



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

DRAFT

**LOW PRESSURE SEWER
POLICY**

April 2023

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This document will be reviewed every 4 years or as required in the event of legislative changes or operational requirements.

Any major amendments to the document must be made by way of a Council Resolution. Minor amendments such as corrections to spelling, changes to wording for improved clarity, formatting and updates to the Appendixes may be made without approval from the Council.

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the application of pressure sewer technology within the Leeton Shire Council local government area, where that technology is provided by Council.

This policy details how pressure sewerage technology is administered and operated, including providing information on current and future responsibilities for Leeton Shire Council, landowners, and other stakeholders.

2. This Policy Applies To

This policy document applies to Council employees responsible for administering, operating, maintaining, and constructing wastewater (sewage) infrastructure, as well as residents who utilise pressure sewerage for house drainage.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Director Operations is responsible for reviewing this policy periodically and for ensuring pressure sewer management functions comply with this policy.

Manager Water and Wastewater and Council's wastewater management team are responsible for the implementation of this policy. They are also responsible and accountable for the provision, operation, and maintenance of pressure sewer infrastructure.

Landowners are responsible for operating system on their property in accordance with the Householder's manual, paying the costs of electricity for the service on their property, and reporting any issues to Council expeditiously.

4. Definitions

Accredited Installer: Installer accredited by Council and trained by the pressure sewer hardware supplier to be able to install a pressure sewer unit complete on a property to meet the supplier's requirements and validate warranty status.

Alarm Panel: The power and control panel that controls operation of the grinder pump and which contains audible and visual alarm components. The panel contains a circuit breaker that allows isolation of the grinder pump.

Backlog Area: An existing residential area that can be serviced and does not have a centralised (or reticulated) sewerage system.

Black water: Domestic wastewater that is expected to be contaminated by faeces or urine or with other biological contaminants.

Boundary kit: Is a fitting assembly that:

- a) connects a pressure sewer lateral to a property discharge line,
- b) provides a means of isolating pressure sewerage reticulation from a property discharge line and associated pump unit, and
- c) provides a means to prevent back flow of sewage from the pressure sewerage reticulation to individual properties.

Collection Tank: The part of a pump unit which collects and stores flows from the customer sanitary drain(s) and houses the grinder pump. The collection tank provides emergency

storage capacity if inflow into the grinder pump exceeds pump capacity, or the grinder pump fails.

Commissioning: The running of the pump unit to ensure flow through the collection and pumping system, carrying out any necessary testing and adjustments until the system is ready and suitable for normal operating conditions.

Connection Point: Point of connection between the collection tank and the residential sanitary drain.

Designer: Person(s) or firm responsible for a design output. Such person or firm may be accountable to a Project Manager or other person having responsibility under a contract or otherwise.

Electrical Supply Cable: Dedicated hardwire from the property MSB to the alarm panel. Property of the homeowner.

Finished Surface Level: Ground level at the completion of construction and landscaping.

Grey Water: Domestic wastewater arising out of the use of sinks, showers, laundry and hand washing facilities. Also referred to as sullage.

Grinder Pump: A mechanical device designed to pump liquid and, in the process, reduce the size of solids contained in the sewage into a liquid slurry.

House Drain: A pipeline installed by a licensed plumber and constructed to plumbing code standards within the property boundary and operated by the property owner to convey sewage from buildings to the connection point; Also called house drain, house service line, house sewer, sanitary connection, property drain or sanitary drain. (See also property drain.)

Inspection Opening (I/O): Capped inspection opening adjacent to the collection tank that is the limit of responsibility for Council. Council owns the I/O.

Overflow Relief Gully (ORG): An open fixture within the household drainage system that allows for surcharge relief in the event of blockage in the property drainage system or an overflow condition of the collection tank. The ORG prevents backflow into the house through plumbing fixtures and floor wastes.

Metered Supply Board (MSB): A board that disseminates the main power supply to the property and is the primary source for metering. Property of the customer.

Preferred Supplier: For this policy this means a supplier pre-approved by Council that can supply hardware, labour and/or technical support for low pressure sewer installations. This may or may not be scheme specific.

Pressure Sewerage Reticulation: A network of mains including pressure sewer laterals and property boundary kits which transports sewage from properties to a sewage treatment facility or another sewerage system.

