

Submission

No 13

INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER

Organisation: Wollondilly Shire Council
Name: Ms Rebecca Domsalla
Position: Senior Environment Health Officer
Date Received: 15/12/2011



Our Reference: Trim 1956 RD:RD

The Legislative Assembly of New South Wales
Committee on Environment and Regulation
NSW Parliament
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

14 December 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER

Reference is made to your invitation for written submissions regarding the Inquiry into the Management of Domestic Wastewater.

The Terms of Reference have been reviewed whereby the following issues/concerns relating to the management of domestic wastewater are raised for the Committee's consideration:

1. Information related to domestic wastewater management is exhaustive however much of this is not mandated and is too complex for ordinary landowners to understand the requirements and their responsibilities.
2. There is insufficient regulation of the food production industry. The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the NSW Food Authority (FA) need to increase their roles and be given more power and resources to better manage food production and its safety.
3. Many Council's currently don't have the resources to exercise the functions imposed upon them for the management of sewage management facilities and the requirements and expectations are increasing beyond what Council's can manage.
4. The responsibility of regulating the food production side of things must remain with the DPI and the FA.
5. Considerable focus should be placed on the means and methods in reducing the overall number of on-site sewage management facilities in food production regions.
6. The penalties for non-compliance with Approvals to Operate and Orders under the Local Government Act 1993 are far too lenient and do little to discourage bad/illegal practices. This would especially apply where an income is being received from food production activities.
7. The issue of domestic wastewater and food production really needs to be managed and controlled at a State level and should not be the responsibility of local government. Perhaps intervention or assistance by the Federal Government is possible particularly in circumstances where food is exported.
8. The servicing of aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS) is an unregulated industry despite Council's pleading with the State Government for years to do something about it however it seems to be repeatedly put in the "too hard basket". The industry needs to be regulated by NSW Fair Trading due to the fact that these service agents move between local government areas. It cannot and should not be a role for individual Councils.

All Correspondence to PO Box 21 Picton NSW 2571

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9. The Silver Book needs to be reviewed which may provide an ideal opportunity for the NSW Government to tie many of these issues together in consultation with the many various stakeholders.

I wish to express my appreciation in having been given the opportunity to provide comments to the Committee in relation to such a critical issue that impacts heavily upon local government, the environment and the health of its constituents.

Should you require any additional information or assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Rebecca Domsalla of Council's Development Services Section on (02) 4677 1196.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke, likely representing the name Rebecca Domsalla.

Rebecca Domsalla
Senior Environmental Health Officer
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SECTION