formatting etc; •Resources for permanent Quality Control officer, who carries out or assists in creation of work processes and procedures, updates documents for financial year changes and conducts reviews/audits to ensure the procedures are being followed and amended when necessary.
8. Communication & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop a OSSM Program communication and education plan and implement; •Operational strategies to be amended to include this plan; •Resources to be allocated to deliver the plan activities; •Section budget to make allowance for appropriate funds to deliver the plan; •Council communication officer to be utilised.
9. OSSM Model – Sizing Effluent Land Application Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Remove current effluent land application sizing tables from the Strategy; •Allocate funds to develop a Ballina Shire Council OSSM effluent land application sizing software model program. (Cost estimate \$15,000), or; alternatively require water balance & nutrient balance calculations for each report, the parameter which equates to the largest area is to be nominated and a suitable effluent land application system designed to suit; •BOM Climate data for Ballina regions are to be included in the revised Strategy, we would need coast, north, south and plateau data.
10. Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •That the position description be developed for the part time OSSM Officer, consider objectives, strategies, activities, roles and responsibilities, communication and education etc; •That the advertising of the part time OSSM Officer position is to be carried out as soon as possible, once the position description is completed; •That staff location, desk, phone, inspection tools, equipment, etc. be obtained & confirmed; •Administrative support roles and responsibilities for the OSSM Program to be clarified and provided.
11. On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy is reviewed and appropriate time and resources are allocated to perform this task. Timeframe for the review e.g. six months – i.e. 30 days to prepare draft (benchmarking other councils', revision of current document, stakeholders group created), 30 days to finalise document – workshop with stakeholders and make necessary changes, 42 days from first exhibition of document (advertisement) to allow for public feedback, 60 days to make any final changes and prepare report to council for adoption of revised Strategy, then communicate to the industry & stakeholders the revised Strategy; •A stakeholder's consultative group is to be established to assist in the Strategy

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OSSM Items	Recommendations
	<p>review, input and feedback. This is needed to ensure that the document becomes best practice and accepted by industry and to satisfy the intent of Community Strategic Plan Themes & Outcomes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request assistance from Council’s communication officer with the revised Strategy advertising and promotion etc.
12. List of OSSM Designers’ and AWTS Services Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the list of suitably qualified people to design OSSM systems and service aerated wastewater treatment systems be proposed to the plumbing & drainage and wastewater industry; Following this a list of suitably qualified persons is to be created for designing OSSM systems and servicing aerated wastewater treatment systems and made available at customer service, Council website etc.
13. Monitoring the Servicing Intervals of AWTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the Authority system is updated to include the appropriate fields and reporting mechanism to identify systems that are overdue with their AWTS servicing requirements; That appropriate resources (i.e. administrative support) are provided to perform these additional functions of reviewing service reports, entering servicing data, running reports, issuing letters/notices etc.
14. Development Services - DA Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy document includes a section for DA referrals and stipulates requirements for applications in non-sewered areas and application information; Ensure strategic planning documents are reviewed and updated if needed with the latest OSSM information, document references & requirements; Clarify the Council’s internal referral roles and the responsibilities between sections and to the development industry, consultants etc; Address the issue of creating new parcel numbers, when a new subdivision is approved, and the need to update Authority registers (linking to the old parcel numbers with the new numbers). Resources & responsibilities for this task are required.
15. Dwelling Alterations & Additions - Existing OSSM Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy document includes a section for dwelling alterations & additions involving existing OSSM systems; There will be a requirement to provide a report from a suitably qualified person to assess if the existing OSSM system is operating satisfactorily, to confirm the wastewater volume the existing OSSM system was designed and installed to treat, to advise whether there is any potential increase in wastewater volume with the proposed alterations & additions and if the existing OSSM system can cope with this increase. If there is an increase in wastewater volume and the existing OSSM system was not designed and installed to treat this increase in volume then the existing system will need to be upgraded in accordance with current requirements. The same upgrade requirements will apply for failing systems, whether there is an increase in wastewater volume or not.

This OSSM Program Review has highlighted key areas that need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Program. As with all Programs there is a need for a continuous improvement commitment and an ongoing requirement for further reviews at appropriate intervals.

John Bruce
 OSSM Officer
 Development and Environmental Health Group

POLICY NAME:	(REVIEW) ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
POLICY REF:	O01
MEETING ADOPTED:	Current Strategy 23 October 2008 Resolution No. 231008/8
POLICY HISTORY:	2001 Strategy Developed & 2008 Strategy Last Review



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement for councils within New South Wales, which have non-sewered areas, to review their On-Site Sewage Management (OSSM) Strategy at appropriate intervals in consultation with the community.

The function of an OSSM system is to collect, contain, treat, assimilate and process wastewater in a sustainable manner so that the key performance objectives are achieved.

Key Performance Objectives:

- a) To protect public health;
- b) To maintain and enhance the quality of the environment;
- c) To maintain and enhance community amenity; and
- d) To protect resources.

The focus of Ballina Shire Council's (BSC) OSSM Strategy is to sustainably manage the design, construction, installation and ongoing operation and maintenance of all OSSM systems within the BSC Local Government Area (LGA). The OSSM Strategy affirms the community's objectives and outlines Council's monitoring program and support services to assist homeowners install and maintain their OSSM system in a satisfactory operating condition.

Key components of the OSSM Strategy are identified in the ensuing aims, goals and objectives. A risk assessment method provides a mechanism for BSC to allocate resources, determine frequency of OSSM audit site inspections and to identify priority high risk areas.

The OSSM Strategy supports and contributes toward several wider BSC program objectives and initiatives, including the improvement of water quality in the Richmond River, creeks, estuaries, protection of drinking water catchments, priority oyster aquaculture areas, and groundwater and stormwater management.

The OSSM Strategy is to be read in conjunction with Council's OSSM Technical Guidelines, which contain the detailed requirements for the design, construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration and maintenance of OSSM systems.

Community and homeowner education will be an important component of the OSSM Strategy.

1.1 Aims

The aims of the OSSM Strategy are:

- to provide a management framework to enable BSC to proactively regulate all OSSM systems within the Shire
- to enhance the capacity of BSC to fund and resource the OSSM monitoring and management program
- to provide education, support and supervision to help homeowners maintain their OSSM system in a satisfactory condition
- to implement a best practice OSSM management program to ensure the protection of public and environmental health, amenity and to utilise resources efficiently.

