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Australia and New Zealand Inc.

ABSTRACT

The Neutral or Beneficial Effect on Water Quality Assessment Tool

Authors: Alison Kniha and Greg Greene

Organisation: WaterNSW

Country: Australia

Email: alison.kniha@waterNSW.com.au

Abstract:

All developments requiring consent in Sydney's drinking water catchment must have a neutral or beneficial effect (NorBE) on water quality. To help councils, as consent authorities, be satisfied that the carrying out of a development would have a NorBE on water quality, and consultants to prepare their own NorBE assessments to submit with a development application (DA), WaterNSW has developed the NorBE Assessment Tool. Using the Tool, it can be determined whether NorBE has been satisfied or not, or if the application needs to be sent to WaterNSW for assessment instead.

The NorBE Tool is a web-based software application that allows the user to assess the site conditions, and stormwater and wastewater impacts. It uses a GIS interface, and includes a model to assess the water quality impact of on-site wastewater systems for developments in areas not connected to the sewer. The NorBE Tool uses the NSW Government's SIX Maps Viewer to display the site and model any on-site systems.

Councils are able to assess themselves whether the NorBE requirement has been met for most proposals, including alterations and additions to existing dwellings, most new dwellings, and small urban and rural subdivisions. Consultants operating in the catchment are able to submit a NorBE assessment for the majority of developments as part of the DA. This increases the likelihood of a high quality assessment being lodged that specifically addresses the NorBE requirements.

The NorBE Tool is practical, simple, and provides flexibility to achieve the best outcomes for the protection of water quality. It reduces DA processing time, and costs to developers, the community, councils and WaterNSW, and provides a consistent and transparent process for development application assessment. It is considered to represent best practice of how a State government organisation can support the streamlining of the development assessment processes.