

Fact Sheet

Changes to the Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Program

History of the Program

Since 2012, Ipswich City Council (council) has operated the Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Program (the Program). The Program allows eligible developers to voluntarily pay a fee to council in-lieu of meeting some or all of their stormwater quality improvement responsibilities under the State Planning Policy 2017.

Council must use the fees to deliver projects off development sites (i.e., off-site) that achieve an equal or greater stormwater quality outcome relative to what would be achieved by developers meeting responsibilities on development sites.

Review of the Program

In late 2022, council undertook a review of the Program to ensure it can meet the responsibilities it inherits from developers participating in the Program in the future. The review identified several recommendations to improve the Program including, but not limited to, the following.

1. The preparation of a new Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Policy (the Policy) to ensure consistent council decisions aligned to best practice and the
2. achievement of desired economic, environmental, and social outcomes in Ipswich.
3. The preparation of the Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Guidelines (the Guidelines) that provides clear guidance on developer eligibility and requirements for participating in the Program.
4. The update of council's Voluntary Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Payment (the Payment) to ensure environmental, financial, and other risks associated with off-site stormwater quality improvement are minimised for council and the Ipswich community.

Change to the Program

In December 2024, council resolved to adopt the Policy and Guidelines. Now in effect, the Policy can be found on council's policies webpage ipswich.qld.gov.au/policies. The Guidelines can be found on council's Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Program webpage ipswich.qld.gov.au/OSQIP.

The updated Payment will take effect from 1 July 2025 and be included in the 2025-2026 Register of Fees and Charges. It will include the following changes to the unit and rate used to calculate the Payment:

1. Payment unit

To ensure consistent assessments of the stormwater quality improvement responsibilities council inherits from developers, and the performance of off-site projects in meeting them, the current unit will change from square metres (m²) of water quality treatment area to kilograms (kg) of Total Nitrogen (TN) per year (kg/TN/year). The change of unit will result in the current rate of \$1,121.23/m² being updated to the equivalent value of \$29,506/kgTN/year. Note that this does not represent an increase to the fee rate, and therefore the fees to be paid by developers, only a change in the unit used to measure responsibilities.

2. Payment rate

To address environmental modelling uncertainties and recover council's costs for the operation of the Program, including the planning and delivery of projects to meet the responsibilities council inherits from developers, the updated fee rate will increase from \$29,605/kgTN/year to \$48,532/kgTN/year. This denotes a 64% increase in the fee rate, made up of a 50% increase to address modelling uncertainties and associated environmental and financial risks, and a 14% increase to recover council's Program and project management costs.

The new Policy and update to the Payment will maintain council's position as a leader in off-site stormwater quality improvement in Queensland. This has been reflected in historic awards for off-site projects (e.g., Small Creek channel naturalisation) and most recently, the 2024 Award for Excellence in Policy and Education from Stormwater Queensland for the Program's review.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information, please visit council's Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Program webpage

ipswich.qld.gov.au/OSQIP