Fraser Coast Planning Scheme – Amendment Package 1

FACTSHEET – On-site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) Code

Why is the On-site sewerage facilities code being proposed?
Many parts of the Fraser Coast region do not have reticulated (piped) sewerage. In these areas, development relies on on-site sewage facilities (OSSF) such as septic tanks or aerated treatment systems. Poorly designed, located or maintained systems can:

- pollute creeks, wetlands and groundwater,
- create odour and amenity issues, and
- lead to high costs for the broader community if sewerage needs to be retrofitted later.

The new OSSF Code seeks to address issues arising from:

- houses being designed for residential lots without first considering requirements for compliant on-site sewage facilities.
- new lots being created that are too small to accommodate compliant on-site sewage facilities.
- the lack of interaction between Queensland Government plumbing and planning legislation.
- the cumulative health and environmental impacts associated with subdivisions which rely on on-site sewage facilities to service future dwellings.

What is the purpose of the onsite sewage facilities code?
The purpose of the code is to ensure that all development incorporating onsite sewage facilities:

- protects public health and amenity;
- protects the environment, land and water resources;
- is responsive to site constraints;
- avoids costs to the broader community; and
- avoids cumulative impacts.

Amendments are also proposed to the strategic framework, zone codes and other development codes to ensure new developments are generally required to connect to reticulated sewerage unless it can be demonstrated is not feasible to connect.

A new Planning Scheme Policy for OSSF also provides the technical guidance on how to comply with the OSSF Code. It sets out what information must be lodged with an application and the standards used to assess suitability. Key requirements include:

- **Site Layout Plan** - Must show lot boundaries, existing and proposed buildings, OSSFs, disposal areas, reserve areas, watercourses, bores, tanks, driveways, and overlays such as flood or coastal hazards.
- **Wastewater Report** - Confirms system design, soil suitability, and water quality protection. It must consider seasonal changes, groundwater risks, and future system resting/replacement needs.
- **Water Risk Assessment** - Required for developments above aquifers, near drinking water sources, or with a capacity between 10–21 EP.

What informed these changes?
Council engaged a specialist consultant to prepare recommendations on proposed changes. The report for that project is available in the document library available on Councils *Have Your Say* page.

Are Plumbing and Drainage approvals still required?

Yes. Approval under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018* must be obtained from Council before installing an OSSF. Approval is also required from Council before making any changes to an approved land application area. The proposed On-site sewage facilities code will not replace these requirements.

Key Elements of the New OSSF Code

Element	What it means
Public Health & Environmental Protection Standards	• Systems must be designed to: o protect public health by reducing risks of illness from sewage exposure; o protect land, soil, groundwater and surface water from contamination; o avoid odour and amenity impacts for neighbours; o minimise impacts from floods or coastal hazards.
New Setbacks to Waterways & Drinking Water	• Setbacks (buffers) are minimum distances that must be kept between disposal areas and sensitive features: o Primary systems (basic septic + trenches): 150 m from small creeks (stream order 1–3), 300 m from larger creeks (stream order 4), 800 m from drinking water dams/supplies. o Secondary systems (with aeration): 50 m from small creeks, 100 m from larger creeks, 400 m from drinking water sources. o Advanced secondary systems (with nutrient reduction & disinfection): 10 m from small creeks, 100 m from larger creeks, 400 m from drinking water sources. • If full setbacks cannot be achieved, an advanced system must be used and placed the greatest possible distance from the water source and demonstrate with a water risk assessment that, it will not impact our waterways and drinking water. .
Better Groundwater Protection	• Where development sits above or next to an aquifer used for drinking water, an advanced secondary OSSF with nutrient reduction and disinfection is required. • This ensures pathogens and nutrients do not leach into underground water supplies. This is particularly important on K'gari (Fraser Island), where sandy soils make aquifers more vulnerable.
More Safe Design & Lot Suitability Standards	• Every development must show there is enough space for: o the OSSF system o a 100% reserve land application area (LAA) for when the first area is no longer functional. o safe access for service vehicles. • A detailed site layout plan and wastewater report from a qualified consultant are required to confirm suitability. • Subdivision in unsewered areas will require larger lot sizes (increasing from 2000m^2 to 3000 m^2).
New Hazard Avoidance Requirements	• Systems and disposal areas cannot be located in flood hazard or coastal storm-tide hazard areas. • Stormwater and overland flow must be kept separate from disposal areas.
Community Title & Access	• For community-titled developments, easements and legal rights must be secured so OSSFs can be accessed, operated and maintained in the future.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Council is inviting the community to review the proposed amendments to the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme and make a submission. For many people, nothing will change — but your feedback helps guide future growth.

Find out more and have your say by **1 May 2026.**

Visit **haveyoursay.frasercoast.qld.gov.au** or by scanning the QR code.