



Addressing the Impact of Septic Tank Systems on the Mornington Peninsula

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In December 2015 Melbourne Water granted the Shire \$165,000 to employ a full-time wastewater field officer between December 2015 and June 2018.

This initial funding was prior to the project being extended for a further 2 years with South East Water (SEW) funding. This funding is covered by a levy of approximately \$10 per kilolitre on the disposal of septage at the Boneo treatment plant.

A Memorandum of Understanding between SEW and MPSC was signed in July 2017 for the funding of this contract position by SEW for 2 years from July 2018.

This project is the first of its kind in Victoria and could become a model for other Councils within the South East Water area, other water authority areas, and throughout Victoria.

The benefits have clearly been demonstrated during the first 15 months. It has established a sustainable system to fund the management of septic tanks at the lowest community cost. Specific benefits include:

- Reducing the impact of septic effluent on Council and Melbourne Water storm water systems
- Minimising the impact of septic effluent on waterways
- Addressing the public health risks from septic effluent and failing septic systems
- Increasing community awareness of septic tank maintenance
- Increasing the number of septic tanks being pumped out within the required 3 year period
- Increasing the number of sewage treatment plants being serviced
- Raising the level of compliance with septic permit conditions
- Reducing the number of septic system failures and off-site discharges
- Extending the life of existing septic disposalsystems
- Increasing sewer connection rates in backlog and ECO sewer programs
- Introduction of the automated IT field solution SepticTrack for sewage treatment system service reports and septic tank pump outs to be reported to the Shire in real time

As a result of this project, 3915 system visits have been reported directly to Council using SepticTrack: 3% were in failure and followed up by the Shire 20,422 entries from the Shire database are now centralised into the App allowing for direct contact with customers 12.8% increase in septic pump out disposal at Boneo treatment plant. All system servicing agents and most pump out contractors are using SepticTrack, with positive feedback received.

In addition to SepticTrack, 2 extensive community education campaigns have been completed, with another campaign to commence in December 2017. It is anticipated that over 10,000 septic systems will be visited by the Wastewater Field Officer