

Submission

No 4

INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER

Organisation: City of Sydney
Name: Ms Monica Barone
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Date Received: 2/12/2011

City of Sydney

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30 November 2011

Our Ref: 2011/327845

Mr Chris Patterson MP
Chair
Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Regulation
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Patterson

Committee on Environment and Regulation -- Inquiry into the Management of Domestic Wastewater

I refer to your letter inviting the City to make a submission to the Inquiry into the management of domestic wastewater.

In 1998, the NSW Government introduced reforms (under the *Local Government Act 1993*, s68 Part C, Items 5 & 6) that made it compulsory for councils to monitor the operation of all on-site sewage management systems and ensure those systems complied with environmental and public health performance standards.

These reforms were introduced after the 1997 Wallis Lake hepatitis A outbreak, when more than 400 people became ill after eating contaminated oysters. Faulty on-site septic tank systems were suspected of being a source of the virus that caused the illness.

Councils who have un-sewered properties in their local government areas must implement an inspection regime and issue an "Approval to Install and Operate" for all on-site wastewater management systems. The City of Sydney follows a similar process for commercial sewage management systems, such as at Darling Island and the Westfield Sydney redevelopment.

Councils must also develop an on-site management strategy and keep a database of all on-site sewage management systems. Some councils operate proactive programs that involve their undertaking inspections of septic tanks and other domestic wastewater management systems to ensure compliance with their operating approval.

The matters listed in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference have not become issues for the City because we are primarily in a public-sewered local government area that does not have privately operated domestic systems. These topics would be more relevant to councils in rural areas, and therefore the City's comments for this submission are limited to those contained in this letter.

city of villages

I look forward to hearing the outcomes of your inquiry. Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the City's wastewater management systems, please contact Peter Harding, Health and Building Manager, by telephone on 9265 9333 or by email at pharding@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.M.B.' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Monica Barone
Chief Executive Officer