

## OVERVIEW

The Adelaide Hills Council region is the primary catchment area for Adelaide's water supply, hence much of the area is zoned "Watershed Primary Production". Without proper management, increased animal and human habitation in the region increases the actual or potential threat to water quality.

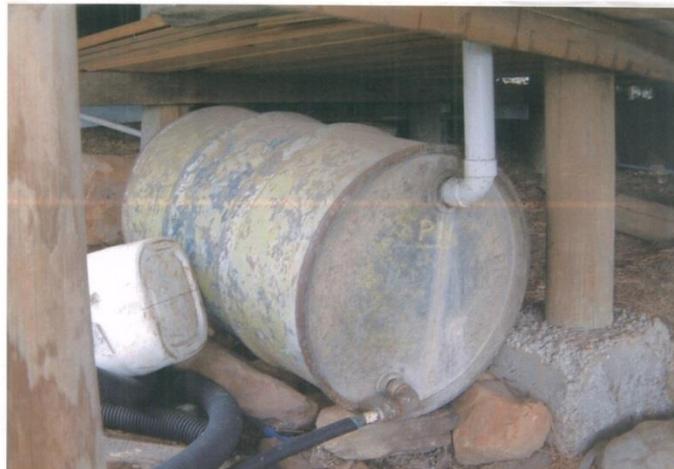
Unlike the Adelaide metropolitan area, the sewer infrastructure in the district is limited (refer appendix). Some townships have Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) whilst the remaining properties have (or require) on-site wastewater systems.

Consequently it is a requirement of Council's Development Plan that a wastewater system must be approved before Development Plan Consent (when applicable) can be granted.

## CONSIDERING PURCHASING AN EXISTING HOUSE?

There are many issues to consider when purchasing a house in the Adelaide Hills area (in addition to size, location, finance etc). Other important points to consider are water supply, fire protection and human waste disposal. Ask the Real Estate Agent (or owner) if the property is connected to mains sewer, community wastewater management system or an independent on-site wastewater system. The agent might be able to answer some of these questions but check this fact sheet (or contact Council) if you need more information on these important property issues. Ask the agent (or owner) to show you the "Schedule 2 document" (required by Section 7 of the Land & Business Sale & Conveyancing Act 1994) which will inform you if any legal notices apply to the property.

## OWN A HOUSE AND WANT TO UPGRADE THE WASTEWATER SYSTEM?



Previous Council surveys have indicated that there are existing homes with wastewater systems that are failing to operate in a sanitary condition. Sometimes the remedy is simple, for example replacing missing lids, vent caps, or education on better maintenance can ensure the wastewater system will give many more years of satisfactory service.

In more extreme circumstances, mal functioning systems require a complete upgrade.

## **BUILDING ADDITIONS TO YOUR EXISTING HOUSE (INCLUDING NEW WET AREAS)?**



Extending your house doesn't necessarily mean that you will be obliged to upgrade your wastewater system. If you are only undertaking minor alterations (and additions) and the existing system is working satisfactorily then you are only obliged to lodge an application with the council for any changes to the sanitary plumbing (drains).

If your additions/alterations are significant and result in your house offering increased accommodation (e.g. more people could live in the house), or spa bath(s) are intended, or the system is already failing – then an upgrade of the on-site wastewater system will be required. In this instance a waste control application will be required for the new sanitary drainage and waste system.

## **PURCHASING A VACANT BLOCK AND/OR BUILDING A NEW HOUSE?**



If you're building a new house (or purchasing a vacant block with the intention to eventually build a house) you need to consider waste (sewage) disposal. The following options should be considered in this order of priority

### **1. Can we connect to SA Water sewer?**

Because the district is Adelaide's primary water catchment area, connection to sewer is always Council's preferred option for new developments (if available).

If a sewer connection point has been installed on the block then a direct connection to sewer becomes mandatory for any new dwelling. Please contact SA Water for more information on sewer extensions or connections.