1.2 Goals

To achieve the aims the OSSM Strategy goals are to:

- maintain a register of all OSSM systems installed within BSC LGA
- ensure the protection of the environment including groundwater, drinking water catchments, priority oyster aquaculture areas, Richmond River, creeks, estuaries, stormwater, surface water, land and vegetation
- protect public health by minimising the risk of human contact with wastewater and effluent

- restrict vector access into OSSM systems ie mosquitos, flies and rodents
- ensure that specific site constraints and locations are considered to ensure suitable OSSM systems are installed
- maintain and enhance community amenity in regard to installation and operation of OSSM systems, ie visual, noise and odour
- ensure that all applications to install OSSM systems and effluent land application areas comply with appropriate Acts, Regulations, Australian Standards, guidelines and application approval conditions
- promote ecologically sustainable development ie efficient use of resources, water and energy in the design and operation of OSSM systems
- ensure that resources are provided for the development of communication and homeowner education programs
- ensure the efficient and effective use of Council resources
- promote the safe reuse of treated effluent, when and where suitable
- ensure that only suitably qualified and experienced persons design, install and service OSSM systems
- develop key performance indicators that will monitor and measure the success of the OSSM Strategy.

1.3 Objectives

To achieve the Strategy goals, BSC has set the following objectives:

- coordinate and record all OSSM application approvals into the OSSM register, including inspection and monitoring information
- develop OSSM Technical Guidelines for the design, construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration and maintenance of an OSSM system
- develop and implement a OSSM communication and education plan targeting homeowners, plumbers and drainers, designers, installers, service agents, real estate agents, solicitors, conveyancers, architects, planning consultants, and the general wastewater industry
- educate OSSM owners on the importance of monitoring OSSM systems and to encourage a voluntary compliance attitude
- develop and implement an OSSM monitoring program to ensure that all systems are serviced at required intervals and service reports are submitted to Council within acceptable timeframes
- develop an OSSM audit inspection program that is risk based and considers available resources
- develop a list of suitably qualified persons for designing, installing and servicing OSSM systems and make the list accessible to the public
- ensure that all OSSM designs and installations are certified by suitably qualified persons for compliance with the Council approved plans and conditions and where applicable the manufacturer's commissioning requirements
- ensure that, where practical, OSSM systems are designed and managed to use materials, water and energy efficiently during construction, installation and operation
- ensure that development approvals in non-sewered areas, ie subdivisions, boundary adjustments, dwelling entitlements and change of land use, comply with the OSSM Strategy.

1.4 Citation

This OSSM Strategy has been adopted by BSC and should be read in conjunction with the BSC Development Control Plan and BSC OSSM Technical Guidelines.

1.5 Commencement

This OSSM Strategy applies to BSC non-sewered areas from the date of adoption by Council, to all development applications, construction certificate applications, and Local Government Act Section 68 OSSM applications relating to or affected by the matters contained in the OSSM Strategy.

1.6 Corporate Linkages

This OSSM Strategy applies to all land within the BSC LGA and supersedes all previous information issued by BSC with respect to OSSM treatment and disposal. In the event of any inconsistency between this OSSM Strategy and previous Development Control Plans, policies or codes, this OSSM Strategy shall prevail.

Table 1: Links to Council's Community Strategic Plan

Connected Community - (CC) CC2 & CC2.2
Healthy Environment - (HE) HE1, HE1.2, HE2, HE2.1, HE3 & HE3.2
Engaged Leadership – (EL) EL1, EL1.1, EL1.2, EL3, EL3.1 & EL3.2

1.7 Scope

The BSC OSSM Strategy and BSC OSSM Technical Guidelines are designed to be consistent with and complement the NSW *Environment & Health Protection Guidelines: On-Site Sewage Management for Single Households* and *AS/NZS 1547 – Domestic On-Site Wastewater Management*, and to highlight certain features of the Ballina Shire locale, such as the exceptionally high seasonal rainfall and volcanic soils. They recognise terrain comprising undulating, or steep escarpments, interspersed with drainage channels and watercourses, the coastal plain, proximity of wetlands and an estuarine environment. These features present challenges that often require specialised solutions for wastewater treatment and management.

The OSSM Strategy and Technical Guidelines provide a framework to implement ecologically sustainable OSSM practices, guidelines for site and soil evaluation (SSE), maintenance and operating requirements for all OSSM systems.

The Protection of the Environment Operations Act (POEO Act) regulates sewage treatment systems when the wastewater processing capacity exceeds 2,500 Equivalent Persons (EP) or 750 kilolitres per day. The OSSM Strategy is not applicable for sewage treatment systems of this capacity that are regulated by the Protection of the Environment Operations Act.

Under the provisions of Local Government Act, Councils are responsible for regulating the installation and operation of OSSM systems, which do not exceed 2,500 Equivalent Persons (EP) or 750 kilolitres per day. This OSSM Strategy applies to sewage treatment systems that do not exceed this capacity.

The NSW Ministry of Health issues certificates of accreditation for OSSM facilities not exceeding 10 EP or 2,000 litres of daily sewage flow. OSSM systems with capacities above 10 EP and less than 2,500 EP have no formal accreditation process. BSC will assess these systems on a case by case situation utilising a risk assessment process and referring to wastewater industry technical guidelines.

Drinking water catchment areas are subject to specific requirements for both new and existing installations. If a property is located within these catchment areas then the Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Guidelines are applicable and are to be read in conjunction with the BSC OSSM Strategy and Technical Guidelines.

This Strategy is not applicable for OSSM systems on State or Federal Government owned land and institutions, where the State and Federal Government Departments approve the OSSM installation and manage their own monitoring and maintenance program eg NSW state schools.

2.0 COUNCIL APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR OSSM SYSTEMS

The Local Government Act states that prior approval must be obtained from Council before carrying out the following:

- installation, construction or alteration of a waste treatment device or a human waste storage facility or a drain connected to any such device or facility
- operation of a system of sewage management.

The Local Government (General) Regulation sets out:

- Council's responsibilities and powers to regulate the installation and ongoing operation of OSSM systems
- the information that must accompany an OSSM application
- the matters to be taken into consideration by Council in determining an OSSM application
- the performance standards to be satisfied before an OSSM approval can be issued
- the domestic greywater diversion requirements (for maximum of one residential dwelling) and when there is Council prior approval or non-prior approval of an installation.

2.1 OSSM Compliance with Legislation and Guidelines

When lodging an OSSM application to Council to install/construct/alter an OSSM system or a development application in a non-sewered area, the designer/consultant is to comply with, refer to and reference the following documents (where applicable) as part of the application process.

