

## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Environment & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Robert Cox, Building Consents Officer - Wastewater

**REFERENCE:** R440

**SUBJECT:** **ON-SITE WASTEWATER - REPORT EP09/08/09** - Report prepared for meeting of 27 August 2009

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### 1. HISTORY

For a long time on-site wastewater management within Tasman has been inconsistent.

The country as a whole has had a national standard for the last nine years. But this has not really made inroads to the burgeoning population making use of on site wastewater within the district.

The advent of TRMP addressed the issues for the planners, but this is only half of the total solution.

For at least the past five years, the local [and out of district] wastewater designers have been asking for clear guidance and direction from Tasman District Council.

### 2. INCEPTION OF GUIDELINES

The guidelines as attached are not a new concept within a Unitary Authority. Auckland Regional Council produced an excellent guide in 2004.

Although our guidelines are not as detailed as theirs, ours reflect the geology and soil conditions within Tasman, and takes present day technology into account, with hopefully the room to morph in future developments.

This project has been developed "in house", but the industry has driven this demand. All material presented has been submitted / reviewed by various industry representatives, up to this submission stage.

### 3. DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION

The document is broken into two parts

1. Guidelines for on site wastewater management
2. Accreditation for Site and Soil Evaluators

The first section is a merge of the National Standard, TRMP and our unique local conditions.

It was devised for Wastewater Engineers, and not as a “do it yourself” guide for the average ratepayer.

Overall it is a present day guide to a more structured approach to the land management of Wastewater Stream.

The second section is a simple list of Site and Soil Evaluators that are acceptable to the Tasman District Council to submit Wastewater Designs.

This list is for general public consumption.

#### **4. OUTCOMES**

The benefits that will be derived from the introduction of these guidelines are twofold; the first is in relation to the Building Act, in that the information supplied by the designers will be able to be processed well within the statutory timeframes. This will be achieved because the designers will be giving full and detailed information, requiring few if any further information requests.

The second benefit is that the environment will actually receive a far more robust wastewater design which should in the distant future be reflected within the soil / nutrient testing regimes that have been, and are being set up now.

#### **5. TIME LINES OF PROJECT**

November 2008:	Industry meet
November 2008 - June 2008:	Collate material / amend as instructed
21 August 2009:	Invitation to apply for accreditation
25 August 2009:	Peer Group Application consideration
27 August 2009:	Present to E&P Committee
4 September 2009:	Place in TDC Web Site
September 2009:	Publicise / Produce Pamphlets for front of house

#### **6. FOOTNOTE**

At this point in time, there are two district councils, and one Unitary Council waiting to see our end result, with a view to carrying out similar processes themselves.  
“It is better to lead than to follow.” [W. Churchill]

#### **7. RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee receive this report

Robert Cox  
**Building Consents Officer - Wastewater**

## **Guidelines for New On-Site Wastewater Soil Evaluator Accreditation**

It is vital that on-site wastewater management systems are designed, installed and managed to reflect the nature of the site conditions and constraints associated with the property and dwelling. If they do not, domestic wastewater will not be treated or contained on-site and the discharge will result in adverse effects off-site. Guidelines have been prepared to assist wastewater practitioners to design, install and manage wastewater management systems in a manner that avoids this situation from occurring. (Guidelines attached)

These guidelines effectively serve two functions. Firstly, Tasman District's environment presents considerable constraints to successful on-site management of domestic wastewater, including soils of low permeability, thin soils, loess soils, high groundwater systems, unconsolidated fill, and unstable land. The Council has been approving on-site systems, and monitoring their operational performance for many years now. There is an organisational awareness of how different on-site systems perform in such variable conditions. The guidelines are designed to apply this accumulated experience so that designers and installers avoid the mistakes of the past. This is reflected in a number of design and installation standards set out in the guidelines.

Secondly, the guidelines represent current best practice in the field of on-site management of domestic wastewater in Tasman District. Best practice evolves over time in response to new technology and better understanding of the factors that influence on-site management of domestic wastewater. The guidelines will be routinely reviewed so that they can continue to represent best practice on an ongoing basis.

These guidelines are designed as a technical resource and are not intended to be used as a step-by-step guide by homeowners. Other material has been prepared for homeowners to assist them in understanding the processes of selecting and managing on-site wastewater management systems.

### **Site and Soil Evaluation**

The guidelines require site and soil evaluations to be undertaken as part of the process of designing new on-site systems. The evaluation enables any constraints to effective on-site wastewater servicing to be identified and ensures that the on-site wastewater management system selected is appropriate to the site conditions.

The Council system requires that site and soil evaluations must be completed by accredited evaluators.

### **Site and Soil Evaluator Accreditation Criteria**

The criteria the Council will use to accredit an evaluator to conduct site and soil evaluations within Tasman District will at this stage be:

- Completed CET Site and Soil Course; or

- BOINZ Site and Soil Course papers A and B; or
- NZQA Wastewater Designer; or
- Verifiable Previous Experience.

