

WORKING TOWARDS SAFE & RESPONSIBLE ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT  
ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION SERIES

ARE YOU  
FAMILIAR WITH  
THESE OSMS  
TERMS?

COMMON TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH ON-SITE  
SEWAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

**Absorption Trench** - A designated area where effluent is released into the soil. Soil processes, natural organisms and plants in the area further purify the effluent before it enters the wider environment.

**Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS)** – An OSMS that treats wastewater to a Secondary standard so that the effluent can be used for irrigation on your property (refer to factsheet 3).

**Blackwater** – Wastewater from toilets. Wastewater from your kitchen sink is also treated as blackwater in OSMS, because it can be highly contaminated with food particles, cooking oil and grease.

**Disinfection** – The treatment of wastewater to destroy or reduce pathogens to an acceptable level.

**Disposal Area** - An area where treated effluent is deposited to after-treatment in an OSMS. Disposal areas include a septic tanks absorption trench and an AWTS irrigation area.

**Effluent** - Wastewater that has been treated in and discharged from an OSMS or sewage treatment plant.

**Greywater** - Household water from baths, showers, hand basins and washing machines that does not include toilet discharge.

**Irrigation Area** – A designated area where effluent is irrigated, using drip irrigation or sprinklers that produce coarse droplets, following treatment in an AWTS.

**Primary treatment system** - The separation of suspended material from wastewater in septic tanks, primary settling chambers, or other structures, before effluent discharge to either a secondary treatment process, or to a disposal area (refer to factsheet 2).

**Secondary treatment system** - Aerobic biological processing and settling or filtering of effluent received from a primary treatment unit followed by disinfection (usually by chlorine) before discharge to a disposal area (refer to factsheet 3).

**Septic Tank** – An OSMS that treats a household's wastewater to a Primary level (refer to factsheet 2).

**Sewage** – Untreated (raw) wastewater from households or commercial premises that is discharged to a reticulated sewer system where available, or treated and disposed of on-site in OSMS.

**Transpiration** – The process where plants absorb water through the roots and then give off water vapour through pores in their leaves.

**Wastewater** - Used water that goes down sinks, toilets and drains and flows into your OSMS.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au](http://www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au)

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