- Local Government Act
- Local Government (General) Regulation
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act
- Public Health Act
- Ballina Shire Council – On-Site Sewage Management Strategy
- Ballina Shire Council - On-Site Sewage Management Technical Guidelines
- AS/NZS 1546.1 – Septic tanks
- AS/NZS 1546.2 – Waterless composting toilets
- AS/NZS 1546.3 – Secondary treatment systems
- AS/NZS 1546.4 – Domestic greywater treatment systems
- AS/NZS1547 – On-site domestic wastewater management
- Ballina Shire Council – Local Environmental Plan
- Environment & Health Protection Guidelines: *On-Site Sewage Management for Single Households*
- Rous Water – On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines
- NSW Guidelines for Greywater Reuse in Sewered, Single Household Residential Premises
- NSW Ministry of Health - Sewage Management Facility Vessel Accreditation Guideline (Septic Tanks, Collection Wells, Sewage Ejection Pump Stations, etc.)
- NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy

Note 1: For referenced documents the latest gazetted versions of legislation and Australian Standards are to be used (ie Acts, Regulations, Australian Standards, and Guidelines etc).

2.2 Applications to Install/Construct/Alter and Operate an OSSM System

There are two separate applications for OSSM approval, being:

1. An approval to install, construct or alter an on-site sewage management system; and
2. An approval to operate an on-site sewage management system.

The *Approval to Install, Construct or Alter an On-Site Sewage Management System* relates to the installation of a new OSSM system or the upgrade/alteration of an existing system. This application is made under Section 68 of the Local Government Act and is to be submitted to Council with payment of appropriate fees prior to any work commencing (refer BSC website for OSSM approval to install application form and BSC OSSM Technical Guidelines).

It is an offence under the Local Government Act to undertake work to install/construct or alter an OSSM system without prior written approval from Council.

The *Approval to Operate an On-Site Sewage Management System* will only be issued to the owner of property where:

1. **For a new OSSM system**; a final inspection has been undertaken and when all certification documentation has been received by Council; or
2. **For an upgrade of an existing OSSM system** resulting in a change to the type of system installed eg a new wastewater treatment system and/or installation of a new effluent land application area (eg trenching or irrigation); a final inspection has been undertaken and when all certification documentation has been received by Council. The new certificate will reflect the modified system; or
3. **For a property that has an existing OSSM system and is sold**, the new property owner may continue to operate the existing system of sewage management for a period of up to three months after completion of the sale, but an application to Council must be lodged (by the new owner) within two months of completion of the sale to enable the OSSM Approval to Operate certificate to be issued in the new owner's name within the legislative timeframes.

Note 2: BSC is proposing to introduce the compulsory re-inspection of existing OSSM systems by suitably qualified people (commencing 2020) at the following stages:

1. When the OSSM Approval to Operate certificate is due to be renewed;
2. Prior to a property being sold.

Refer to Section 3 and Table 2 within this document for further details.

An administration fee is to be paid to Council for the processing and issuing of the OSSM approval to operate certificate (refer to BSC OSSM Approval to Operate application form).

It is an offence under the Local Government Act to operate an OSSM system without a current Approval to Operate issued by Council.

3.0 OSSM APPROVAL TO OPERATE: RENEWAL AND ANNUAL OSSM MANAGEMENT FEE

An OSSM Approval to Operate certificate issued by BSC to a property owner is not unlimited and has an expiry date. At present when the property owner pays the annual OSSM Approval to Operate management fee (through their rates notice), this is deemed as the application and renewal of their OSSM Approval to Operate.

For a non-sewered property that has an OSSM system installed, Council charges the property owner an annual fee to assist with the funding of the OSSM Management Program. The fee is charged as a separate item on the annual rates notice. The fee contributes to the development and dissemination of education material, OSSM audit inspections and the acquisition of resources to implement the OSSM Program objectives.

There have been limited Council resources to perform a re-inspection of the OSSM system (prior to OSSM Approval to Operate expiry date) and issue the certificate, however in the future Council is proposing to implement and resource an OSSM Approval to Operate renewal application and inspection process which must be completed before the expiration date. The property owner will be required to arrange for an inspection of their OSSM system by a suitably qualified person and to submit the inspection report before Council issues the OSSM Approval to Operate certificate.

There is significant training, documentation and processes to be developed before Council will implement this renewal application and inspection requirement. The full details of the renewal application process will be provided when the OSSM Strategy is next due to be reviewed in the year 2020.

4.0 OSSM AUDIT INSPECTION PROGRAM - RISK ASSESSMENT AND INSPECTION FREQUENCY

In order for BSC to achieve its strategy goals and objectives and to manage resources effectively and efficiently, the OSSM audit inspection program will utilise a risk assessment process.

All properties with existing OSSM systems within the BSC LGA will have a desktop risk assessment evaluation performed to identify site features and constraints. Each of those properties will then be allocated a corresponding risk level (ie high, medium or low). The OSSM risk level will determine the OSSM Approval to Operate expiration, reinspection and renewal date.

The risk method process will identify all applicable site and soil characteristics on a property and evaluate the level of constraint for each. The horizontal and/or vertical setback distance from a sensitive receptor to the OSSM system (including the effluent land application area) will be the key element in determining the level of risk. The level of constraint presented by site and soil characteristics on the property and/or the proximity of sensitive receptor to the OSSM system will correspondingly increase the level of constraint and risk for that property. The higher the risk, the greater the audit inspection frequency for that property and the less time between OSSM Approval to Operate expiration, reinspection and renewal dates.

BSC will prioritise the completion of the desktop risk assessment process. This will ensure that the risk level for each property with an OSSM system has been determined and the OSSM register is brought up to date with correct data. At the time of writing this revised OSSM Strategy there are approximately 2,000 properties in the OSSM register that require a risk assessment evaluation.

In the future, BSC will perform more of an auditing role within the OSSM monitoring program. For example, a cluster of OSSM high risk properties will be selected for operational compliance (eg ten to twenty properties in the same locality). This method of limiting the maximum number of properties to inspect in any given time and concentrating the inspections in specific areas on a risk basis is an efficient and effective way to use resources and to manage any necessary compliance actions. The properties that are within the priority oyster aquaculture and drinking water catchment areas are examples of where audit inspections will be performed.

Typical site features/constraints which will be taken into consideration are:

- priority oyster aquaculture areas
- drinking water catchment areas
- groundwater bores on-site or nearby
- soil landscapes and soil properties
- slope of ground
- flooding potential
- permanent and intermittent surface waterways and stormwater drainage channels
- level of wastewater treatment and quantity of wastewater generated
- effluent land application method
- size of parcel of land
- commercial and public businesses.

