

Background

These guidelines provide information on Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan (DRP) preparation and reporting for Level 2 Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) as defined in the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* (EMPCA).

Under the environmental conditions of the Land Use Permit or Environmental Protection Notice (EPN), a DRP is usually required prior to decommissioning the WWTP.

PART I – preparation of the DRP

Key principles

The DRP must outline the actions that will be taken to ensure the following:

- Avoidance of environmental harm during decommissioning;
- Land uses allowable under the relevant zoning are not prejudiced or likely to be prejudiced by residual pollution or potential pollutants on the land;
- That all waste material and products are managed and disposed of appropriately; and
- The land is not causing or likely to cause off-site environmental harm.

Information required

The DRP must include:

- An action plan with tasks to be completed and timeframes for each task;
- A site plan which identifies all structures to be removed (and retained) and all land to be rehabilitated;
- Who is responsible for undertaking the work (including site contact details);
- Who is responsible for determining the work is completed to a satisfactory level (including site contact details); and
- How environmental impacts associated with decommissioning tasks will be managed.

DRP Tasks

Where alternative approaches exist for undertaking DRP tasks, justification for the selected option should be provided based on the objectives of the decommissioning and proposed future land uses. As a minimum, the DRP is to consider the following:

i. **Soil, surface water and ground water assessment and remediation (ESA process)**

The DRP must specify responsibilities and timelines associated with undertaking an environmental site assessment (ESA). The ESA must:

- be undertaken in accordance with the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure, made by the National Environment Protection Council;
- describe the pollutant(s) concerned;
- describe the full spatial extent and magnitude of the pollutant(s) concerned;
- assess the level of human health and ecological risk associated with the pollutant(s); and

- describe the current management and recommendations for further management (including remediation) of the identified pollutant or pollutants and the time frames within which these management actions will be implemented. If no management action is considered necessary, this must be stated with a reason for why further action is not considered necessary.

ii. Waste management

All waste issues must be documented in the DRP, along with the preferred management approach. When decommissioning a wastewater treatment plant there will be a range of waste issues requiring management (e.g. residual sludge, liquid wastes including chemicals, contaminated soil). Management recommendations within the DRP should reflect the requirements of relevant environmental regulations, guidelines or other rules.

There may be other waste issues which are more challenging to manage and require discussion with the EPA.

iii. Infrastructure decommissioning

Details of proposed infrastructure decommissioning must be provided in the DRP. Before decommissioning any infrastructure, the relevant planning authority should be consulted and, if necessary, planning approval obtained.

A wastewater treatment storage may be classified as a 'dam' under the *Water Management Act, 1999* and may require a permit to decommission or change its design or capacity. Contact the Water Management and Assessment Branch, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment for details on whether a permit is required and / or the referrals and application process.

iv. Landscape and revegetation

Details of the following must be provided in the DRP:

- Topsoiling and planting of the site with native, locally sourced plants or grasses; and /or
- Grading, levelling and re-contouring to ensure no voids or uneven surfaces; and
- Rendering the site safe for future land use.

v. Managing decommissioning, remediation and rehabilitation works

The DRP is to outline what steps will be undertaken to mitigate environmental impacts arising from decommissioning, remediation and rehabilitation works. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Water quality: prevention of soil or sediment entrainment in surface runoff;
- Air quality: prevention of impacts arising from dust and odour;
- Noise: prevention of impacts arising from machinery or other works.

vi. Other Considerations

Other relevant issues which need to be considered in the context of decommissioning include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Site history;
- Heritage considerations, including heritage buildings or sites for special consideration;
- Occupational Health and Safety and Public Health requirements

DRP Submission

The person responsible for the preparation of the DRP is encouraged to contact EPA Tasmania for guidance in developing the Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan. A draft DRP should be submitted to the Director, EPA for review before finalising.

The finalised DRP should be sent to:

The Director
Environment Protection Authority
GPO 1550
HOBART TAS 7001

PART 2 – final reporting

Post Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Reporting

Once the land has been rehabilitated to a standard appropriate for the future land use, a final report signed by the Chief Executive Officer must be submitted to the Director. This final report must include:

- details of works that were completed, outlining any deviations from the agreed DRP;
- any supporting reports such as the ESA; and
- details of any ongoing management strategies such as monitoring.

Environment Protection Authority

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ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Note: This document was updated in February 2021 to ensure links, contacts and legislative references were current. Existing content has been reformatted to improve document accessibility. Unless specifically noted, all other content remains unchanged from the date of original publishing.