

## MOYNE SHIRE COUNCIL

## FACTSHEET 11: LAND CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

The following information is provided as a general guide to help explain the Moyne Shire Council's requirements for preparing Land Capability Assessments (LCA's). This guide details the minimum standards that must be addressed for LCA's to be considered as part of a septic system application.

**What is a Land Capability Assessment?**

A Land Capability Assessment (LCA) is a report, prepared by a suitably qualified person that assesses the various aspects of an individual site, including the way it is proposed to be developed, in the absence of reticulated sewerage.

The LCA must comply with Environment Protection Authority criteria as outlined in EPA Information Bulletin 746 Land Capability Assessment for Onsite Domestic Wastewater Management 2003 and the EPA Code of Practice for Onsite Wastewater Management (891.4) 2016.

**The LCA needs to:**

- Demonstrate to Council if the site is capable of sustainably managing within allotment boundaries all domestic wastewater likely to be generated by the proposed development; and
- Provide a management program that will need to be put in place (and sustained) to ensure that the health and environmental impacts of on-site wastewater management are minimised.

Please note that an LCA is not a *Septic Tank Permit*. This is a separate approval that needs to be applied for through Council's Environmental Health Unit prior to commencement of any works associated with wastewater treatment.

**Who should carry out the LCA?**

The LCA should be prepared by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional in the environmental science/health, geotechnical, soil science, and/or wastewater consulting field. The applicant/owners should ensure that the assessor has the appropriate qualifications and experience and has *Professional Indemnity Insurance* cover.

**When is an LCA needed?**

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) guidelines provide that the LCA procedure should be applied at the rezoning or subdivision stages of the planning process. It is also used to assess the capability of existing individual allotments to support a dwelling and/or other land use.

An LCA is a standard application requirement for subdivision of land without reticulated sewerage (unsewered) in the Residential Zone, Low Density Residential Zone, and the Township Zone, under the Moyne Shire Council Planning Scheme. The assessment for each allotment must clearly define both an appropriate building envelope and primary and reserve effluent disposal envelopes, together with recommended programs for wastewater management. An LCA may also be required where development is proposed on an existing small unsewered lot in a rural zone, or where a permit is triggered under a Schedule to the Environmental Significance Overlay or 173 Agreement.

Before issuing any approval for development, Council must be satisfied that all wastewater can be treated and retained on-site in accordance with the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria) under the Environment Protection Act 1970.

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**A satisfactory LCA can be the key to Council approving a Planning Permit application or an application for a *Permit to Install a Septic Tank System*, although submission of an LCA does not necessarily ensure that a development can proceed.**

### What should the LCA contain?

The LCA is a document written in a report format and should contain sufficient details to enable Council officers to make an informed decision about the proposal. Dot points with minimal detail, risk ratings with no explanation, or tick the box reports are considered to be insufficient. It is important that LCA reports are clear, easy to follow and properly structured, with appropriate headings and sections to provide the reader with an informed understanding of the proposal, risks identified, and methods proposed to be implemented to address those risks.

The **following list of the key issues must be addressed** in the report. The following list is consistent with the MAV Model LCA Report (2006), which is recommended by the EPA as the procedure for undertaking LCAs, and is the minimum standard expected by Moyne Shire Council. LCAs not based on the MAV Model LCA will be returned and not considered as part of the application process.

1. Introduction
2. Description of the Development
3. Site Key Features
4. Soil Assessment and Constraints
5. Published Soils Information
6. Soil Survey and Analysis
7. Land Capability Assessment Matrix
8. The Management Program
9. Treatment System
10. Land Application
11. Size of the Irrigation System
12. Siting and Configuration of the land Application Area
13. Irrigation System Description
14. Buffer Distances
15. Monitoring, Operation and Maintenance
16. Stormwater Management
17. Conclusions
18. Attach all relevant supporting information

### CONTACT US

Phone: (03) 55680555  
 Email: [moyne@moyne.vic.gov.au](mailto:moyne@moyne.vic.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.moyne.vic.gov.au](http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au)  
 Postal Address: PO Box 51, Port Fairy, 3284  
 Office Hours: 8.30 am - 5.00 pm (Monday to Friday)

### RESOURCES

Further information about LCA's is contained in the following Environment Protection Authority documents, available at [www.epa.vic.gov.au](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au)

-Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management 2016 (Publication 891.4)

-State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria)

<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/~media/Publications/891%204.pdf>

A model Land Capability Assessment report, prepared by the Municipal Association of Victoria is available to download from the MAV website: [www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au)

[http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/environment/water/domestic-wastewater/Documents/Victorian\\_land\\_capability\\_assessment\\_framework.docx](http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/environment/water/domestic-wastewater/Documents/Victorian_land_capability_assessment_framework.docx)

-Council's Septic Tank application form is available to download from the Moyne Shire website:

<http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-Services/Public-Health/Septic-Systems>

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## LIST OF INFORMATION TO BE ADDRESSED IN LAND CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT:

1. Introduction
2. Description of the Development

Site Address:  
Owner/Developer:  
Postal Address:  
Contact:  
Council Area:  
Zoning  
Allotment Size:  
Domestic Water Supply:  
Anticipated Wastewater Load:  
Availability of Sewer

### 3. Site Key Features

Climate  
Exposure  
Vegetation  
Landform  
Slope  
Fill  
Rocks and Rock Outcrops  
Erosion Potential  
Surface Water  
Flood Potential  
Stormwater run-on and upslope seepage  
Groundwater  
Site Drainage and Subsurface  
Drainage  
Recommended Buffer  
Distances  
Available Land Application Area

4. Soil Assessment and Constraints
5. Published Soils Information
6. Soil Survey and Analysis

### Soil features

Depth  
Depth to watertable  
Coarse fragments  
Soil permeability and design loading rates

For topsoil and subsoil – the following detail is required:

Soil description  
Soil category (AS/NZ1547:2000)  
Design Irrigation Rate (DIR mm/day)  
Design Loading Rate (DLR mm/day) for trenches/beds  
pH  
Electrical conductivity

## 7. Land Capability Assessment Matrix

### General characteristics

Site drainage  
Run-off  
Flood levels  
Proximity to watercourses  
Slope%  
Landslip  
Groundwater (seasonal watertable depth in metres)  
Rock outcrops  
Erosion potential  
Exposure  
Landform  
Vegetation type  
Annual rainfall (mm/year)  
Pan evaporation (mm/year)  
Fill

### Soil profile characteristics

Soil permeability category  
Profile depth  
Presence of mottling  
Coarse fragments  
pH  
Emerson Aggregate  
Electrical Conductivity  
**OVERALL SITE RATING**  
*(Note: Overall Site Rating is based on the highest site rating (1 – very good to 5 – very poor) and not the average score.)*

8. The Management Program
  9. Treatment System
  10. Land Application
  11. Size of the Irrigation System
  12. Siting and Configuration of the land Application Area
  13. Irrigation System Description
  14. Buffer Distances
  15. Monitoring, Operation and Maintenance
  16. Stormwater Management
  17. Conclusions
- Appendix - Attach all relevant supporting information**

***NOTE:** The applicant/owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with the current provisions of the Moyne Shire Council Planning Scheme before commencing any activity.*

Information Guide adapted from existing MAV Victoria resources.  
Moyne Shire Council acknowledges these sources.