Table 2: Proposed OSSM Reinspection Requirements for Renewal of Approval to Operate Certificate (commencement date expected 2020)

OSSM Type	OSSM Evaluated Risk Level and Inspection Frequency			Service Person to Perform Inspection (Inspection Reports Lodged to BSC)
	High	Medium	Low	
Wastewater Collection Well – Pump Out System	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Septic Tank & Trench/Beds	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Septic Tank & Wisconsin Sand Mound	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Septic Tank and Sand Filter	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Composting Toilet	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Constructed Wetland – Reed Bed	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Greywater Diversion Devices	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Once/10yrs	Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer
Greywater Treatment Systems (GTS)	Not Applicable already serviced at regular intervals as required within NSW Ministry of Health Certificate of Accreditation			Suitably Qualified Person – Authorised Service Agent
Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)	Not Applicable already serviced at regular intervals as required within NSW Ministry of Health Certificate of Accreditation			Suitably Qualified Person – Authorised Service Agent
All OSSMs (other than AWTS or GTS) Installed within Drinking Water Catchment Areas	Once/3yr	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Suitably Qualified Person
All OSSMs (other than AWTS or GTS) Installed within Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas	Once/yr	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Suitably Qualified Person
Commercial OSSM Systems (other than AWTS or GTS)	Once/yr	Once/5yrs	Once/7yrs	Suitably Qualified Person
All OSSMs (other than AWTS or GTS) prior to selling property in non-sewered area	Vendor to arrange inspection of OSSM system prior to selling property. Inspection report to be provided to purchasers of property and to BSC via the new owner when they lodge their OSSM Approval to Operate application.			Suitably Qualified Person – NSW Licenced Plumber & Drainer

Note 3: BSC will develop standard OSSM inspection templates to be used by suitably qualified people when re-inspecting OSSM systems to renew the OSSM Approval to Operate certificate or prior to selling a property.

5.0 SUITABLY QUALIFIED PERSON

Design, installation and/or servicing of OSSM systems in the BSC LGA must be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced people with adequate qualifications, training, knowledge, experience and skill. In addition, professional indemnity insurance must be held and the insurance certificate of currency must cover the work being performed.

BSC has adopted AS/NZS 1547: – *On-site wastewater management* recommendations in determining suitable qualifications for each element of the OSSM installation process and for the ongoing servicing of the system as follows.

Source AS/NZS 1547:

5.1 Site evaluators and soil assessors

Site evaluators and soil assessors may include professional engineers, soil scientists, drainage contractors or plumbers with appropriate training, competence, and experience in design and installation practice. Site evaluators and soil assessors should ensure that they:

- (a) Have attended an appropriate accredited training programme;
- (b) Are familiar with any regulatory requirements for site evaluation;
- (c) Are responsible for all work to evaluate the capacity of a site and its soil for accepting treated wastewater;
- (d) Certify that the evaluation procedures have been undertaken in accordance with this Standard and any requirements of the relevant regulatory authority; and
- (e) Identify cultural concerns or constraints.

5.2 OSSM Designers

Designers may include professional engineers, soil scientists, drainage contractors or plumbers with appropriate training, competence, and experience in design and installation practice. Designers should ensure they:

- (a) Have attended an appropriate accredited training programme;
- (b) Complete and certify a design report (including a wastewater loading certificate) to accompany any application for installing or operating on-site systems, as set out in 7.4.2;
- (c) Are familiar with information on current installation trade practices, the range of materials and methods employed, the types of machinery available to the installer and the level of operator competence required for their use;
- (d) Are familiar with any community and environmental constraints;
- (e) Certify on completion of the installation, that the on-site system has been constructed, installed, and commissioned in accordance with its design including any additional requirements of the relevant regulatory authority;
- (f) Lodge a set of 'as-built' plans and details, as set out in 6.2.5.4, with the owner or occupier of the facility being serviced by the on-site system and with the relevant regulatory authority if required;

The above sections (e) and (f) are not applicable for OSSM Designers. Refer to Table 4 for requirements and responsibilities for OSSM certification within the BSC LGA.

- (g) Prepare a set of operation and maintenance guidelines (see 6.3) specific to the on-site system as designed and installed or constructed. The guidelines should be lodged with the property owner or occupier and if required, with the regulatory authority or their agent.

Certification could be required by regulatory authorities as prepared by independent technical experts such as professional engineers with appropriate experience and competence in the relevant discipline. The operation and maintenance guidelines should include the designer's loading certificate setting out specific detail on the capacity of the system, the wastewater producing fixtures for which it has been designed, and the risks of overloading if additional fixtures are added beyond the capacity of the system (see 7.4.2(d)).

5.3 OSSM Installation contractors

Installation contractors may include licensed drainlayers and plumbers, technical or professional engineering people or any other persons with appropriate competence and experience in construction and installation. Contractors should ensure that they:

- (a) Have attended an appropriate accredited training programme which should include training in the theory of current and contemporary design approaches and in installing on-site systems;
- (b) Consult with the designer on the intention of the design, and the installation/construction methods and procedures essential to achieving design integrity;
- (c) Liaise with the designer during installation/construction so that a certificate of compliance with design can be completed, particularly when unusual or innovative design approaches are being used that are beyond their current experience; and
- (d) Certify with the designer that all equipment incorporated as part of the on-site system has been installed in accordance with the manufacturer's or supplier's instructions and in accordance with any other conditions established by the regulatory authority.

Regulatory authority requirements could at times override the designer's or manufacturer's instructions.

5.4 OSSM Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS) Service Agent

To become a Council authorised AWTS service agent the following is required:

- a) Completion of an AWTS servicing training course conducted by a registered training organisation ie Training Australia course CPCPDR2023 maintain effluent disinfection systems or equivalent course;
- b) Minimum six months experience in the servicing of AWTS systems – proof of servicing experience and the type of systems serviced is required. Service agents just starting out would need to gain experience working with authorised AWTS service agent (mentor). Contact BSC if assistance is required in obtaining experience or mentorship;
- c) Accreditation in writing from each AWTS manufacturer confirming completion of any specific training needed to service that manufacturer's particular system;
- d) Professional indemnity and public liability insurance for the particular work, details of which are to be lodged with Council in advance of commencing servicing. BSC will maintain a register of currency of insurance and it is the responsibility of Service Agents to lodge renewal details with Council.

All OSSM electrical work is to be performed by a qualified, experienced licenced electrical contractor and in accordance with all appropriate electrical regulations and standards.

Note 4: There are a sufficient number of suitably qualified persons to install OSSM systems within the BSC LGA ie NSW licenced Plumber and Drainers. However, there are a limited number of OSSM designers and service agents and it is understood it can be difficult for the public to access and contact these professionals.

For these reasons BSC will make available to the public a list of suitably qualified persons that meet the required criteria to design or service OSSM systems within the BSC LGA. It will be voluntary for businesses to be included on the list. To be included on the list each business will need to complete and submit to BSC the OSSM Suitably Qualified Person Application Form. The suitably qualified person is to uphold their continual professional development and insurance requirements to remain on the list.

6.0 BSC OSSM COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OVERVIEW

When BSC conducts a OSSM site inspection and confirms that the OSSM system is operating unsatisfactorily (ie defective, failed system or effluent run-off) then the following enforcement steps are undertaken to ensure that the OSSM system is rectified promptly and returns to satisfactory operation.