Pressure Sewerage System: A complete system wherein macerated sewage is conveyed under pressure generated by pumping units located on each property to a sewage treatment facility or another sewerage system.

Pressure Sewer Unit (PSU): A complete on site pressure sewer system comprising boundary kit, property discharge line, collection tank, grinder pump, pump control cable, alarm panel and other appurtenances within the unit.

Property Drain: A gravity sewer that collects household sewage from the internal fixtures and conveys it to the collection tank. The property drain is owned and maintained by the property owner. (See also house drain).

Property Discharge Line: A pressure sewer line located on private property that connects the pump unit to the property boundary kit.

Sewage: Any waste containing human excreta or domestic wastewater.

Sewerage: The infrastructure system associated with the collection and distribution of sewage.

Sullage: Household grey water that does not contain human excreta, but may still contain many of the harmful pathogens, nutrients and other chemicals contained in the black wastewater.

Wastewater: Includes all domestic sewage and sullage.

5. Supporting Documents

AS3000 – Electrical Installations (Wiring Rules)

AS3500 – Plumbing and Drainage

6. Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

Water Management Act 2000

Water Management (General) Regulation 2018

7. Policy Procedure

Leeton Shire Council will allow the use of low pressure sewerage systems in parts of the Leeton Shire area to provide sewerage services.

In general, applications of pressure sewer systems will only be where other forms of sewerage management cannot be effectively implemented or where pressure sewer systems have additional environmental, economic, or social benefits, which Council may be seeking.

Traditional gravity systems will take priority over all other systems unless proven otherwise.

This document sets out the way the pressure sewerage system is to be used within the Leeton Shire Council area and outlines Council's formal policy in relation to the technology including various supporting documents for the purpose of appropriate management of existing, new and evolving schemes to meet acceptable industry practice.

Council will always determine the appropriate type of sewerage system to be used in backlog applications or for new developments within the area serviced by Council's reticulated sewerage systems.

Adoption of any type of sewerage system should not be assumed in any application.

See appendices for specific information and constraints for each pressure sewer scheme.

7.2 Pressure Sewer Hardware

Where Leeton Shire Council supplies low pressure sewer hardware for use within the greater Council area, Council will endeavour to maintain a standardised fleet of pumps, tanks and boundary kits. Council will also nominate a Preferred Supplier in general or for each scheme. This will be nominated in Appendix 3.

7.3 Power Supply Costs

Property owners are responsible for the ongoing electricity cost to operate the pump. Power to the alarm panel must always remain switched on. If power has been deliberately isolated/switched off, the owner will be responsible for any overflows that may occur.

7.4 Ownership of Assets within Private Property

Council is not required to acquire an easement over individuals' properties where infrastructure on each property is installed to service only that property. Should individual circumstances arise where access arrangements are not suitable, Council may take out an easement to ensure adequate space to carry out maintenance and servicing functions.

The following low pressure sewer hardware located within serviced properties belong to Leeton Shire Council:

- Boundary kit and property discharge line to the collection tank
- Collection tank
- Grinder pump located within the collection tank
- Alarm panel
- Pump control cable between the alarm panel and the collection tank
- Inspection opening adjacent to the collection tank and inlet pipe into the tank from the inspection opening.

These assets will be maintained by Council as part of its normal servicing functions including the replacement of the grinder pump or any other faulty component where required.

The resident and/or owner must not open, access or move any of these assets. Residents who ignore these warnings are in breach of Section 365 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and may be liable for prosecution and cost of repairs.

The homeowner is responsible for the maintenance of the drainage system upstream of the tank inlet inspection opening.

The alarm panel must remain on an exterior wall of the dwelling or on a remote stand, be always accessible to Council personnel and be visible from the pump unit.

7.5 Homeowner Support/Responsibility

A pressure sewer manual will be provided to all homeowners benefiting from a low pressure sewer system installed by Leeton Shire Council. See Attachment 4.

All homeowners will be required to sign Terms and Conditions Of Use. See Attachment 4.

