

**NOVEL APPLICATION OF A LAMELLA CLARIFIER  
FOR IMPROVED PRIMARY TREATMENT OF  
DOMESTIC WASTEWATER**



*Paper Presented by:*

**Tony McKean**

*Authors:*

**Tony McKean**, *Reuse Team,*  
**Brian Bourke**, *Maintenance Team,*  
**Warren Mitchell**, *Maintenance Team,*  
**Lara Caplygin**, *Reuse and Maintenance Manager,*  
**Rory McKeown**, *Wastewater Technical Specialist,*

East Gippsland Water



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# NOVEL APPLICATION OF A LAMELLA CLARIFIER FOR IMPROVED PRIMARY TREATMENT OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER

**Tony McKean**, *Reuse Team*, East Gippsland Water.

**Brian Bourke**, *Maintenance Team*, East Gippsland Water.

**Warren Mitchell**, *Maintenance Team*, East Gippsland Water.

**Lara Caplygin**, *Reuse and Maintenance Manager*, East Gippsland Water.

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## ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of a lamella clarifier unit for primary treatment of domestic wastewater was investigated. The trial was divided into three operational phases: Phase I – operation of a conventional primary sedimentation tank; Phase II: operation of a lamella clarifier for primary settlement; Phase III – operation of lamella clarifier for primary settlement in conjunction with a chemical coagulant (aluminium chlorohydrate). The performance of the lamella clarifier was assessed in terms of the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>), suspended solids (SS), total nitrogen and total phosphorus removal efficiencies. Results demonstrated that the lamella clarifier unit performed favourably when compared to the conventional primary sedimentation tank, with BOD<sub>5</sub> and SS removal efficiencies of 30% and 57%, respectively (Phase II). The operation of the lamella clarifier in conjunction with coagulant (Phase III) enhanced nutrient removal, thereby improving the overall performance of the system.

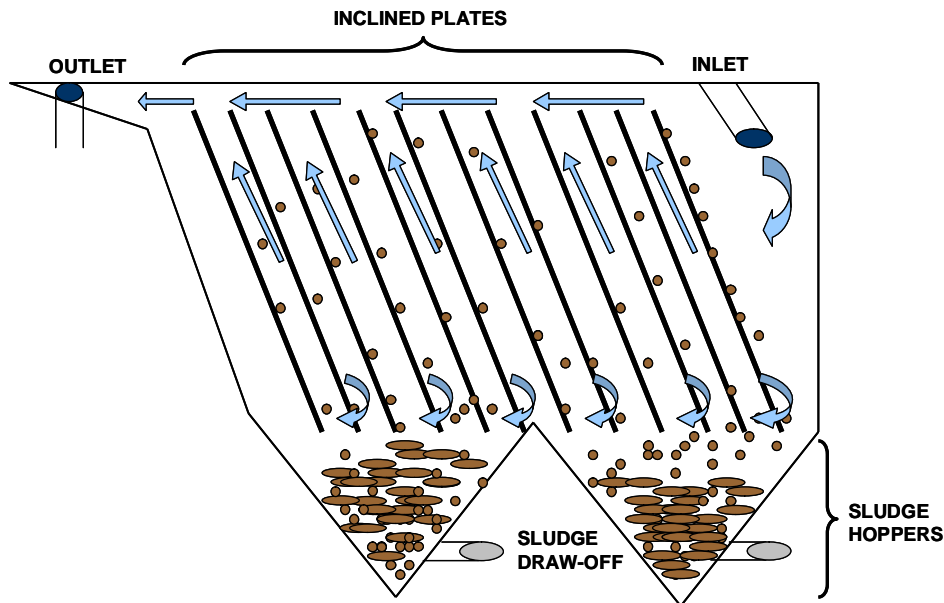
## Keywords:

Lamella clarifier; nutrient reduction; primary sedimentation; process efficiency; solids removal.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lamella clarifiers are designed to remove particulate matter from liquids. These systems have been used extensively for industrial, construction and environmental remediation applications. In contrast to conventional sedimentation/clarifying units, lamella clarifiers contain a series of inclined plates, which provide a large effective settling area within a considerably smaller footprint. The influent solid/liquid stream is stiller upon entry into the lamella clarifier unit, and solid particles settle onto the plates, accumulating and thickening in collection hoppers at the bottom of the unit; the clarified liquid exits the system through an outlet weir (Fig. 1).

The apparent advantages of these systems over conventional primary settlement tanks led East Gippsland Water to investigate their effectiveness for primary treatment of domestic wastewater.



**Figure 1:** Schematic of the lamella clarification process.

## 1.1 Site Description

A full-scale trial was commissioned in March 2010 at Dinner Plain wastewater treatment facility in Victoria. The facility is located in the Alpine region and, due to its popularity as a winter tourist destination, is subject to large seasonal fluxes in the quality and quantity of the influent wastewater. During normal operation, the treatment facility consists of preliminary treatment via a mechanical step-screen, followed by primary sedimentation in a conventional sedimentation tank (Fig. 2a). Primary effluent is discharged to a series of oxidation/polishing lagoons. All reclaimed water is beneficially reused for irrigation purposes. Primary sludge is digested in an aerobic digestion tank (Fig. 2a).

## 1.2 Description of the Lamella Clarifier Unit

A ‘SiltBuster<sup>®</sup> HB50’ lamella clarifier unit was acquired, the details of which are described in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Technical and operational information relating to the lamella clarifier.

