

ADOPTED AT COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY, 2007

Outlined below are amendments to the recently updated Pressure Sewerage Policy (POL06/135):

223. Pressure Sewer System Policy Amendments

File 12039

RECOMMENDED that Council:

- a) **Receive the report for information**
- b) **Amend the Pressure Sewer Policy by inclusion of a section after 2.20 as below:**
“Vacant single dwelling residential lots”;
For existing vacant single dwelling residential lots at the time of gazettal of this scheme, the on-property pressure sewer systems will be supplied and installed in the same way as for new developments (see heading “New Developments”) and charged as below:
- c) **The vacant lot new development charge phased in as follows:**
 1. **No charge corresponding to the number of spares provided under the individual backlog sewerage scheme subsidy.**
 2. **For up to five years from gazettal each owner contributing 45% (Tabourie) and/or 43% (Lake Conjola) of the charge.**
 3. **After 5 years, as per the new development charge.**
- d) **The amended draft policy be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days and that following the expiry of the exhibition period if there are no submissions received then the policy be adopted as submitted.**

**REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER
SHOALHAVEN WATER OPERATIONS & STRATEGIC REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY 2007**

1. Pressure Sewer System Policy Amendments

File 12039

Background

Council recently upgraded its Pressure Sewer System Policy POL05-5, principally with minor amendments relating to:

- Definitions, terminology and minor technical matters.
- Provision of pumps to non-residential properties in backlog areas
- Clarification in respect to new developments.

On receipt of approval from the Minister for Water Utilities to accept a tender for the property design and construction of pressure sewer systems for the Tabourie Lake Sewerage Scheme, residents were advised of the impending construction and the process of:

- construction of pressure sewer systems in the village
- undertaking of property audits for compliance with plumbing and electrical regulations
- contacting and arranging the design of the “on-property” systems with property owners
- the approximate timetable for the above, including installation for “on-property” works.

Feedback from both the contractor, their property audit/designer and some residents have highlighted the number of issues that need clarification and capture in the Pressure Sewer Policy.

Vacant Lots

The Pressure Sewer Policy under 2.2 *Connection from the Reticulation Main to the Property* provides “for existing vacant single dwelling residential lots at the time of gazettal of the scheme a pumping unit will be supplied in the same way as for new developments. For new developments, installation of the system will be at their cost, ie:

- Installation of power and house drains up to the pressure sewer unit
- Meeting the adopted charges for installation of the “on-property” pressure sewer unit and discharge pipe.

This is as per the earlier report in this business paper.

Recognising Council's concern regarding the cost of installation for new developments, advice was sought from other relevant authorities, with their particular policies.

Bega Valley Shire

The boundary kit is installed during the installation of pressure sewer main by the contractor. When the owner desires to build a house they pay \$12,500 and undertake the same process as for a newly created lot. Bega's rationale for the payment is that the pressure sewer installation was not included in the subsidy funding from the State Government.

South East Water (Melbourne)

The boundary kit is installed during installation of the pressure sewer main by the contractor. When the owner desires to build a house they contact SEW who supplies the equipment and does the installation for a \$500 administration charge. This cost is set by the Victorian government regulator. It is cost subsidy by other customers.

Wagga City Council

As for Bega but the charge is \$13,000.

Sydney Water Corporation

The boundary kit is installed during the installation of pressure sewer main by the contractor. When owners wish to connect they install their own system. If they install approved equipment SWC will maintain.

As for Bega Valley Council, Shoalhaven will not receive a subsidy for vacant lots as they are future works and on private property. The subsidy does provide for spares. The supplier recommends 4% of spares be carried for each village. The vacant lots in both Tabourie and Conjola area 32 and 31 respectively or 8%. It is unlikely that these will be taken up in the near future.

Council has a number of options to consider in dealing with existing vacant lots in backlog areas.

- Treat as for new developments from date of gazettal of this scheme
- Owners to meet 45% of the charge, which is equivalent to the Tabourie subsidy rate (43% in Lake Conjola)
- Waive the charge and undertake the installation at full cost to Council

It may be appropriate to phase in the full cost as below:

1. No charge for the first 16, corresponding to the number of spares provided under the subsidy. This would be an approximate cost to Council of \$4,000 per property
2. For up to five years from gazettal, either 1 above or each owner contributing 45% (Tabourie) and 43% (Lake Conjola) of the charge. Note that the supply of unit is 46% of the installation charge.
3. After 5 years, as per the new development charge.

Uncontactable Owner in Backlog Lots

The contractor is required to contact owners for the property audit and "on-property" design in consultation with the owner. Letters have been sent to all Tabourie Lake residents requesting their contact details and at this stage the response has been excellent, with very few not responding. There is always the possibility of owners not being contactable, despite the best endeavours of Council through correspondence and/or the contractor through discussions with neighbours.

There are two instances to consider; either an existing dwelling with "on-property" pressure sewer system is to be installed, or a vacant lot requiring the location of the boundary kit within the property. In both cases it is essential that the contractor undertake the works in the contract period (in Tabourie from January to end of November 2007).

Other authorities have been contacted on how they manage and their response is as follows:

Bega Valley Shire

If the owner is not contactable, they send a plan of the proposed location of the pressure sewer unit, discharge pipe or the boundary kit for vacant lots, to the owner's registered address. They are provided an opportunity to contact Council and comment within 30 days of the date of the letter. If a response is not received then the contractor proceeds to install the units and/or boundary kit, entering the property under the provisions of the Local Government Act.

Bega Valley Council has experienced only a very small number of these situations.

South East Water

Similar to Bega Valley, owners are given plenty of opportunity for owners to respond. They do not connect power or install the pump until contacted by the property owner.

Wagga City

Similar to Bega

Sydney Water Corporation

They do not have powers of entry so are reliant on personal contact. If the owners fail to respond and after the contract has expired and they wish to connect they pay the full cost of connection.

It is proposed to undertake the same process as Bega.

Unco-operative Owners

There may be instances when an owner may not be co-operative with the contractor or Council audit, design or installation on their property. While Council has the power to enter property to undertake works, it is not considered appropriate (except for the boundary kit installation).

At Bega they have not experienced any owner that has refused entry on the lot and/or co-operation regarding installation of pressure sewer systems on properties. For individual cases they have had to convince owners of their best interests to co-operate and locate the units, etc.

Issues to discuss with owners include:

- Council's regulatory requirement in regard to the satisfactory operation of on-site sewerage management facilities
- The payment of sewerage availability charges at the time of gazettal of the scheme
- After the time of gazettal of the scheme the installation could be at full cost to the owner

It is not proposed to include this within the Pressure Sewer Policy at this point of time as this would be an unlikely occurrence. If the situation arises, each case will be reported for Council decision at that time.