

Wannon Water

Understanding responsibilities for sewerage services

July 2026



Stage 1 - Strategic planning



Purpose

Stage 1 sets the long-term direction for wastewater servicing by identifying high-risk or service-constrained areas. It ensures that local land-use priorities are aligned with the feasibility of providing sewerage infrastructure.

Key activities

Identify service-constrained and high-risk areas, update and maintain On-site Wastewater Management Plans (OWWMPs), share data, include priority sewer schemes in Wannon Water's price submission cycle, and collaborate through Integrated Water Management (IWM) networks.

Who does what?

- Wannon Water leads long-term service infrastructure planning and provides data.
- Councils develop best-practice OWWMPs to proactively identify service-constrained areas, share data and information, and consider the feasibility of sewer servicing in land-use planning decisions.
- The community provides input, and practitioners contribute technical expertise to enable rigorous land capability assessment.

Outcomes

Early identification and awareness of problem areas (service-constrained areas), strategic investment priorities, and coordinated regional planning.

Key messages

- Plan ahead: Align wastewater and land-use planning early.
- Share data: Keep GIS and planning datasets up to date.
- Think long-term: Flag infrastructure funding needs early.
- Engage communities: Use plan updates to inform residents.



Roles and process

- Councils review and update their OWWMPs to map ‘problem areas’ and servicing constraints.
- Wannon Water analyses OWWMPs and servicing data to identify high-risk or constrained areas.
- Wannon Water and councils hold joint planning meetings to agree on servicing priorities and timing.
- Wannon Water incorporates priority works into its five-year price submission for funding approval.
- Wannon Water and councils share GIS layers and data updates.
- IWM partners provide input on environmental and regional planning.

Outcome:

- ***A shared plan/data indicating where, when, and under what conditions sewer services may be available for unsewered land.***

Stage 2 - Pre-purchase



Purpose

Prevents surprises for buyers, developers, and agents by providing clear, upfront information on service availability and responsibilities before a property purchase.

Key activities

Provide accurate sewerage service availability data and advice, publish clear maps of service-constrained areas, ensure adequate information on Section 32 statements*, and encourage septic inspections in pre-purchase assessments.

* Section 32 statements

Under section 32H of the Sale of Land Act 1962 (Vic), a vendor must disclose whether essential services are connected to the land.

*If a property is **not connected to sewerage services**, Wannon Water will clearly state this in the Section 32 statement. This includes situations where wastewater is managed by an **on-site system, such as a septic tank**, rather than a sewer connection.*

*This disclosure enables prospective purchasers to understand the property's servicing status and to **explore the potential costs and requirements for connection or ongoing wastewater management after settlement**.*

Requirements relating to on-site wastewater management systems may sometimes be documented on a property Title Plan and/or through a Planning and Environment Act 1987 Section 173 Agreement that is listed as a caveat on the Certificate of Title.

Who does what?

- Councils and Wannon Water provide information for inclusion in Section 32 statements.
- Wannon Water issues Information Statements and maintains sewer network and connection maps.
- Councils will confirm any site constraints related to planning scheme overlays.
- Conveyancers and agents use verified information.
- Buyers confirm written servicing status.



Outcomes

Reduced confusion and unplanned costs, and improved confidence for property owners.

Key messages

- Don't assume: 'In a sewer district' means 'connected.'
- Ask for proof: Request an Information Statement.
- Inspect septics: Have systems checked before purchase.
- Trust the source: Confirm advice directly with Wannon Water and/or council.

Roles and process

- Prospective property owners/developers of land not connected to sewer, but within a sewer district, should:
 - Check sewerage connection availability with Wannon Water and request an Information Statement or Servicing Advice.
 - If sewer is unavailable, ask the council's planning or environmental health team for advice on the feasibility of on-site options.
- Conveyancers and real estate agents should include verified servicing availability based on the information provided in improved Section 32 statements.
- Buyers are responsible for checking the feasibility, costs, and timing of wastewater disposal.

Decision:

- ***If the connection to sewer exists/or is feasible: proceed to purchase and Stage 3.***
- ***If not: explore the possibility of an on-site wastewater disposal system or a voluntary sewerage scheme with Wannon Water guidance.***

Stage 3 - Statutory planning and approvals



Purpose

Ensures consistent, transparent assessment processes for development and subdivision approvals involving wastewater servicing.

