

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan Implementation Action Plan

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1. Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) Implementation Action Plan

Cardinia Shire Council's OWMP supports Council's broader strategic goals of environmental sustainability, healthy communities, and infrastructure resilience. It will guide inspection programs, public education efforts, and advocacy for investment in wastewater infrastructure across Cardinia Shire Council from now until 2030.

This OWMP will be used to feed into annual budget and programming cycles of the Council. It will be reviewed at a minimum annually to remain up to date and whenever required to:

- reflect changes in the organisation, resources or policies
- identify and address emerging risks
- ensure that identified actions are current and effective in reducing the identified and emerging risks.

This OWMP Action Implementation Plan timeline outlines the management strategies and action items to address priorities. The Environmental Health Unit will have the primary responsibility for the coordination and implementation of the recommendations. Council's Planning, Environment, Infrastructure, Building and GIS staff will assist them.

1.1 Funding and budget allocation

This OWMP will require the allocation of budget and resources throughout the full implementation. The majority of actions will be absorbed into the existing Environmental Health budget.

Currently income derived from statutory fees (OWMS permits) and charges currently cover resources required to assess, discuss / permit the installation, inspection and approval to use new and modified OWMS and do not provide for full-service cost recovery and implementation of the plan.

Council will need to consider allocation of resources, along with some cross organisation development of solutions, such as improved use of technology to achieve greater compliance. External funding will also be sought, including grants, from the water authorities and the State and Federal governments.

2. Detailed action plan

The below table provides a detailed action plan of priority projects from Year 1 to 4, responsible department, partners/stakeholders, constraints and risks and strategic pillar.

Strategy 1: Healthy Environments - Promote sustainable wastewater practices and support community understanding

1.1 Provide fair, accurate, and accessible information on good wastewater management principles, practices, and improvement option				
Actions	Timeframe	Responsible department	Partners/Stakeholders	Constraints/risks
Continue to discuss individual systems with property owners during the permit application process and in response to enquiries from owners. Educate future / potential owners of homes with OWMS.	Year 1 – completion 2026	EVH		Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Update educational material.				
Provide details about permit process on Council's website.			IT	
Proactively distribute policies and educational materials to the community and service providers.			OWMS service providers	
1.2 Develop a township risk prioritisation plan				
Focus on high priority townships identified in risk assessment	Year 1 – completion 2026	EVH	Strategic planning, engineering, water authorities	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Improve onsite wastewater management by assessing gaps and improving data collection	Year 1 – completion 2026		GIS, Strategic planning, Engineering	
Assess any property in an onsite wastewater containment area where Council does not have data	Year 2 – Completion 2027			
Collaborate with stakeholders on results of water data from receiving environments	Ongoing		Engineering, water authorities. LCA assessors	
Improved risk data for strategic planning and decision making	Ongoing		Strategic planning, engineering, water authorities	

1.3 Encourage property owners to connect to sewer (in declared areas)				
Actions	Timeframe	Responsible department	Partners/Stakeholders	Constraints/risks
Utilise internal building and planning referral process to encourage system upgrades where required	Ongoing	EVH	Planning, building, engineering	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Properties provided sewer in high density area's to be encouraged to connect through notification to the water authority.			Water Authority	

Strategy 2: The protection of the public health and environment is at the centre of wastewater decisions

2.1 Raise profile of wastewater system operation and maintenance requirements within the municipality and region				
Actions	Timeframe	Responsible department	Partners/Stakeholders	Constraints/risks
Implement targeted education campaigns to property owners, occupiers and agents in high-risk areas at appropriate times.	Year 2 – completion 2027	EVH	OWMS service agents	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Provide readily accessible wastewater management information in other languages and in both hard copy and web-based formats.			IT, communications	
2.2 Utilise a Risk Management Framework to identify townships and high-risk sites that require a review of their wastewater treatment and disposal options to enable long term sustainability and future growth of townships.				
Investigate innovative and sustainable community-scale or on-site wastewater treatment and water cycle management solutions in partnership with key stakeholders	Year 2 – Completion 2027	EVH	Strategic planning, engineering, water authorities	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Regularly engage with relevant water authorities to discuss sustainable and future on-site wastewater disposal system needs for townships and high-risk sites that reduce environmental impacts	Year 2 – Completion 2027		Strategic planning, engineering, water authorities	
Investigate health protection measures to address high-risk and accessible contaminated stormwater drains or groundwaters.	Year 2 – Completion 2027		Engineering, water authorities. LCA assessors	
Seek improved maintenance and development of stormwater drainage in priority townships in partnership with Council's Projects and Infrastructure departments.	Year 2 – Completion 2027		Strategic planning, engineering, water authorities	