Appendix 1 – Home Owner’s Manual



Homeowner’s Pressure Sewer Manual

Version: April 2023

THE GOLDEN RULES

There are a few golden rules pertaining to the operation of the pressure sewerage systems that you need to be aware of and always comply. These are:

1. **Do not attempt to repair the unit yourself.** Council is maintaining your unit on your behalf (as part of your sewer rates). Your actions may void the warranties attached to the system.
2. **Do not take off the lid or enter the pumping unit.** The inside of the pumping unit represents a confined space working environment that could be lethal.
3. **Do not discharge any prohibited substances into the pressure sewerage system.** These include:
 - Oils, fats and grease (cooking, automotive or any other)
 - Hard materials such as glass, metal, seafood shells, rocks, plastic, wood
 - Nappies, socks, rags or clothes
 - Chemicals other than those used in normal domestic products such as dishwashing powder, detergents and hair dyes.
 - Stormwater
 - Paint
 - Sanitary napkins or tampons
 - Kitty litter
 - Flammable materials
 - Petrol or diesel
 - Salt water
 - ‘Flushable’ wipes.
4. **Do not connect your roof or yard drains into to the pressure sewerage system.** The pressure sewer system is not designed to accommodate stormwater flows.
5. **When going on holidays, flush the pressure sewerage system.**
6. **If evacuating in an emergency, turn off all power, including the power to the pumping unit.**
7. **When in doubt about your pressure sewerage system, call Council.**

It is essential that you read this manual and thereafter keep it in a safe but readily accessible place. You should re-familiarise yourself with it each year. If the property is rented, then the manual should be provided to the tenant along with instructions for them to familiarise themselves with the document. Additional copies of the document are available from Council.

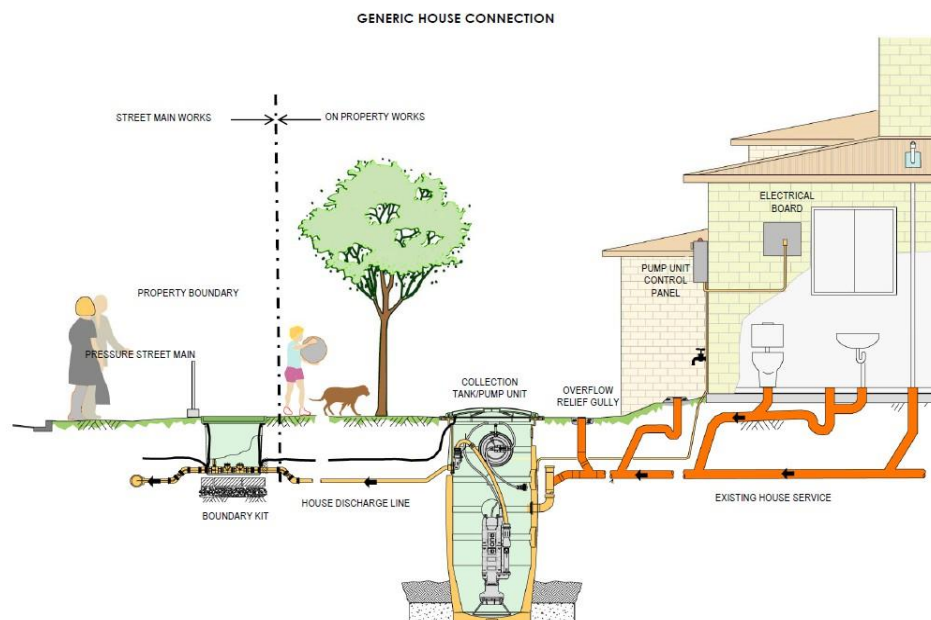
INTRODUCTION

This manual has been put together to assist you on how to operate your pressure sewerage system, what to do if things go wrong and what not to do.

Your property's sewerage service is provided by a Low Pressure Sewerage System. A typical system is shown below.

These systems have been in operation for around 30 years within Australia and should require little more thought or effort on the part of the resident than for a more conventional sewer system, excepting that **the resident is required to contact Council if the alarm sounds.**

COMPONENTS OF THE SYSTEM



The pressure sewerage system shown above essentially comprises of 4 main elements:

- A property boundary kit.
- A pump unit, including grinder pump and collection tank.
- A pump alarm/alarm panel.
- A property service line or property discharge line.

1. Property boundary kit

Under no circumstances should you attempt to operate the valve within the property boundary kit located at the front of the property.

Council will operate this valve when required.

2. Pump Unit

The pump unit consists of a small tank placed on your property, a small grinder pump to break solids and allow them to be pumped through the house discharge line, and a mechanical and electrical system to coordinate the operation of your system. The collection tank is buried within your property, but the top needs to protrude from the ground. This will facilitate repairs and service particularly if an emergency response is required.