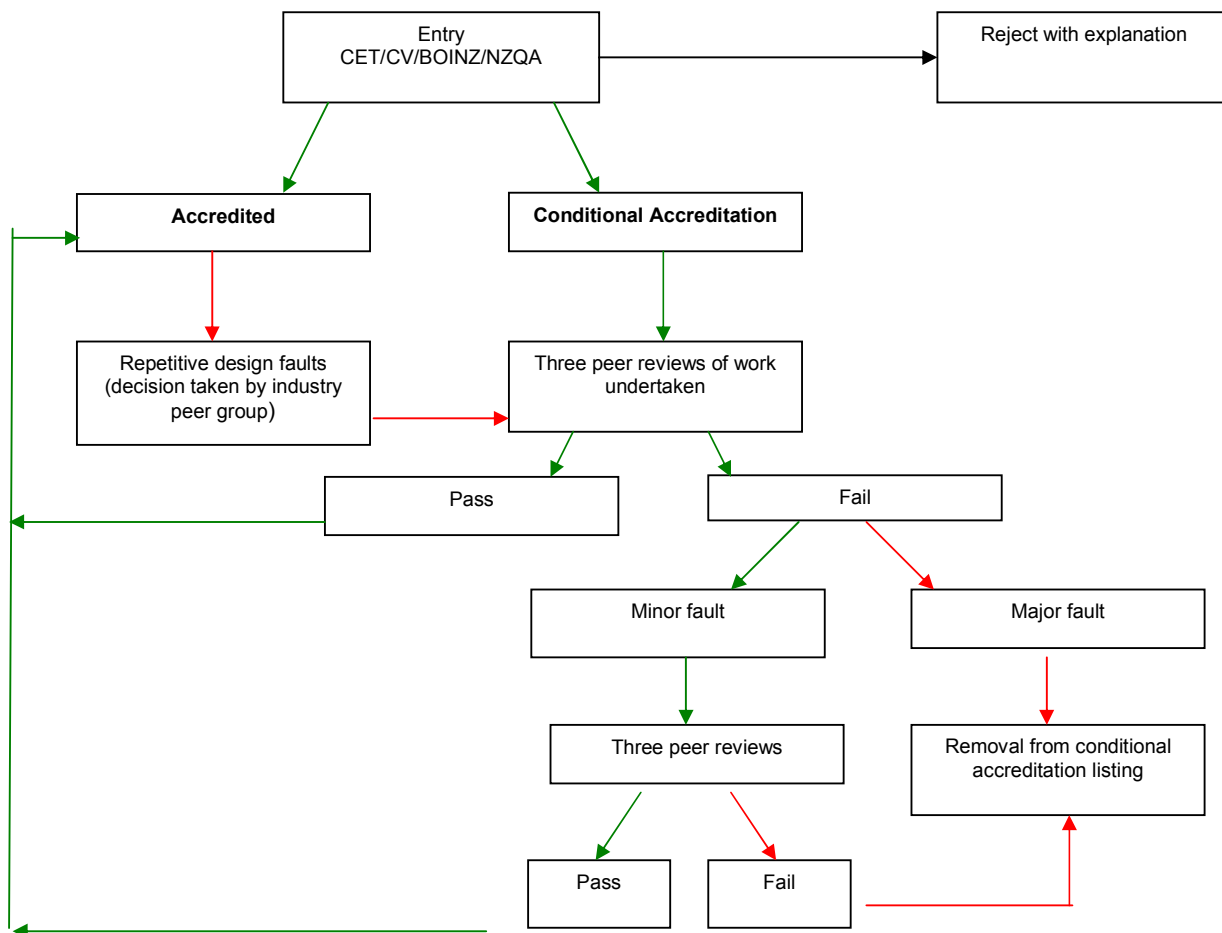
The Council will be assisted in deciding who should be accredited by an industry peer group from within the Tasman District. This industry group will consist of at least two currently operating practitioners and two Tasman District Council staff. On acceptance, details of accredited evaluators will be posted on the Council's website. At present there is no cost involved in seeking accreditation.

### Conditional Accreditation

Where under the Building Act applications are received from non-accredited evaluators, Council will require the design to be peer reviewed by an accredited person. Conditional evaluators will be required to have at least the first three site and soil evaluations to be peer reviewed before full acceptance as an accredited evaluator. The cost of any peer review is to be met by the applicant.

The results of any peer review are to be submitted to Council and these will be used by the industry peer group for a final decision on acceptance, or further peer review requirement.

A diagrammatic network describing the accreditation process is as follows:



## Removal from Accreditation List

The Council will keep the Accreditation List under regular review. Removal from the accredited list may occur as a result of performance issues. This is only expected to be activated in extreme cases and will follow the diagrammatic flow described in the network chart. The removal process will be overseen by the industry peer group **only** whose decision shall be final. All information on or in connection with this procedure will be retained by Tasman District Council as a matter of record. Generally, this information will not be made freely available to the general public. The industry peer group will retain the right of refusal for any future readmission of individuals previously removed from the list. The accreditation process is only to be applied to individuals.

The persons who have met the requirements to become accredited site and soil evaluators (for the purpose of designing new on-site wastewater management systems) set out in the Council's "Guidelines for New On-site Wastewater Management Systems" at this time are:

(List as at 12 May 2009)

\* This person is "conditionally" accredited. This means that any site and soil evaluations must be peer reviewed by another accredited Site and Soil Evaluator.