Key activities

Early as possible referrals between councils and Wannon Water, service feasibility assessments, land capability reviews, and straightforward advice and clear permit conditions.

Who does what?

- Wannon Water provides servicing and technical advice.
- Councils encourage pre-application meetings, assess planning applications, and issue planning approvals and onsite wastewater permits.
- Proponents engage early and plan for servicing costs.
- Practitioners prepare Land Capability Assessments and engineering designs.





Outcomes

Transparent, efficient approvals and consistent decision-making.

Key messages

- Engage early: Confirm wastewater service options before developing applications.
- Coordinate: Hold joint pre-application meetings.
- Be clear: Include Wannon Water conditions in permits.

Roles and process

- Developers/property owners engage early via pre-application meetings with both council and Wannon Water.
- Councils act as the Responsible Authority for planning and onsite wastewater approvals.
- Councils refer planning applications to Wannon Water for comment and conditions.
- Wannon Water reviews referrals, assesses connection feasibility, and provides written servicing conditions.
- Proponents commission Land Capability Assessments when onsite systems are proposed.
- Trades/engineers prepare compliant designs and documentation.
- Council and Wannon Water coordinate on the final permit conditions.

Outcome:

- ***If approved: proceed to design and construction.***
- ***If changes needed: revise and resubmit.***

Stage 4 - Connection and construction



Purpose

Guides property owners and developers through the process of connecting to the sewer safely, efficiently, and in compliance with standards.

Key activities

Design and construct connections, apply for permits, manage financing, and record connection data.

Who does what?

- Wannon Water approves designs, issues permits, and manages inspections.
- Councils oversee compliance.
- Developers/property owners fund work.
- Trades build to standards and report results.

Outcomes

Safe, compliant connections and systems, along with accurate record-keeping, to build a robust data and information foundation.

Key messages

- Budget early: Seek cost estimates upfront.
- Consider schemes: Shared connections reduce costs.
- Keep records: Submit as-built documentation.





Roles and process

- Wannon Water nominates connection points and approves detailed designs.
- Developers/property owners fund and arrange works, individually (private connection) or jointly (voluntary scheme).
- Wannon Water issues connection permits and provides technical standards.
- Trades/licensed plumbers/contractors construct works to Wannon Water standards.
- Wannon Water inspects before activation.
- Councils oversee regulatory compliance and issue on-site system permits when sewer service is not feasible.
- Wannon Water records new assets in GIS and finalises repayment agreements.
- Wannon Water has powers to require customers to connect to sewer. These powers can only be used in either of the following situations:
 - (a) The sewerage service has been included in a sewerage management plan developed in conjunction with the relevant municipal council and in consultation with the local community; or
 - (b) Where Wannon Water has consulted with the Environment Protection Authority, Secretary to the Department of Health or local council and Wannon Water believes the connection is necessary to avoid an adverse impact on public health or the environment.

Decision:

- ***If inspection passed: connection activated and asset handed over to Wannon Water.***
- ***If not: rectify and repeat the inspection.***

Stage 5 - Ongoing use and maintenance



Purpose

Maintains reliable wastewater systems and protects health and the environment over time.

Key activities

Operate and maintain sewer or on-site wastewater disposal systems, conduct inspections, monitor performance, and educate communities.

Who does what?

- Wannon Water operates sewer networks.
- Councils monitor on-site wastewater systems.
- Property owners are required to maintain maintenance records for a minimum of five years and provide these on request.
- Trades service and report on the performance of on-site wastewater systems.
- Councils educate the community on the importance of maintaining on-site wastewater systems.

Outcomes

Reliable operation and reduced health/environmental risks, increased awareness of roles and responsibilities.



Key messages

- Maintain on-site systems: Regular maintenance and servicing are essential.
- Report issues: Contact the relevant authority.
- Stay informed: Follow updates on planning and development in your neighbourhood.

Roles and process

- Property owners/occupiers are responsible for maintaining plumbing within their property boundaries and on-site disposal systems.
- Trades/service providers perform regular servicing and report faults to the owner and the appropriate authority.
- Wannon Water operates and maintains the public sewer network, monitors performance, and updates data.
- Councils monitor and regulate on-site wastewater systems and update risk mapping.
- Wannon Water and councils share data, including flagging failing on-site systems.
- IWM network collaborates on education campaigns.

Feedback loop:

- ***Recurring issues identified through maintenance inform future strategic planning.***



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