The collection tank lid is not to be buried and must be always accessible.

Burying the lid may lead to system failures.

3. Electrical Alarm Panel

Power to the pump unit is provided from your electrical distribution box. The operation of the grinder pump is alarmed by the electrical alarm panel. The electrical alarm panel also provides an audible and visual alarm to give you adequate warning that the pump needs to be serviced. **Under no circumstances is the alarm panel to be accessed, obstructed, moved or removed by the property owner.**

4. House Discharge Line

The house discharge line connects the property boundary kit to the pump unit. This line is used to discharge the sewage off the property.

5. Maintenance to Customer's Plumbing System

Under no circumstance should a customer or their contractor undertake any maintenance works within 1 metre of the collection tank or associated works. For further information, customers should contact Leeton Shire Council on the numbers given below.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

For repairs to your pump unit and house discharge from the pump unit, Leeton Shire Council should be contacted on **02 6953 0911**.

If an issue arises with the operation of the unit and there is a need to contact Council, the caller should describe the problem to the Customer Contact Officer who will then ascertain the best course of action. Leeton Shire Council is committed to respond to emergency calls within 1 hour during business hours and 2 hours outside of business hours.

When you are speaking to the Service Operator you need to confirm if there is an urgent need for the repairs to be carried out immediately. The normal method of repairs is to carry out next day servicing to:

- Minimise the inconvenience to the residents and their neighbours,
- Minimise any potential damage to the householder's property (particularly the landscaping) by carrying out servicing during daylight hours,
- Contains servicing costs by avoiding after hours call outs.

WHAT TO DO IF THE ALARM SOUNDS

If the pump unit alarm sounds, you should take the following steps:



1. Turning off the audible alarm

Turn off the audible alarm by pressing the silence button on the alarm panel. This audible alarm has a time switch and will only operate for approximately 10 minutes. You cannot turn off the red light. It will turn off when the fault is cleared and the pump unit is functioning correctly, or the pump lowers the water level in the tank to below the alarm set point. If the red light has been activated for more than 1 hour, contact Leeton Shire Council and report that the alarm has been activated.

2. Power failures and blackouts

If the alarm sounds immediately after a power failure, wait for one hour after power has been restored before calling Leeton Shire Council. (The alarm can be silenced in accordance with section 1 above). The alarm may sound when the power is restored simply since the sewage has built up to a high level and there has been no pumping during the blackout. You are advised to minimise wastewater flows (refer to section 4 below) during and immediately after power failures to allow the system to clear.

3. Floods and Storms

During a flood or storm event, the customer is not required to make any alteration to the normal operation of the pressure sewer unit. If the collection tank is inundated with stormwater, the pump alarm may activate, however this should clear within a short period of time after a storm event when the alarm should reset. The customer is requested to contact Leeton Shire Council if the alarm does not reset itself within 1 hour.

4. Minimising wastewater

You can minimise wastewater when the alarm is on by:

- Keeping showers to a minimum.
- After taking a bath, leaving the plug in or bucket out the water onto the lawn.
- Switching off any drainage (automated or not) from swimming pools and spas.
- Practicing good water savings techniques such as not leaving taps running.
- Not using washing machines.
- Not using automated dishwashers.

Minimising wastewater generation does not mean you cannot use the system. Toilets can still be flushed, and normal cooking can proceed.

5. Frequent sounding alarms

If you notice that the alarm sounds frequently, then turns off investigation is needed to determine if there is any:

- Sewerage coming from the Overflow Relief Gully. (An inspection opening just upstream of the pumping unit),
- Discharge coming from the ground around the tank lid,
- Perceptible odour problems,
- Power failure and have you waited the suggested 1 hour before calling,
- Unusual pump noises,
- Sudden household discharge,
- Heavy rainfall event.

If the frequent alarm continues, please report this to Leeton Shire Council.

In the meantime, keep using the unit as normal and switch off the audible alarm when it occurs. The light will go off when there is no longer an alarm condition.

REPAIRS TO THE SYSTEM

Leeton Shire Council will arrange for the repairs to all parts of the pressure sewer system. All repairs to the pump unit and property discharge line are usually the responsibility of the Leeton Shire Council. Repairs on the owner's plumbing upstream from Inspection Point upstream of the entry to the pump unit and nominally within 1 metre of the tank are at the owner's expense, as for any other form of sewerage system.

