

# Retaining Shacks commitment

## Coorong shacks: Preferred wastewater system



## Information for lessees of shacks in Coorong National Park

This information sheet is for lessees of shacks in Coorong National Park, to help you understand and meet the wastewater standards required at this unique location.

Read this document **after** you have read the 'Wastewater systems for shacks on Crown land and in national parks' information sheet, which has more general information about installing a suitable wastewater system for your shack site.

Lessees are reminded that they need to have a compliant wastewater system, as well as meet other contemporary standards, for their shack site to be considered for long-term tenure.

### Why do Coorong shacks have specific wastewater requirements?

All shack lessees must meet the requirements of the *Public Health Act 2011* and the *Environment Protection Act 1993* when selecting a suitable wastewater system for their shack site.

However, lessees of shacks in Coorong National Park also have other considerations that must be factored in, in order to protect the ecological and cultural value of this special area.

The Coorong is considered as a 'Wetland of International Importance' (under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), and is also defined as a 'water protection area' under the *River Murray Act 2003*.

Parts of the area are also protected as the Coorong National Park and Game Reserve, which is of enormous cultural significance to the land's Traditional Owners – the Ngarrindjeri people.

All of these factors must be taken into account when determining the most appropriate wastewater system for use in the Coorong.

### What is the preferred wastewater system to use in the Coorong?

As a lessee, you are welcome to investigate and apply to use a wastewater system of your choosing at your shack site.

However, DEW acknowledges that the process can be complex, particularly given the specific environmental and cultural considerations that need to be taken into account in the Coorong region.

To help you, DEW has consulted with relevant regulatory authorities to understand what type of wastewater system would be most suitable for Coorong shacks, in terms of being most likely to gain the necessary approvals.

Based on this advice, **holding tanks** are the preferred wastewater system **for all shacks in Coorong National Park**.

This is because holding tanks can be used on sites that aren't suitable for other on-site land application systems, such as in areas where there is a risk of ground and surface water contamination and high ecological value.

Any existing wastewater systems that include on-site land applications systems, such as soakage trenches, will **not be approved for use** in Coorong National Park.

Note: Refer to the 'Wastewater systems for shacks on Crown land and in national parks' information sheet (referenced above) for details on removing existing, non-compliant wastewater systems.

### What is the process for proceeding with this option?

As a lessee, you will need to determine the most appropriate holding tank for your shack site from the list of [approved products](#) determined by SA Health.

Coorong District Council can assist with general queries about holding tanks but for more technical information, you will need to seek advice from a suitable professional with experience in wastewater management.

After selecting which holding tank to use, you must seek approvals by following the process outlined in the 'Wastewater systems for shacks on Crown land and in national parks' information sheet (referenced above).

The approvals process includes showing how the proposed works comply with installation and performance requirements outlined on Page 34 of the [On-site wastewater systems code](#). It is **strongly recommended** that you work with a wastewater engineer or suitable professional to design a system to achieve this.

Regulatory authorities often reject applications for wastewater systems because of poor design work.

## Who is responsible for disposing of wastewater?

After gaining approvals for a holding tank and installing it at your shack site, lessees are responsible for ongoing maintenance and organising pumping and disposal of the wastewater in your holding tank.

This work must be undertaken by an Environment Protection Authority licensed contractor. The [EPA website](#) has an index of licensed businesses who can transport and dispose of wastewater (search for Waste Transport Business Category B) or speak to your local council.

**Note:** To save costs, lessees are encouraged to work with other Coorong shack lessees to coordinate pumping and disposal of wastewater.

## Are there any other special considerations to take into account in the Coorong?

### Native Title

Many sites in the Coorong are subject to native title, and are governed by an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) between the Traditional Owners, the Ngarrindjeri People, and the State which sets out how the land may be used.

The ILUA applies to any works being undertaken at the site, which would include the installation of a wastewater system.

When a lessee seeks to install a wastewater system, because it involves disturbing the land, it might trigger the 'notifiable act' process under the ILUA

This means that DEW, as the landholder, must give notice to the Ngarrindjeri People, and seek their views, prior to the works being undertaken.

This process takes a minimum of 60 days and could involve further investigations such as undertaking a cultural heritage survey.

DEW is responsible for managing this process and will keep you informed as it progresses, which includes notifying you if there are likely to be any additional costs that you would be responsible for, like those for cultural heritage surveys.

**Note:** General information about ILUAs can be found on the [National Native Title Tribunal website](#).

### Protecting cultural heritage

Lessees are also urged to consider the implications of their wastewater designs on the potential to disturb cultural heritage material in the soils around the Coorong.

Wastewater system design should be a balance between tank size and minimising soil disturbance. Where possible, new systems should be located as close to, or within the same site, as an existing (non-compliant) system.

**Important note:** If you encounter cultural heritage material at your shack site during installation, you must stop all further excavations immediately and follow a **site discovery protocol**, a link to the protocol will be made available on the DEW shacks website to guide you in this process.

## More information

For further information visit the [DEW Retaining Shacks webpage](#) or contact the DEW Shacks Team:

- (08) 8204 1218
- [DEWshacks@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWshacks@sa.gov.au)

The DEW Shacks Team aims to respond to emailed questions within five working days.