1. BSC sends the property owner a Local Government Act – "Notice of Proposed Order" advising that BSC is intending to issue the owner an "Order" to rectify the defective OSSM system on the

property. The "Notice of Proposed Order" details the defects and the actions required to resolve the matter. The owner has an opportunity to make representations to Council within 14 days of the date on the "Notice of Proposed Order" if they believe the "Order" should not be given, modified or the timeframes to rectify are not achievable.

2. After the 14 day representation period expires, BSC will review any representations and decide whether to issue the property owner the "Order" and if so, whether with or without modifications. Depending on the extent of OSSM defects, the "Order" may require a Local Government Act – Section 68 Application to be lodged with Council including the payment of fees.
3. If the property owner does not comply with the "Order", BSC engages a solicitor to start proceedings to have the matter heard in either the Land and Environment Court or the Ballina Local Court.
4. Depending on the results of the site inspection, ie extent of non-compliance and risk to public and environmental health, Council may issue the person responsible for the breach a Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) "On The Spot Fine" in addition to the standard legal enforcement process. The OSSM risk rating and inspection frequency will be reviewed and adjusted if needed, which may incur additional costs to the homeowner due to potential increase in frequency of inspections.

Table 3: OSSM Program Performance - Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	Measurement (task actioned/completed)
Determination of OSSM system Approval to Install Applications (except applications within priority oyster aquaculture areas, which may take longer)	14 days
Determination of OSSM Approval to Operate Applications when property sold – include with the certificate to the new owner, the suite of OSSM homeowner education fact sheets and any system specific information	7 days
Response to customer request for BSC management action eg effluent run-off complaints where there is public and environmental health risk	Within 24 hours
Response to customer request for BSC management action eg OSSM complaints where there are no apparent public and environmental health risk	Within 48 hours
Timeframe for service agents to send their Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS) completed service reports to BSC. (In future all types of OSSMs service reports will need to be lodged to BSC within this timeframe)	Within 14 days
BSC perform audit of AWTS service reports overdue (>30 days) – letter to owner if overdue in first instance, enforcement process to follow if needed	2 audit reports run/year
Lodgement by service agents of current public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. Review by BSC and inclusion on BSC list of authorised service agents	1 per year
Educational information provided to homeowner, community and wastewater industry – eg OSSM articles in the BSC community connect newsletter and workshops	2 per year
Customer service survey	1 per year
Statistics of OSSM inspections performed on existing systems and provide breakdown of inspection results - compliances, non-compliances and failures	Quarterly 4 audit reports run/year

The OSSM Program provides quarterly statistics to Council as part of the Development Environmental and Health Group quarterly reporting process. The statistical reports are a gauge confirming if

compliance with the Key Performance Indicators is being achieved. A summary of OSSM statistical information is also included in the BSC State of the Environment Annual Report.

7.0 HOW TO APPLY TREATED EFFLUENT TO THE LAND

All OSSM systems within the BSC LGA must apply treated effluent to the land via sub-surface methods to reduce the risk of the effluent coming into contact with humans, or animals and minimising the risk of effluent surface run-off incidents.

For existing OSSM systems which have previously been approved by BSC for surface spray irrigation, they may continue to operate in this method as long as the system complies with the Approval to Operate conditions. If the existing system fails or is not being serviced and maintained in accordance with the Approval to Operate conditions then BSC will issue an Order to the owner to lodge a Local Government Act Section 68 application to install/alter the effluent land application system to a sub-surface method.

8.0 GREYWATER REUSE REQUIREMENTS

The Local Government Act and Local Government (General) Regulation provide approval requirements for domestic greywater treatment systems and greywater diversion devices.

Greywater means wastewater from washing machine, laundry tub, shower, hand basin, bath and kitchen (however it is preferred to keep kitchen waste out of greywater systems), but does not include wastewater from a toilet, urinal or bidet.

In general there are three ways of re-using greywater:

1. **Manual bucketing** – small quantities of greywater are captured in a bucket for re-use outside on gardens or lawns for which no Council approval is required
2. **Greywater diversion devices** - divert greywater (excluding kitchen wastewater) without storage or treatment to a sub-surface irrigation area for which no Council approval is required under certain conditions. A NSW licenced plumber and drainer is to install the device/s
3. **Domestic greywater treatment systems** - collect, store, treat greywater and disinfect the greywater for re-use inside the home for toilet and urinal flushing and cold water washing machine use, as well as for use outside the home on gardens or lawns in dedicated non-trafficable areas or other land application systems and for which Council approval is required. A NSW licenced plumber and drainer is to install the system/s.

Domestic greywater treatment systems must be accredited by the NSW Ministry of Health. All greywater diversion devices (gravity and pumped devices) are to be evaluated in accordance with the Australian Technical Specification ATS 5200.460-2004 issued by SAI Global Assurance Services.

Certification to the technical specification for plumbing and drainage products is obtained by way of a Watermark licence.



Extract from NSW Health – Greywater reuse policy:

“It is well recognised that householders, unless dedicated to wastewater reuse practices, do not necessarily maintain their wastewater management systems unless there is a system of audit. It is essential that councils institute an on-site wastewater management strategy which initially considers the impacts of greywater reuse in their areas before allowing greywater reuse and secondly, rigidly enforces an operating licence by a system of regular audit.”

8.1 Greywater Re-Use in Non-Sewered Areas

Installation of a greywater treatment system or greywater diversion device in a non-sewered area must be of an accredited system and must have prior approval from BSC. This approval is sought by the

lodgement of a Local Government Act Section 68 Application (including payment of the application fee). Refer to BSC OSSM Technical Guidelines for details on information to be submitted with an application.

Greywater reuse systems are not encouraged in non-sewered areas, as unlike in a sewered area where the greywater can be instantly diverted into Council's reticulated sewerage system during a power outage, maintenance works, persistent wet weather periods, or when high volumes of wastewater are being generated, this immediate safety diversion option is not available in a non-sewered area.

This means in a non-sewered area there is more risk and there also needs to be a backup system installed ie a treatment tank and effluent land application area must be installed based on total volume of greywater generated to manage the greywater when there is a power outage, maintenance works, persistent wet weather periods, or when high volumes of greywater are being generated. The added financial costs and additional resources required for inspection and management (BSC and homeowner) of a greywater re-use system in a non-sewered area do not fall within the OSSM Strategy objectives.

8.2 Greywater Re-Use in Sewered Areas

Installation of a greywater treatment system or greywater diversion device in a sewered area must be of an accredited system and must have prior approval from BSC. This approval is sought by the lodgement of a Local Government Act Section 68 Application (including payment of the application fee). Refer to BSC OSSM Technical Guidelines for details on information to be submitted with application.