1. Access

You must ensure that Leeton Shire Council has 24 hours access to the pump unit, alarm panel and boundary kit and associated infrastructure. This means that the resident should ensure that pets can be contained, gates are accessible and there is unrestricted access to the tank/pump and the alarm panel. Should Leeton Shire Council decide with the resident/property owner to access the property, however on arrival, access to the system cannot be achieved, Council reserves the right to charge a service call.

2. Warranty and Repair Costs

Maintenance of the system is at no additional cost to you. The exceptions to this may be if you have:

- Discharged matter into the pump unit that you have been advised not to
- Accessed the pump unit – i.e., either the collection tank or the alarm box.
- Interfered with the property service line or property boundary assembly.
- Sealed off the venting to the unit.
- Moved/relocated the alarm box.

3. Burst Pipes

If the property service line from the pump unit bursts (this will become evident by wet ground or water eruptions from the ground), you should **immediately contact Leeton Shire Council via 02 6953 0911** and turn off the power to the pump. This is achieved by turning the switch (circuit breaker) off in your main electrical distribution box. You should then minimise wastewater discharge.



4. Wet Areas Around the Tank

If you notice that the ground immediately around the pumping unit is wet, you should contact Leeton Shire Council on **02 6953 0911** in Part 5 and have them inspect the site. You should then minimise wastewater discharge.

5. The Alarm is Activated When You are Not at Home

It is advisable to notify your neighbours of the location of your new unit and its alarm/alarm panel, so that if your alarm is activated when you are not home, they can contact Leeton Shire Council who will inspect the property.

WASTE NOT TO BE DISCHARGED INTO THE SEWER

Certain substances are not to be discharged into this or any other household sewerage system under any circumstances. To do so may result in a blockage of the property service line.

These include:

- Oils, fats and grease (cooking, automotive or any other)
- Hard materials such as glass, metal, seafood shells, rocks, plastic, wood
- Nappies, socks, rags or clothes
- Chemicals other than those used in normal domestic products such as dishwashing powder, detergents and hair dyes.
- Stormwater
- Paint
- Sanitary napkins or tampons
- Kitty litter
- Flammable materials
- Petrol or diesel
- Salt water
- 'Flushable' wipes.

As with any wastewater treatment system that discharges to the environment, Leeton Shire Council encourages the use of low sodium and low phosphorus products to minimise the impact that these chemicals have on the environment such as algal blooms and salinity.

Note: Council will operate on a "3 strikes" rule for residents who fail to exclude these substances from their system and/or cause excessive maintenance callouts and repairs to the pressure sewer units located on their property. Council reserves the right to recover the full cost from repeatedly offending residents for any maintenance or replacement to the pressure sewer unit, pump or electrical infrastructure.

If you are in any doubt about any substances entering the sewerage system, you should call Leeton Shire Council on **02 6953 0911**.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

1. Entry to Collection Tanks

Customers are warned that they **must never** access any of Leeton Shire Council's assets on their property including the collection tank and the property boundary kit.

There is no need for the resident to enter the system. Should Leeton Shire Council believe that access has been gained then the customer may receive a written warning from Leeton Shire Council and may also attract an administration fee.

2. Overflow Relief Gully

It is recommended, as with conventional gravity sewerage systems, that the overflow relief gully is always kept clear to ensure that if a blockage causes a backflow, sewage will not enter the dwelling through internal fixtures.

3. Unoccupied House

In a situation where the home will be unoccupied for more than one week, the pump unit will need to be flushed out as this will ensure that it does not become a source of odours. It is suggested that:

- You run about 50 Litres of clean water into the pump unit until the pump activates and runs for about 1 minute (typically this can be achieved by running the water into the bathtub and then releasing it into the sewerage system). After that time, turn off the water and allow the pump to run until it shuts off automatically.
- It is preferred that the power to the pump unit is **not** switched off, however, if you wish to turn the power off, it is recommended that water supply to the house is also turned off at the stop tap to avoid the risk of collection tank overflow. Customers should note that if the power is turned off to the pump, the alarm will not operate and if an alarm condition arises, a sewage overflow may occur. Council will not be liable for any costs or other actions in the case where the electricity supply to the unit has been intentionally interrupted by the owner and/or occupier.
- Where Council receives a foul odour complaint arising out of a customer's failure to flush the unit prior to an extended absence from the property, it may choose to recover costs from the resident to carry out work to mitigate the nuisance.