2.3 Develop an environmental monitoring program in collaboration with other agencies.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsible department	Partners/Stakeholders	Constraints/risks
Implement a comprehensive environmental monitoring program including the collection of water samples from selected locations and arranging their analysis at a NATA-approved laboratory.	Year 3– completion 2028	EVH	Strategic Planning/Sustainability	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Prepare an annual report outlining the results of the environmental monitoring program and any improvements that have been made.			Strategic Planning/Sustainability	

Strategy 3: Regulatory Management

3.1 Our authorised officers will have the required skills and knowledge to make decisions fairly, consistently and proportionate to risk.				
Actions	Timeframe	Responsible department	Partners/Stakeholders	Constraints/risks
Development of Council wastewater policy through evidence-based investigation, including enforcement protocols.	Year 1 – completion 2026	EVH	Council Management	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater policy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specify OWMS approvals process - Transition from existing OWMS to upgrade and connection to sewer process - Non-permit (eg older dwellings with no records) to permit process - Enforcement (eg failing/aged/non-maintained systems) process - Green energy home design and greywater reuse - Authorised Officer training procedures (including induction) - Annual policy review to ensure it is reflective of current legislation, organisational needs and best practice. 	Year 1 – completion 2026 Ongoing monitoring/review		Council Management	

3.2 Explore alternative or innovative uses of existing legislative provisions to enhance wastewater management processes				
Develop and implement a OWMS inspection program (prioritised by risk, including age of system) to gather system details at property level.	Year 2 – completion 2027	EVH	GIS, Engineering, Building	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Influence and assist Government agencies and other stakeholders to improve the regulatory framework within which the Council operates.	Ongoing		State government agencies, Councils (Regional)	
3.3 Establish an audit and enforcement program to ensure that property owners and service technicians or agents adequately fulfil their respective responsibilities				
Advocate to government agencies and other stakeholders to improve the regulatory framework within which Council operates.	Ongoing	EVH	State government agencies, Councils (Regional)	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Develop robust wastewater compliance processes including procedures for managing non-compliance.	Year 1 – Completion 2026		Council Management, enforcement	
Introduce procedural fairness into regulatory management/enforcement.	Year 1 – Completion 2026		Council Management, enforcement	

Strategy 4: Collaboration

4.1 Identify, plan and advocate for the provision of sewerage infrastructure in growth areas				
Investigate alternative, community scale treatment systems for priority townships, and availability of funding in collaboration with water corporations.	Ongoing	Strategic Planning	EVH, engineering, sustainability, water authorities	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
Liaise with appropriate departments to ensure that planning and infrastructure proposals adequately address wastewater management needs for townships			EVH, planning, engineering, sustainability, water authorities	
4.2 Develop an internal stakeholder group with key Council representatives being Environmental Health, Strategic planning, Sustainability and Engineering to collaborate and advocate on wastewater priorities				
Establish Stakeholder Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop TOR • Meet quarterly to discuss wastewater priorities • Share data and information to identify wastewater opportunities for townships. Promote and facilitate ongoing coordination of internal resources into wastewater management strategies and projects.	Ongoing	Strategic Planning	EVH, planning, engineering, sustainability, water authorities	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
4.3 Develop and strengthen external stakeholder relationships and collaboration on wastewater management projects and programs.				
Identify shared water/ wastewater objectives and strategies with external water authorities and stakeholders.	Ongoing	EVH/Strategic Planning	Planning, engineering, sustainability, water authorities	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology

4.4 Determine priorities for implementation and recommend to Council for consideration via the annual budget process as a result of the annual review.

Annual review of the action plan and reporting to Council and stakeholders on progress, including results of inspection and monitoring program.	End of year review and report 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029	EVH	Reporting from internal Council departments, water authorities	Budgeting / Resources / Time / Technology
A full review of the OWMP (including independent audit) four years after its adoption by Council.	2029		Consultant, internal Council departments, water authorities	