Domestic greywater diversion may be carried out without the prior approval of the Council if:

- a) it is carried out in accordance with the Plumbing Code of Australia,
- b) an on-site sewage management facility is not installed on the premises, and
- c) the following performance standards are achieved:
 - (i) the prevention of the spread of disease by micro-organisms;
 - (ii) the prevention of the spread of foul odours;
 - (iii) the prevention of contamination of water;
 - (iv) the prevention of degradation of soil and vegetation;
 - (v) the discouragement of insects and vermin;
 - (vi) ensuring that persons do not come into contact with sewage or effluent (whether treated or not) in their ordinary activities on the premises concerned;
 - (vii) the minimisation of any adverse impacts on the amenity of the premises concerned and surrounding lands.

Note 5: An OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate must be issued to a property owner prior to the operation of either a greywater treatment system or greywater diversion device.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries–Water website provides information on greywater and a link to the document titled "NSW Guidelines for Greywater Reuse in Sewered, Single Household Residential Premises", which explains all the approval requirements for greywater reuse.

9.0 OSSM CERTIFICATION

BSC requires that all stages of the OSSM system design and installation process are certified by suitably qualified persons.

Table 4: OSSM Certification Requirements

Certification Type	Certification Person	Certification Document
OSSM Design Certification	Suitably Qualified Person – ie Designer - NSW Licenced Plumber and Drainer or Wastewater Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSC – Design Producer Statement
OSSM Installation and Commissioning Certification - new and upgraded On-Site Sewage Management Systems	NSW Licenced Plumber and Drainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSC – Compliance and Commissioning Certification Form

Certification Type	Certification Person	Certification Document
OSSM Installation & Minor Alterations Certification	Suitably Qualified Person – ie Designer, NSW Licenced Plumber and Drainer or Wastewater Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSC - Installation and Minor Alterations Certification Form
OSSM Commercial Systems - >10 Equivalent Persons (EP) - Design and Installation Certification	Appropriately qualified and experienced Wastewater Consultant or NSW Registered Professional Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSC – Design Producer Statement BSC – Compliance and Commissioning Certification Form

10 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS – NON-SEWERED AREAS

For developments applications in non-sewered areas the following is required:

10.1 Subdivision/Boundary Adjustment/Rezoning Applications

- The development application is to include an OSSM Report prepared by a suitably qualified person, who has conducted an OSSM desktop study of the property, a site inspection and who has assessed any existing OSSM system/s. The OSSM Report must include details of the location of all existing OSSM systems on the property (including effluent land application areas), confirm; whether the existing systems are performing satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily; their location; their condition; and if they will affect the proposed development application;
- For development applications involving the subdivision of land into multiple parcels, the OSSM design report will need to include a desktop study, site and soil assessment details and justify that an OSSM system can be installed on the new parcel/s of land in accordance with BSC's OSSM Strategy and Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines if applicable.

The size and location of the subdivision will also determine the extent of content to be included in the OSSM Design Report. For large subdivisions (ie subdividing into greater than five parcels of land) and where the soil assessment characteristics are confirmed the OSSM designer may only need to justify that an OSSM system can be installed on the most limiting parcels within the subdivision.

This would mean a site and soil assessment and effluent land application area calculation, based on a standard four bedroom dwelling, is only carried out on the most limiting parcel/s, and not on every parcel of land. The most limiting size of effluent land application area would be indicatively placed onto a site plan for all parcels of land within the subdivision justifying that an OSSM system can be installed in accordance with BSC's OSSM Strategy and Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines if applicable;

Note 6: The OSSM Designer is to consider and reference any applicable building envelop and environmental zones, in the OSSM Report and on the site plan, when determining the location of OSSM systems and effluent land application areas.

- If the OSSM Report finds that any existing OSSM system is **unsatisfactory**, the Report must set out in detail why this should not affect any consent given for the proposed development.

Example:

- Confirm that a Local Government Act Section 68 application to alter/install an OSSM system has been lodged with Council to rectify the unsatisfactory performance of the system, or
- Advise it is the intention of the owner to lodge a Local Government Act Section 68 application to alter/install an OSSM system at a later date, justify the delay in rectifying the OSSM system and certify it will not cause an environmental or health risk in the meantime.

BSC will consider this information and may issue the development consent with appropriate conditions to ensure that any OSSM system upgrade works are completed (eg prior to issue of an occupation or subdivision certificate) and/or issue an "Order" to the property owner to rectify the OSSM system within a set timeframe;

- d) If the OSSM Report finds that the existing OSSM system is **satisfactory**, it must also confirm that if the system does require any future upgrades, and it will not affect any consent given for the proposed development;
- e) If an applicant is unsure of BSC requirements when lodging a development application, a request should be made for a pre-lodgement meeting with Council.

10.2 New Dwellings

For proposed new dwellings in non-sewered areas, on parcels of land **2000m² or less**, and/or within a drinking water catchment area and/or within a POAA the following is required:

- a) The development application is to include an OSSM Report prepared by a suitably qualified person. The OSSM design report will need to include a desktop study, site and soil assessment details and justify that an OSSM system can be installed on the land in accordance with BSC's OSSM Strategy and Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines if applicable;
- b) Any approval will be conditioned to lodge a Local Government Act OSSM Section 68 Application (including payment of the application fee) prior to issue of Construction Certificate;
- c) An OSSM Approval to Operate certificate must be issued by BSC prior to the issuing of an interim or final occupational certificate;

For proposed new dwellings in non-sewered areas, on parcels of land **greater than 2000m²**, and not within a drinking water catchment area and not within a POAA the following is required:

- d) Any approval will be conditioned to lodge a Local Government Act OSSM Section 68 Application (including payment of the application fee) prior to issue of a Construction Certificate;
- e) An OSSM Approval to Operate certificate must be issued by BSC prior to the issuing of an interim or final occupational certificate.

10.3 Alterations and Additions to Existing Dwellings

For alterations and additions to existing dwellings in non-sewered areas where there **is a proposal** to increase the wastewater load (eg additional bedrooms) or an intention to carry out plumbing and drainage works (eg ensuite) the following is required:

Prior to Issue of a Construction Certificate

- a) A suitably qualified person is provide a report to BSC justifying that the existing OSSM system is operating satisfactorily, can treat the additional wastewater load and apply the effluent to the land, or confirm that the existing OSSM system will need to be upgraded, or that a new OSSM system will need to be installed;
- b) If the OSSM system needs to be upgraded or a new system installed then a Local Government Act OSSM Section 68 Application will be required to be lodged prior to issue of the Construction Certificate, including an OSSM Report prepared by a suitably qualified person in accordance with BSC's OSSM Strategy and Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines if applicable. An OSSM Approval to Operate certificate must be issued by BSC prior to the issuing of an interim or final occupational certificate.