4. Council Access to the Pressure Sewer Equipment

The minimal requirements for access by Council repair service people are:

- The unit is not to be buried, paved, concreted over nor permanently covered with any material.
- When the Council repair agent comes to repair the unit, it must be accessible. If Council officers are unable to locate the unit because it has been covered, Council may refuse to carry out repairs until the owner exposes the unit and Council may apply a service charge to the resident. At minimum, Council may pass any costs on to the resident for it to locate and uncover the pumping unit and it may choose to impose the fines for this covering of the asset under section 635 of the *Local Government Act (1993)*.
- If pets are not secured, Council officers may refuse to enter the property and carry out any repair works. In this instance Council will

not be held liable for any repairs unable to be carried out and it may elect to apply a service charge.

- Access to the pumping unit for a trolley/lifting device will be required. The officer will need to place a lifting frame above the pumping station to lift out the pump and then carry the pumps away to their vehicle requiring a path for the trolley. Any resident that closes off access may be responsible for any additional costs incurred including additional equipment, such as cranes etc. Council will not be held to next day responses in these instances.
- Residents with properties that have restricted access must be present to allow

Council service staff access to the pump unit and alarm panel at the agreed time.

5. Council Not Liable

Council will not be held liable for any overflows that may occur on the property where the resident has failed to notify Council. Residents will be liable for any flows that discharge from their property and may be prosecuted for environmental breaches if they have failed to notify Council. A record of all notifications will be maintained by Council.

