

30<sup>th</sup> November 2015



Dear Sir/Madam

***Blackwood Localised Septic Program***

Following recent correspondence regarding the activities of the Blackwood Sewerage Working Group, and the announcement by Minister Lisa Neville (see attached media release) of her support of a localised septic program for Blackwood, we wish to invite you to attend a drop-in session to discuss the above program with members of the Working Group.

Drop-in sessions will be held at the Country Fire Authority (CFA) building at the corner of Terrill Street and Greendale-Trentham Road, at the following times:

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December**  
3.30pm - 6.30pm

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December**  
10:30am – 1:00pm

Feel free to come during any of the above times as no registration is required.

**The Program**

The program, to be known as the Blackwood Localised Septic Program, includes the following main components: to renew or upgrade existing septic systems in Blackwood that were identified as faulty in an audit undertaken by the Moorabool Shire Council; and, to implement a support program for owners wishing to build a new dwelling on vacant land within Blackwood (the attached brochures provide further details about the program and its components).

At the drop-in sessions representatives from the working group will outline further details on the septic upgrades and innovative planning support to be introduced. You are welcome to discuss these proposals either in-person at a drop-in session, or as otherwise provided for below.

For further information, or if you wish to make comment (ideally by 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015), please contact Stephen Carter at Central Highlands Water (PO Box 152, Wendouree VIC 3353 or E: [scarter@chw.net.au](mailto:scarter@chw.net.au) or T: 1800 061 514)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul O'Donohue".

Paul O'Donohue  
**Managing Director**  
**Central Highlands Water**



CENTRAL  
HIGHLANDS  
WATER



# BLACKWOOD

## LOCALISED SEPTIC PROGRAM

### OVERVIEW OF SEPTIC UPGRADE PROGRAM

#### THE BLACKWOOD LOCALISED SEPTIC PROGRAM (BLSP) INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING MAIN COMPONENTS:

- to renew or upgrade existing septic systems in Blackwood that were identified in the Moorabool Shire Council's Septic Audit as being faulty; and,
- to implement a planning support program for owners wishing to build a new dwelling on vacant land within Blackwood.

The following information is a question and answer and high level overview of the actions and timelines of the program as it relates to upgrading of faulty septic systems (a separate document provides information about the planning support component of the Program).

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

##### What properties does this program apply to?

This program will primarily apply to those properties where faulty septic systems were identified under the municipal septic tank audit undertaken by the Moorabool Shire Council. That is, at approximately one in every four Blackwood properties.

##### How will I know if my property is included?

A BLSP Project Manager will be appointed, in the first half of 2016, to confirm the audit findings through site visits and consultation with landowners. The selection of properties and the process for further contact with landowners is generally as set out in the following flow diagram.



# BLACKWOOD

## LOCALISED SEPTIC PROGRAM

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (CONT.)

#### When will this project begin?

The BLSP will commence during 2016 and is expected to take around two years to complete.

#### How much will it cost me?

The contribution by property owners toward the program is capped at \$800, but only required to be paid by the owners receiving an upgrade to their septic system. The \$800 cap does not apply to proposed new dwellings (i.e. where landowners are required to meet the full cost of any septic system required). See also the separate process developed for the BLSP to assist owners of vacant land with planning related matters.

#### Are there any ongoing costs?

All landowners are now, and will continue to be responsible for the maintenance of the septic systems on their land for the associated public health and environmental benefits. This will include, for some advanced treatment systems, the requirement for periodical inspections and maintenance by a servicing agent.

#### What about sewerage charges?

Under the BLSP there will be: no sewerage scheme and therefore no sewerage charges applied by Central Highlands Water (currently approximately \$730/year); no costs to connect to sewerage for landowners (estimated at between \$2,000 and \$8,000 per property); and, for those approximately 75% of landowners in Blackwood not requiring a septic upgrade, no \$800 equivalent scheme contribution (i.e. nothing to pay other than for their current responsibility for maintaining their septic systems).

#### Is it compulsory?

Where a septic system requires upgrade or repair Council has powers to require owners to undertake works. Council is undertaking an ongoing education program under its Domestic Wastewater Management Plan to ensure landowners understand their obligations, however the BLSP will assist those landowners where faulty systems were detected under the Municipal Audit.