For alterations and additions to existing dwellings in non-sewered areas where there is **not a proposal** to increase the wastewater load (eg no additional bedrooms) or no intention to carry out plumbing and drainage works the following is required:

- c) It is the homeowner and designer's responsibility to verify that the proposed development works (eg decking, building extension, swimming pool) will not be built over or impact on any existing OSSM system or effluent land application area. There is no requirement to submit an OSSM Report or lodge a Local Government Act OSSM Section 68 Application to BSC for these types of alterations and additions.

10.4 Change of Building Use

For change of building use development applications in non-sewered areas the following is required:

Development Application Stage

- a) A suitably qualified person is provide a OSSM Report to BSC justifying that the existing OSSM system is operating satisfactorily, can treat any additional wastewater load and apply the effluent

to the land, or confirm that the existing OSSM system will need to be upgraded, or that a new OSSM system will need to be installed;

- b) If the OSSM system needs to be upgraded or a new system installed then a Local Government Act OSSM Section 68 Application is to be lodged to BSC including an OSSM Report prepared by a suitably qualified person in accordance with BSC's OSSM Strategy and Rous Water On-Site Wastewater Management Guidelines if applicable. An OSSM Approval to Operate certificate must be issued by BSC prior to the issuing of an interim or final occupational certificate.

Note 7: If the Change of Building Use development application involves building works then the OSSM Report and Local Government Act OSSM Section 68 Application (if applicable) will be required to be lodged prior to issue of the Construction Certificate.

11 ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

All buildings connected to OSSM systems are to install water and energy efficient plumbing products (where applicable) to conserve the water and energy supply, minimise wastewater generation, assist in the satisfactory operation of the OSSM system and reduce the risk of the system failing. Refer to the Australian Government Water Efficiency Labelling Standards (WELS) Scheme and Energy Rating websites to compare the water and energy efficiency of different products.

As a minimum the following water efficient products are to be installed:

- a) Water conserving clothes washing and dishwashing machines (if applicable);
- b) Dual flush cisterns to all toilets;
- c) Flow control aerators to taps; and
- d) Water conserving shower roses.

The WELS water rating label provides water efficiency information for water-using products. It allows consumers to compare products and rewards manufacturers and retailers who make and stock water efficient models.

Label identification rating:

- A zero to six star rating that allows a quick comparative assessment of the product's water or energy efficiency. The more stars on the label the more water or energy efficient the product
- A figure showing the water consumption flow of the product based on laboratory tests.



OSSM Design - elements to consider:

- use of electricity
- use of consumables (such as chlorine)
- frequency of servicing
- number of parts and maintenance costs
- generation of greenhouse gases
- ability to reduce a) organic matter (compost food scraps), b) nutrients (low phosphorus washing and cleaning products), c) salts (low sodium washing and cleaning products) and sludge.

12 STAKEHOLDERS

The following stakeholders have been consulted during the OSSM Strategy review process.

Table 5: OSSM Strategy Review – Stakeholders

BSC Internal	External	Government
Public & Environmental Health	NSW Northern Rivers Plumbers and Drainers	NSW Ministry of Health
Development Services	Wastewater Consultants	NSW Department Environment and Heritage
Building Services	Solicitors and Property Conveyances	Department Primary Industries – Fisheries
Customer Service	Real Estate Agents	Department Primary Industries – Food Authority
Civil Services	Wastewater Pump Out Contractors	Rous County Council
Strategic and Community Facilities	Plumbing Suppliers	
Communication and Marketing	Aerated Wastewater Treatment System Manufacturers	
	Aerated Wastewater Treatment System - Service Agents	
	Soil and Water Testing Laboratory	
	Community Groups – Richmond River	
	Solicitor Legal advice	
	Third Party Peer Review of Strategy	

Table: Status of OSSM Program Review – Implementation of Recommendations

OSSM Items	Recommendations	Status
1. Council's Role in OSSM Approval to Install Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's role is to ensure that the applicant provides to Council the necessary information as prescribed in Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - Section 26, Council's On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy, and any additional information that may be needed to enable the Council to make a determination of the OSSM application • Council is not the applicant, designer or installer nor is it responsible for the roles these people perform • Council will, in general, communicate with the applicant/owner/designer/installer and other parties as needed about further information requests, assessments, or the issuing of approval documentation • The applicant/installer/owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with the approval conditions; • The Installer certifies that the installation has been carried out in compliance with the OSSM approval and conditions • The distinction between each person's role and responsibilities is needed to ensure that there is no confusion and a satisfactory outcome is achieved. 	<p>OSSM application form and assessment process has been modified.</p> <p>Certification of OSSM design, installation and commissioning clarified in policy. Standard certification forms developed for each stage and operational.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities clarified in policy.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>
2. Key Performance Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the key performance indicator/s and OSSM strategies be changed to have a clear link back to the Community Strategic Plan – Themes and Outcomes and have realistic sustainable target/s set for appropriate OSSM activities and customer satisfaction (nominate KPIs only). 	<p>Key performance indicators linked to community strategic plan.</p> <p>Indicators and reporting process detailed in policy.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>
3. Administrative Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To train administrative support officers to perform alternative services that are not double handling of processes e.g. issue OSSM Approval to Operate documentation and being responsible for this task, permanent Quality Control officer, link new parcel numbers created by subdivisions to old numbers in registers, provide education & communication assistance, and support customer satisfaction surveys, etc • Telephone enquiries as first port of call are to go to the main switch then the relevant OSSM Officer's phone message bank (if not in office), bypassing the need for admin. officers to take technical officers' telephone calls. The call is then responded to by the technical officer at a specific time of the day, along with other telephone enquiries e.g. 3:00 – 4:00pm • Training of fellow DEHG staff/sections so double 	<p>Limited administration support has been provided. Admin officer issues OSSM approval to operate certificates related to change of property ownership and other tasks.</p> <p>Ok at present, however further admin. support will be needed if revised policy adopted and with the additional</p>

