

FACT SHEET



– Knowing your Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS)

(02) 4677 1100
wollondilly.nsw.gov.au



WHAT IS AN AWTS?

An AWTS is a purpose built system used to treat sewage in unsewered areas. Wastewater flows through a series of treatment and disinfectant processes so it can then be used to water the lawns and garden.

HOW DO THEY WORK?

Raw effluent enters the first tank/chamber where the solids settle to the bottom.

The liquid effluent then flows into the second chamber where it is mixed with air so bacteria can eat more of the solids in the liquid.

From here the effluent flows into a third chamber where the solids still in the liquid will settle at the bottom. These solids will be sent back to the first chamber.

The wastewater flows into the last chamber where it is treated with a disinfectant, usually chlorine.

After all of this, the treated wastewater is pumped to the designated irrigation area.

REGULATIONS

All owners of sewage management systems in NSW are required to hold a current **Approval to Operate**. This Approval allows Councils to monitor and manage the cumulative impact of sewage pollution.

Approvals are granted for periods of 1, 3 or 5 years depending on the risk the system poses to public health and the environment.

Wastewater must not spray or seep into neighbouring properties, the stormwater or onto the nature strip.

MAINTAINANCE

Your AWTS needs to be serviced by a suitably qualified technician every three (3) months. Copies of the service reports are submitted to Council by your agent.

The irrigation area must be well maintained with sprinklers a minimum of 6 metres if up-gradient, and 3 metres if down-gradient of property boundaries.

IS YOUR AWTS HEALTHY?

There is a problem with your AWTS if you note any of the following occurring -

- There is a strong effluent odour present.
- The irrigation area is damp or soggy.
- Drains and/or toilets take time to clear or back up.
- There is excess noise from the blower or pumping equipment.
- There is poor vegetation growth in the irrigation area.

Reducing water consumption will avoid overloading the AWTS. They do not cope with large volumes of water, eg. several showers or washing loads over a short period of time. Try to spread water usage more evenly throughout the day and week.

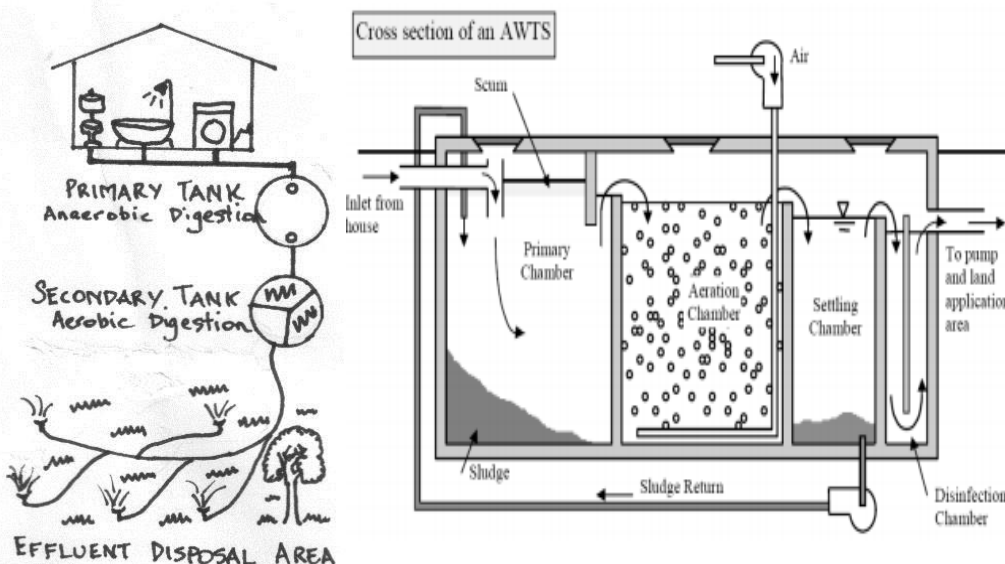
If you are experiencing problems with your AWTS, contact your AWTS service technician ASAP

HELP PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

Poorly maintained AWTS's are a serious source of water pollution and may present health risks, cause odours and attract vermin and insects.

By looking after your AWTS you can do your part in helping to protect the environment and the health of you and your family.

Please note – If you do not have a current Approval to Operate or use your AWTS in a way that poses a risk to public health or the environment you may be issued a fine or notice under *The Local Government Act 1993* or *The Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.



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Do ✓

- ✓ Ensure you always have a current Approval to Operate.
- ✓ Maintain a service agreement with a service technician approved by Council.
- ✓ Call your service agent if you are experiencing problems such as alarms or unusual odours.
- ✓ Ensure the correct buffer distances are maintained.
- ✓ Regularly move surface spray irrigation lines around the designated irrigation area to avoid over saturation of the soil.
- ✓ Use environmentally friendly, biodegradable detergents and cleaning products.
- ✓ Use toilet paper that disintegrates easily.
- ✓ Use sink strainers in the kitchen to avoid unnecessary solids entering the AWTS.
- ✓ Have the solids tanks de-sludged (pumped out) every 3-5 years.
- ✓ Conserve water to avoid overloading the system.
- ✓ Spread clothes washing cycles throughout the week and avoid washing on rainy days.
- ✓ Fix leaking taps and running toilets as soon as they are discovered.
- ✓ Become familiar with how your system works.
- ✓ Keep your AWTS accessible at all times, yet protected from unauthorised entry.
- ✓ Plant grasses, trees and shrubs downslope that will assist in the absorption of wastewater.

DO NOT ✗

- ✗ Let children or pets come into contact with treated effluent water from an AWTS.
- ✗ Divert wastewater off your property.
- ✗ Irrigate wastewater onto a fixed surface such as concrete or paving.
- ✗ Use products that contain bleach, ammonia, antiseptic, antibacterial or high strength detergents.
- ✗ Discard any chemicals, pesticides, or herbicides down the drain
- ✗ Use more than the recommended amounts of detergents.
- ✗ Flush non-degradable products such as face wipes, hygiene products, nappies or condoms.
- ✗ Switch off the power to the AWTS off even if you're on holidays.
- ✗ Remove sprinkler fittings from the effluent distribution line.
- ✗ Attempt to self-service your AWTS.
- ✗ Irrigate edible fruit or vegetables with wastewater from the AWTS.
- ✗ Allow anyone to park or drive over any part of the system.
- ✗ Cover tanks or access openings.
- ✗ Compact the soil in the effluent disposal area.