If a sewer connection point has not been installed and sewer is available nearby an “indirect connection” to sewer might be feasible and would certainly be Council’s preference for your development. Please contact SA Water for more information on indirect sewer connections.

## **2. Can we connect to a Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS formerly known as STEDs or CED)?**

As with sewer, if CWMS is available (or can be made available) to your block, connection will be mandatory for any new house (and/or commercial development).

The following townships have CWMS - Birdwood, Charleston, Kersbrook, Mt. Torrens, Stirling East (near golf course), Woodside and Verdun.

If the CWMS drain can be extended to your block, an application for the drain extension and connection point is required to be lodged with Council.

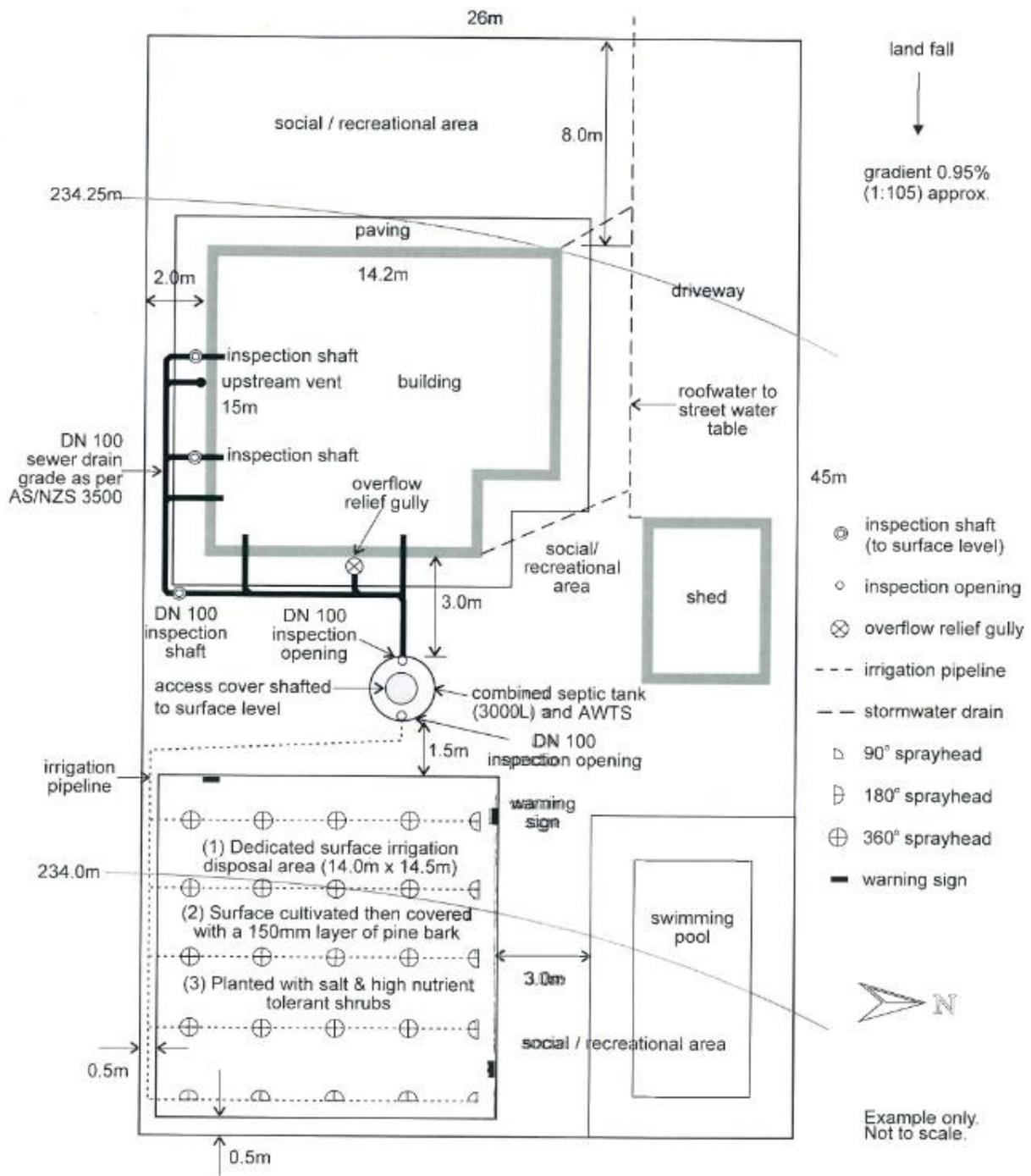
If your block has a CWMS connection point installed, your new house will require a septic tank that is plumbed into this connection point. An application is required to be lodged with the Council