8.5 Policy (Review) - On-Site Sewage Management.DOC

OSSM Items	Recommendations	Status
	handling & inefficiency is identified and rectified so that administrative support resources are available to all sections.	tasks and is proposed to be staged in future with the program.
4.OSSM Hard Copy Documents Archived or Destroyed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An administrative officer is to be trained and task allocated to review the OSSM documentation contained in these boxes and relevant content recorded in TRIM or if it is non-relevant destroyed. 	OSSM officers completed this task. No further action required.
5.N/A	N/A – left blank intentionally	N/A – left blank intentionally
6.OSSM Approval to Operate – Proposed New Process – (sale of property applications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the proposed new OSSM Approval to Operate Application process (sale of property applications) be implemented and that administrative support staff are to be trained to take responsibility for performing this task That no expiry date is included in the OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate or in Authority. Alternatively state that the OSSM Approval to Operate is renewed each year, which occurs for all property owners' via the payment of the OSSM Program fee at rates time (no need for inspection or to issue a new certificate until change of ownership occurs, the payment of fee confirms renewal) The OSSM Approval to Operate Certificate Template be modified to suit this new process and procedure All OSSM audit inspections are to be performed based on a risk based strategy using available resources and are not be a date driven requirement or sale of property request. Prior to the sale of a property the homeowners' or purchaser are to arrange for a pre-purchase inspection with an appropriate external professional. Council to educate stakeholders of this important step and possibly include this as a mandatory requirement in the revised Strategy. 	<p>This change in process has commenced with further details in the revised policy.</p> <p>Intending to implement this approval to operate process and be operational in 2020. A lot of work is needed in preparation for this implementation.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
7.Quality Assurance/Control – Documentation, Processes & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and complete all OSSM Officer processes & procedure flow charts Quality control of all documentation, formatting etc Resources for permanent Quality Control officer, who carries out or assists in creation of work processes and procedures, updates documents for financial year changes and conducts reviews/audits to ensure the procedures are being followed and amended when necessary. 	<p>Processes and procedures to be reviewed.</p> <p>Quality control responsibility of officers, BSC Corporate Communications to format.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
8.Communication & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a OSSM Program communication and education plan and implement Operational strategies to be amended to include this plan 	Revised policy now includes communication and education as goal

OSSM Items	Recommendations	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources to be allocated to deliver the plan activities Section budget to make allowance for appropriate funds to deliver the plan Council communication officer to be utilised. 	<p>and objective.</p> <p>Communication and Education Plan to be developed, allocation of funds to be included in budget for education program i.e. creation, publications, resources and delivery.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
9. OSSM Model – Sizing Effluent Land Application Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove current effluent land application sizing tables from the Strategy Allocate funds to develop a Ballina Shire Council OSSM effluent land application sizing software model program. (Cost estimate \$15,000), alternatively, require water balance & nutrient balance calculations for each report, the parameter which equates to the largest area is to be nominated and a suitable effluent land application system designed to suit BOM Climate data for Ballina regions are to be included in the revised Strategy, we would need coast, north, south and plateau data. 	<p>Ballina climate data included in OSSM Technical Guidelines.</p> <p>Computer model for sizing effluent land application areas to be reviewed. Undecided if OSSM model needed, no decision as yet on this matter.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
10. Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the position description be developed for the part time OSSM Officer, consider objectives, strategies, activities, roles and responsibilities, communication and education etc That the advertising of the part time OSSM Officer position is to be carried out as soon as possible, once the position description is completed That staff location, desk, phone, inspection tools, equipment, etc. be obtained & confirmed; Administrative support roles and responsibilities for the OSSM Program to be clarified and provided. 	<p>Additional OSSM Technical Officer appointed.</p> <p>Resources and revenue to be reviewed considering the revised policy proposed changes and focus of operations.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
11. On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy is reviewed and appropriate time and resources are allocated to perform this task. Timeframe for the review e.g. six months – i.e. 30 days to prepare draft (benchmarking other councils', revision of current document, stakeholders group created), 30 days to finalise document – workshop with stakeholders and make necessary changes, 42 days from first exhibition of 	<p>Revised policy to be tabled at Council Ordinary Meeting 22 June 2017.</p> <p>Public exhibition period for policy to commence soon.</p>

OSSM Items	Recommendations	Status
	<p>document (advertisement) to allow for public feedback, 60 days to make any final changes and prepare report to the Council for adoption of revised Strategy, then communicate to the industry & stakeholders the revised Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A stakeholder’s consultative group is to be established to assist in the Strategy review, input and feedback. This is needed to ensure that the document becomes best practise and is accepted by industry and satisfies the intent of Community Strategic Plan Themes & Outcomes •Request assistance from Council’s Corporate Communications with the revised Strategy advertising and promotion etc. 	<p>Local consultative working group formed and workshops completed. Peer review conducted.</p> <p>Communication officer reviewing documents, branding and formatting etc.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
<p>12. List of OSSM Designers’ and AWTS Services Agents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •That the list of suitably qualified people to design OSSM systems and service aerated wastewater treatment systems be proposed to the plumbing & drainage and wastewater industry •Following this a list of suitably qualified people is to be created for designing OSSM systems and servicing aerated wastewater treatment systems and made available at customer service, Council website etc. 	<p>Suitably qualified person criteria in revised policy.</p> <p>If policy adopted then list of suitably qualified people will be created and made available to public.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
<p>13. Monitoring the Servicing Intervals of AWTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •That the Authority system is updated to include the appropriate fields and reporting mechanism to identify systems that are overdue with their AWTS servicing requirements •That appropriate resources (i.e. administrative support) are provided to perform these additional functions of reviewing service reports, entering servicing data, running reports, issuing letters/notices etc. 	<p>Authority Council computer program initial amendments completed by IT Section.</p> <p>Admin. resource support provided for entering service report data. Envisaged more admin. support may be needed in future.</p> <p>Auditing of reports to be carried out in future, this may initiate enforcement actions.</p> <p>Further action required.</p>
<p>14. Development Services - DA Referrals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy document include a section for DA referrals and stipulates requirements for applications in non-sewered areas and application information •Ensure strategic planning documents are reviewed and updated if needed with the latest OSSM 	<p>Revised policy includes section - DA referral requirements.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities</p>

OSSM Items	Recommendations	Status
	<p>information, document references & requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the Council's internal referral roles and the responsibilities between sections and to the development industry, consultants etc • Address the issue of creating new parcel numbers, when a new subdivision is approved, and the need to update Authority registers (linking to the old parcel numbers with the new numbers). Resources & responsibilities for this task are required. 	<p>detailed.</p> <p>New parcel/historic numbers, triggered as result of subdivision approval still an ongoing issue. Need to update all Council registers when subdivision occurs, corporate issue also, not resolved.</p> <p style="background-color: #f4a460;">Further action required.</p>
<p>15. Dwelling Alterations & Additions - Existing OSSM Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the On-Site Sewage & Wastewater Management Strategy document includes a section for dwelling alterations & additions involving existing OSSM systems • There will be a requirement to provide a report from a suitably qualified person to assess if the existing OSSM system is operating satisfactorily, to confirm the wastewater volume the existing OSSM system was designed and installed to treat, to advise whether there is any potential increase in wastewater volume with the proposed alterations & additions and if the existing OSSM system can cope with this increase. If there is an increase in wastewater volume and the existing OSSM system was not designed and installed to treat this increase in volume then the existing system will need to be upgraded in accordance with current requirements. The same upgrade requirements will apply for failing systems, whether there is an increase in wastewater volume or not. 	<p>Revised policy includes a section for alterations and additions to dwellings that have existing OSSM systems.</p> <p style="background-color: #c6e0b4;">No further action required.</p>