



# *Separation Distances Policy*

Water Reclamation Plant

20 February 2013

## Introduction

Coliban Water's vision is to contribute to improving living standards in our region. We realise this vision by actively contributing to regional sustainability.

Our Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs) are significant community assets that contribute to regional sustainability.

This Policy:

- a. Provides guidance to potential property purchasers and others, regarding proposals for sensitive land uses and developments close to WRPs;
- b. Has been developed in consultation with stakeholders including the EPA, as well as council.

## Objectives

This Policy:

- Operates in the broad community interest, as a proactive risk-management device;
- Aims to mitigate the consequences of odour emissions, not their likelihood;
- Even with good pollution control technology and practice, cannot eliminate emissions that impact on surrounding land use and development; and
- Nonetheless, will help limit the need for expensive works to alleviate odour, whose costs are passed through to our customers.

## Land Use and Development

The operational ability of WRPs to serve domestic and industrial customers needs to be protected against inappropriate encroachment by sensitive land uses and developments.

These land uses and developments include residential (whether occupied or not), accommodation facilities, medical facilities, child care centres, educational institutions or uses involving the presence of people for extended periods.

For their part, these land uses and developments must be protected against odours from WRPs caused by failure of biological processes, accidental discharges, machinery breakdown, unusual weather conditions and other unavoidable circumstances.

## Distances

Accordingly, separation distances to separate sensitive uses and developments from WRPs have been established by *State Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality Management)*.

In consultation with EPA, we apply separation distances that reflect factors including wind, topography, waste loading, treatment/disposal methods, design capacity and other relevant factors – under relevant guidelines as amended, including:

1. *Recommended Buffer Distances for Industrial Residual Air Emissions* (EPA Publication AQ2-86); and
2. *Recommended Separation Distances for Industrial Residual Air Emissions* (EPA Publication 1506, currently in draft, but intended to replace AQ2-86).

Based on such factors, as appropriate we apply multiple separation distances, from the WRP boundary, as well as from specific odour sources within the WRP.

These separation distances are detailed in maps and other information available through:

- Coliban Water website;
- Information statements provided to potential property purchasers under section 32, *Sale of Land Act (1962)*.

## Decisions

In addition to its roles regarding zones and overlays in planning schemes, as responsible authority Council is the primary decision-maker on planning permit applications.

As referral authority for planning permit applications, we exercise discretion regarding specific circumstances in which sensitive land uses or developments are proposed within relevant separation distances.

This discretion will inform our decision to:

1. Not object to council granting the permit;
2. Not object if the permit is subject to conditions we specify, for example that the purchaser enter into a Section 173 Agreement that:
  - i. Signifies the purchaser's acknowledgement that the land may be impacted by odour;
  - ii. Notifies future purchasers of risks concerning the WRP; or
3. Object on grounds we specify.

