Applying the Tasmanian Acid Sulphate Soils Code to Development Applications

The Tasmanian Acid Sulphate Soils Code forms part of most 2015 Interim Planning Schemes in the state. Its intent is to ensure that developments in areas potentially containing acid sulphate soils (a) avoid areas containing such soils, and (b) where avoidance is not practicable, appropriate measures are taken to mitigate any adverse effects.

Use this flowchart to determine whether or not a development application is exempt from the Code.

Comment

Section E20.3.1 of the Code defines acid sulphate soil as a soil or sediment containing highly acidic soil horizons or layers affected by the oxidation of iron sulphides. When disturbed and exposed to the atmosphere, the sulphides oxidise to sulphates and tend to produce acidic water solutions which can mobilise heavy metals in soil or sediment which can cause environmental or infrastructure issues, and/or migrate elsewhere. If left undisturbed, sulphate is not generated. Most potential acid sulphate soils and sediments are in low-lying coastal environments.

To see if you Development Application is in a Potential Acid Sulphate area, go to www.thelist.tas.gov.au. On the home page, click on "LISTmap", double click on your location of interest and continue to double click (or use the mouse wheel) to zoom in (or alternatively, "Search the map" at the top by typing in an address); click "Layers" at top right; then click "Add Layer +"; In the menu box that opens, scroll down to "Geology and Soils", select "Soils", select (click on the green circular "+" icon) any of the first three listed Layers. Drag the menu box out of the way (or close it). At top right of the screen, click on the tiny arrow in the Potential Acid Soils box to see the Legend and change the transparency.]

The colour coding for Potential Acid Sulphate Soils areas is:

- High
- Low
- Extremely Low

No colour means that an area is at an acceptable level of risk of Potential Acid Sulphate Soils

Important Disclaimer

This flow chart is intended to assist in interpreting the Tasmanian Potential Acid Sulphate Soils Code. It is not a substitute for the Code, or for professional planning advice. It may be amended from time to time without notice. It has been compiled by William C Cromer Pty Ltd (WCCPL) with due care but WCCPL is not a Planner. Accordingly, WCCPL does not guarantee that it is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for every purpose for which it may be used.
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Development Application (DA) received by Planning Authority

E20.2.1
Does the DA involve land in a coastal zone below 20m AHD?
- No → DA is exempt from the Acid Sulphate Soils Code and requires no further assessment in this regard
- Yes

E20.4.1(a)
Does the DA involve exposing or disturbing soils, or draining groundwater, below 20mAHD?
- No → DA is exempt from the Acid Sulphate Soils Code and requires no further assessment in this regard
- Yes

E20.4.1(b)
Does the DA involve changes to an existing building, or construction a non-habitable building, in a development area less than 100m^2 and maximum excavation depth of 0.75m?
- Yes → DA is exempt from the Acid Sulphate Soils Code and requires no further assessment in this regard
- No

E20.2.1(a)
Does the DA involve the excavation of more than 100m^3 of soil or sediment?
- No → DA is exempt from the Acid Sulphate Soils Code and requires no further assessment in this regard
- Yes

E20.2.1(b)
Does the DA involve deposition of 500m^3 or more of fill to a depth of 0.5m or more?
- No → DA is exempt from the Acid Sulphate Soils Code and requires no further assessment in this regard
- Yes

The Acid Sulphate Soil Code applies to the Development

E20.5.1
Planning Authority may require an acid sulphate soil management report by a suitably qualified person

Desk top review
Subsurface investigations
Soil sampling
Management plan

Comment

A "Suitably Qualified Person" is not defined in the Code

More information may be required by Planning Authority

Report is reviewed by Planning Authority

Report is approved or rejected by Planning Authority

Comment

Section E20.5.1 states that in addition to any other application requirements, the planning authority may require the applicant to provide any of the following information to determine compliance with performance criteria:

(a) An acid sulphate soil management plan

The Tasmanian Acid Sulphate Soil Management Guidelines (DPIPWE, 2009) are considered best practice.

Section E20.3.1 defines an acid sulphate soil management plan as a report acceptable to the planning authority that details:

(a) The acid sulphate soils or potential acid sulphate soils in the vicinity of the proposed development
(b) The potential for the development to cause potential acid sulphate soils to be exposed to air or oxidised
(c) An analysis of the level of risk to the development and the level of risk to users of the development
(d) An analysis of the level of risk to the environment
(e) Proposed management measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level where necessary

Comment

Section E20.7.1 P1 states that for developments in Potential Acid Sulphate Soil areas, there is No Acceptable Solution. Performance Criteria P1 states that development must be designed, sited and constructed to minimise the risk of acid sulphate soil to property and the environment having regard to the following, as appropriate:

(a) The acid sulphate or potential acid sulphate soils in the vicinity of proposed works involving excavation or disturbance of soil or sediment, or drainage of groundwater
(b) The potential for those works to cause potential acid sulphate soils to be exposed to air or oxidised
(c) The potential for the development to be affected by acid sulphate soils
(d) The level of risk and potential consequences for human health, property and the environment
(e) Management measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level

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Comment

The Potential Acid Sulphate Soils maps are produced by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE). More information.