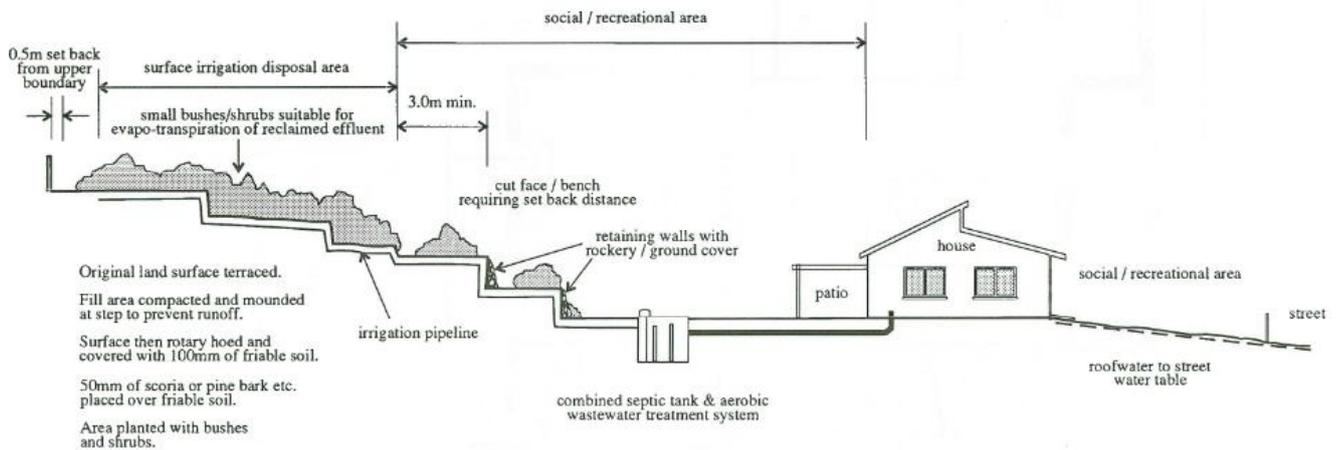
## **3. Can we install an on-site waste system?**

If your block doesn’t have sewer or CMWS available then an on-site system is the only solution - providing it can meet State Health requirements. Compliance with these legal requirements is established after a “wastewater works application” is lodged with the Council.

The following criteria must be evaluated when considering an on-site system eg

- **Land slope** - not greater than 20% (1 in 5) or site engineering solution required.
- **Flooding** - the site should not be subjected to inundation or flooding more frequently than 1 in 10 years.
- **Site and soil characteristics** - assessed for depth and permeability.
- **Setbacks** – minimum distances from buildings, boundaries or swimming pool and importantly 50m from watercourses (rivers, creeks, dams, bores etc).
- **System size and capacity** – number of potential occupants (min 6) and sanitary fixtures.





## TYPES OF WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Proprietary wastewater systems are generically approved for use in South Australia by SA Health. To install such a system on your block requires approval from your local council. At the Adelaide Hills Council, your local Environmental Health Officer has delegated authority to assess and approve a wastewater system (or alterations to a wastewater system) on your block.

