



Updating Stormwater Management Policy in 2017 - What's the Focus?

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Development in Fairfield City is in the process of change. Council is starting to see an increased rate of infill development in our older suburbs, at a higher density than ever before. Whilst Council is able to direct development with our zoning and strategic land use planning process, we are also facing other factors for which we have less control, such as previous and current State planning policies.

Additionally, as more of our favourable sites are already developed, we are now seeing development shift towards those sites which are less favourable. These sites often have the simple issue of poor development geography - they drain away from the street. Therefore we are finding that more time and cost is being spent on drainage design in line with our policies, or worse, our policies are being ignored.

With this in mind, Fairfield City Council set out to review their stormwater management policies with four main aims; to reduce the four policies into one, make the policy an easy to read document, ensure it was in line with those of the surrounding Councils, and make use of engineering best practice. But these aims do not happen in a vacuum. There was concentrated political interest in the changes to be made to the stormwater management policies, along with having to accommodate the fact that the Fairfield LGA has the most socio-economic disadvantaged residents in the Sydney region.

There were a variety of changes throughout the updated policy, but it was decided to focus on six main policy issues; policy flexibility, charged systems, pump out systems, absorption trenches, on-site detention and water quantity and quality improvements. These issues were seen as either being those that garnered the most complaints to our Councillors, or where Fairfield was outside the policies of our surrounding Councils.

The update process has also had a strong consultation focus, ranging from Council officers, external design engineers, to the Mayor and Councillors. This has helped with explaining the limitations and opportunities we face in the Fairfield LGA, which in turn assists with user acceptance.

Fairfield City Council has also decided that this policy update should not be seen as a one off, rather that it be seen as part of building the momentum towards ensuring they continue to grow with the adoption of new techniques, and ensure existing practices continue to be fit for purpose.