Appendix 2 – Wamoon Scheme

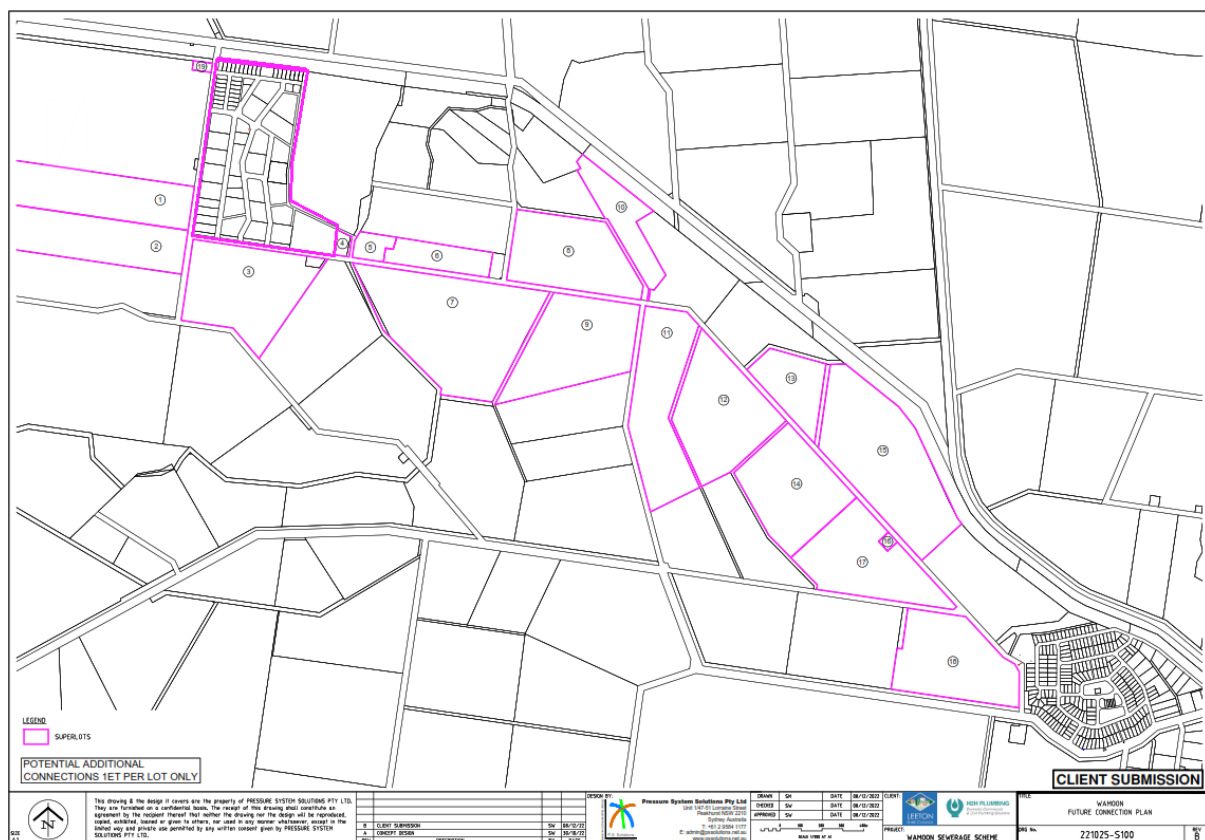
General Information

The Wamoon Sewerage Scheme was born from a need to overcome issues of managing septic systems on small lots (<4000m²). The existing systems were prone to failure due to hydraulic overloading, unsuitable lot sizes, poor maintenance and unfavourable ground conditions for effluent disposal.

The Scheme provides for a new sewerage reticulation network for 64 properties in Wamoon and transports raw sewage to Leeton Sewage Treatment Plant via number 8 sewer pump station, located at Blackwood St.

Service Area

The Scheme is designed to service the properties highlighted in purple below. Connection of properties not highlighted will generally not be permitted. Council will assess applications to connect outside of the service area on a case-by-case basis to determine the effect on the design loading of the system.



Design ET for Scheme

The design loading for the Scheme is 85 ET. This includes provision for the fresh water flushing system installed at Wamoon Park. The ADFW is 0.638 L/sec.

Pump Specifications

The pump units selected for the project are Enviro One (EOne) Extreme Series wet well grinder pumps. As such EOne is the nominated Preferred Supplier for this scheme. The tank size for all properties (except for the primary school) are 750L.

Installer

H2H Plumbing Pty Ltd were contracted to perform the works. Contact details are below:

H2H Plumbing Pty Ltd
Director: Robert Slade

Special Circumstances for use Outside of Design Service Area

Because of the nature of low-pressure sewer, there is no reason other than capacity constraints to restrict service. Farm homesteads and isolated properties close to sewer installations may seek approval to connect. Such connections are seen as appropriate and will be encouraged, provided the following conditions are met:

- The owner pays all costs associated with the installation
- The owner pays normal sewer charges
- The owner may have to enter into a maintenance arrangement or licence to possess a private pipeline within the road reserve/Council owned land.
- The installation will not overcommit the system.

Industrial and Trade Waste

Because of limited capacity and long detention times involved in this Scheme, industrial and trade waste is not permitted to be discharged into this system.

Appendix 3 – Preferred Supplier Schedule

Low Pressure Sewer Scheme	Preferred Supplier	Pump and Tank Spec
Wamoon	Enviro One (EOne)	EOne Extreme Series in 750L tank

Appendix 4 – Terms and Conditions of Low Pressure Sewer System Installation and Use

Leeton Shire Council has constructed a reticulated low pressure sewerage system and related works that service your property in accordance with all relevant Australian Standards, codes, guidelines and approved design plans. Council will make available copies of these documents available upon request.

Leeton Shire Council will:

1. Be responsible for the installation of the scheme, including all pipework, pumps, tanks, boundary kits and electrical infrastructure required for the system.
2. Own, maintain, repair and replace the pump unit, electrical control panel and property service line from the pump unit and tank to the reticulated sewer main including the boundary kit.

The resident must:

1. Grant access to the pressure sewer unit servicing the property to Council for maintenance purposes.
2. Be responsible for paying the cost of electricity used in running the pump once installed and commissioned.
3. Be responsible for correct disposal of waste in accordance with section *Waste Not To Be Discharged Into Sewer* on page 13 of the Homeowners Manual.
4. In the event of excessive maintenance/repair caused by improper use pay for the cost of repair or replacement of the pressure sewer pump unit, tank or control panel.
5. Report all failures and faults of the system to Leeton Shire Council via 02 6953 0911 and will provide 24 hour access in accordance with the Policy and Homeowners Manual.

I (Resident's Name) _____ reside at

(Address of Property) _____

acknowledge that the property is serviced by a low pressure sewer system. I undertake to comply with the Terms and Conditions as set out above and have received a copy of the Homeowner's Manual.

Signature _____ Date: _____