Comparison Blackwood v Sewered township	\$800 Sewer Scheme or BLSP Contribution	Sewer connection costs (est. \$2,000 - \$8,000 / property)	Sewerage Tariff (approximately \$730/year)	Maintain On-site Septic System
Blackwood	✓	X	X	✓
Typical sewered township	✓	✓	✓	X

\* Refers only to those properties where an upgrade to the septic systems is to be completed under the BLSP.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information please contact:  
 Stephen Carter  
 Central Highlands Water  
 PO Box 152 Ballarat Vic 3353  
 phone **03 5320 3123**  
 email **scarter@chw.net.au**

# BLACKWOOD

## LOCALISED SEPTIC PROGRAM

### PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROCESS FOR APPLICANTS PROPOSING A NEW DWELLING ON A VACANT PARCEL OF LAND IN BLACKWOOD

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#### THE BLACKWOOD LOCALISED SEPTIC PROGRAM (BLSP) INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING MAIN COMPONENTS:

- to renew or upgrade existing septic systems in Blackwood that were identified in the municipal audit as being faulty; and,
- to implement a town planning support program for owners wishing to build a new dwelling on vacant land within Blackwood. The objective of the support program is, through early intervention, to work collaboratively to try to find a solution for landowners.

The components of the town planning assistance program are described below and in a flow chart on the following page (see also a separate document titled “Overview of Septic Upgrade Program” for more information on the works component of the program).

#### OWNER (APPLICANT)

The applicant has the option to contact the BLSP Project Manager to arrange for a planning support person (free of charge) to assist them with the preparation and submission of a planning application in Blackwood. This could include providing advice about the requirements of the planning scheme including wastewater, fire overlays and any other potential constraints on, or requirements for, the development. This support will be available for the duration of the BLSP.

#### GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A Governance Committee is to be established from the relevant agencies and will appoint a Project Manager to oversee the BLSP. This group will also be available to resolve any disputes about the BLSP, but does not have any powers to approve planning applications.

#### WATER AUTHORITIES

Water Authorities will be available to meet applicants either before or after an application has been submitted to discuss the proposal. In some instances the Water Authority may be able to provide written consent to accompany the planning application, assuming the plans are in order and don't require further alteration.

#### COUNCIL

Council will work with the Applicant, Planning Support Person and Water Authorities to ensure any complications that may result from advertising or comments from other referral agencies are appropriately responded to within the required timeframes. Council also has an approval and ongoing monitoring and community education role regarding the maintenance of any septic systems installed.

#### LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that there may be some vacant lots within Blackwood that have too many constraints to be further developed with a dwelling. Other alternatives such as consolidation with adjoining land to create a larger parcel, if feasible, may be necessary.

There may also be other constraints such as fire and flooding risks that may mean that an application cannot be approved irrespective of wastewater management constraints. Native vegetation could potentially be another constraint and will need to be considered and addressed.

# BLACKWOOD

## LOCALISED SEPTIC PROGRAM

### PLANNING PROCESS FOR APPLICANTS PROPOSING A DWELLING ON A VACANT PARCEL OF LAND IN BLACKWOOD

#### Owner (Applicant)

- May contact the BLSP Project Manager regarding the opportunity for a fully funded planning support person to assist them to understand the planning requirements and to develop their planning application and wastewater proposal
- Has the opportunity to meet with Council and Water Authorities to discuss draft plans / proposals prior to or after commencing the application process
- Will need to engage a consultant to undertake a land capability assessment
- Will need to regularly maintain their wastewater treatment system and ensure there is continued compliance with the requirements of the Planning, Building and Septic permits that have been issued to the property

#### BLSP Project Manager

- Will attend onsite meetings with the applicant and appointed Planning Support Person and act as a liaison with Council and the Water Authorities
- Will provide the owner with a written summary outlining the discussions
- Will upon finalisation of the necessary documentation, meet with the applicant again, prior to the application being submitted to assist with application processes

#### Planning Support Person

- Will provide advice and support to the applicant to develop their proposal/s
- Will lodge the planning application on behalf of the applicant

#### Council

- Will assess the application and referral responses (eg. from Water Authorities, CFA and other agencies)
- Will issue its determination on the planning application
- Will determine the septic permit to install application

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information please contact:  
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