Please be mindful that the appropriate treatment and disposal/recycling of human waste is paramount to the sustainability of not only your project today – but the future of our shared environment tomorrow!

### Septic Tank & Trench System

This is an elementary form of sewage and wastewater treatment. Bacteria within the tank break down waste into simpler substances. Sludge and scum accumulate over time and the tank must be pumped out periodically (every 4 years minimum) to prevent these solids entering the trench and causing clogging. The liquid wastewater flows from the tank (contaminated effluent) into the subsurface trench or other approved system where it soaks into the soil.



### CWMS (also known as STEDs)

In this system the septic tank discharges the liquid wastewater into the council drainage systems via a connection point. Each house has its own septic tank (on site) connected to the system. Periodic pump outs are still required and undertaken by council's contractors every 4 years. Effluent collected by the

system is conveyed to either SA Water for further treatment or to a Council storage lagoon for further treatment before it can be reused for irrigation purposes.

### **Aerobic Wastewater Treatment Systems: (AWTS)**

These can be used where conventional subsurface disposal methods are ineffective. AWTS incorporate primary treatment, aeration, clarification, settling, disinfection and storage chambers. The resulting effluent is discharged by pumping to a dedicated surface or sub-surface irrigation disposal area (\* refer notes on following page).



**\*Note:** in addition to the space required for personal recreation (ie 100m<sup>2</sup> min), Aerobic Filter Systems require sufficient space set aside for effluent irrigation. These effluent irrigation areas must be designed by a soil engineer and constructed by the plumber (as per the engineers report) as part of the system installation.

When any application for a wastewater system is submitted to Council it should be accompanied by the engineer's site and soil report. As the effluent is not suitable for human contact the effluent irrigation areas must be installed to as to comply with designing engineers site and soil report.

The above criteria can be located in *On-site Wastewater Systems Code 2013* which is available on the SA Health website.



### **Alternative Systems:**

These include composting toilets, grey water system, septic tanks and reed beds. Application for such systems can be made to the Council Environmental Health Unit.

**PLEASE NOTE**

The information provided in this Fact Sheet is only intended to be a summary. All applications are considered on their individual merits and therefore situations may vary.

**Contact details**

Development & Regulatory Services  
Duty Planner  
(08) 8408 0400

Development & Regulatory Services  
Environmental Health Unit  
(08) 8408 0400.

**Further information**

Adelaide Hills Council  
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au  
ahc.sa.gov.au  
PO Box 44  
Woodside SA 5244  
  
SA Water  
1300 650 951

## APPENDIX

### Waste Disposal by District

Sewer *	CWMS	On site
Aldgate	Birdwood Township	Ashton
Balhannah	Charleston Township	Basket Range
Bridgewater	Kersbrook Township	Bradbury
Gumeracha	Mt. Torrens Township	Carey Gully
Heathfield	Stirling East	Castambul
Lobethal	Woodside Township	Chain of Ponds
Oakbank	Verdun Township	Cherryville
Rostrevor	<p><b>NOTE:</b> CWMS may only service township or parts of these suburbs – always check with Council for confirmation that CWMS is available. Application for CWMS connection point or septic tanks can be made to Environmental Health Unit at the Council office.</p>	Crafers West
Stirling		Cudlee Creek
Woodforde		Forrest Range
<p><b>NOTE:</b> Sewer mains may only service townships or parts of these suburbs – always check for confirmation of sewer drains with SA Water. Application for direct or indirect connections to sewer should be made to SA Water on (ph) 1300 650 951</p>		Forreston
		Greenhill
		Houghton
		Horsnell Gully
		Humbug Scrub
		Inglewood
		Ironbank
		Kenton Valley
		Lenswood
		Longwood
		Marble Hill
		Millbrook
		Montacute
		Mt. George
		Mylor
		Norton Summit
		Paracombe
	Piccadilly	
Scott Creek		
Summertown		
Upper Hermitage		
Upper Sturt		
Uraidla		
Warren		