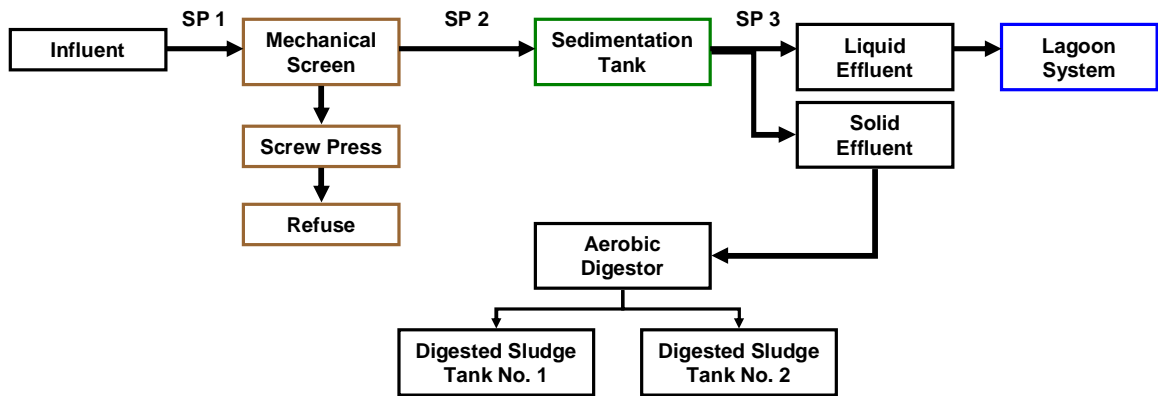
Plate Spacing Configuration (mm) <sup>a</sup>	Effective Plate Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Hydraulic Capacity (L/sec) <sup>b</sup>	Typical Operating Range (L/sec)	Sludge Capacity (m <sup>3</sup> )
25	50	20	0.2 to 14	2.2
50	25	10	0.1 to 7	2.2

<sup>a</sup> To avoid inter-plate clogging when treating unsettled wastewater, every second inclined plate was removed to allow 50 mm spacing between plates;

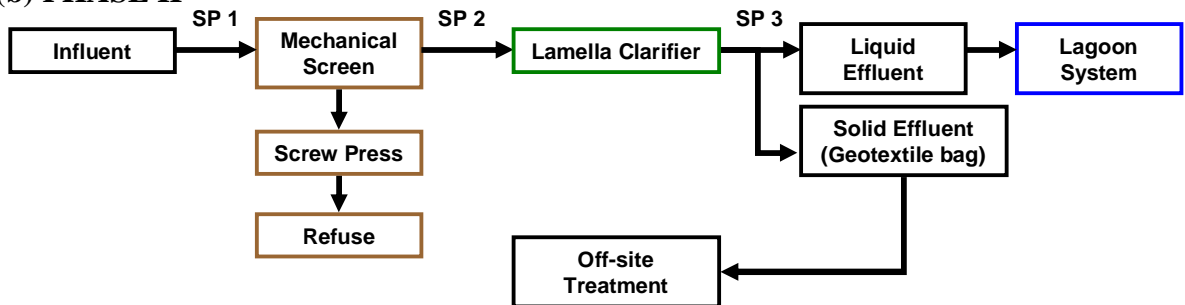
<sup>b</sup> Total hydraulic capacity approx. 7.5 m<sup>3</sup>.

Initially, sludge was drawn from the sludge hoppers twice a day, for a 30-second period. The primary sludge was pumped to a geotextile bag, housed in a banded container, with the liquid drainage from the bag discharged to the oxidation lagoons.

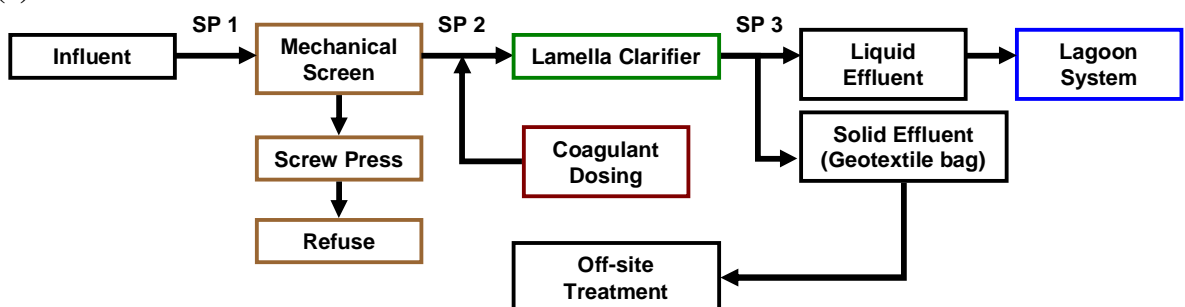
### (a) PHASE I



### (b) PHASE II



### (c) PHASE III



**Figure 2:** Schematic of the treatment process at Dinner Plain wastewater treatment facility during (a) Phase I [primary sedimentation tank online] (b) Phase II [lamella clarifier unit online] and (c) Phase III [lamella clarifier operating in conjunction with coagulant dosing]; SP1 to SP3 denotes designated sample points.

## 1.3 Description of the Trial

In order to evaluate the performance of the lamella clarifier unit relative to the existing primary sedimentation tank, testing was performed before and after the lamella clarifier was brought online. The concentrations of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>), suspended solids (SS), total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorus (TP) were determined for each sample.

The trial was divided into three experimental phases:

*Phase I:* operation of the primary sedimentation tank (Fig. 2a);

*Phase II:* operation of the lamella clarifier (Fig. 2b);

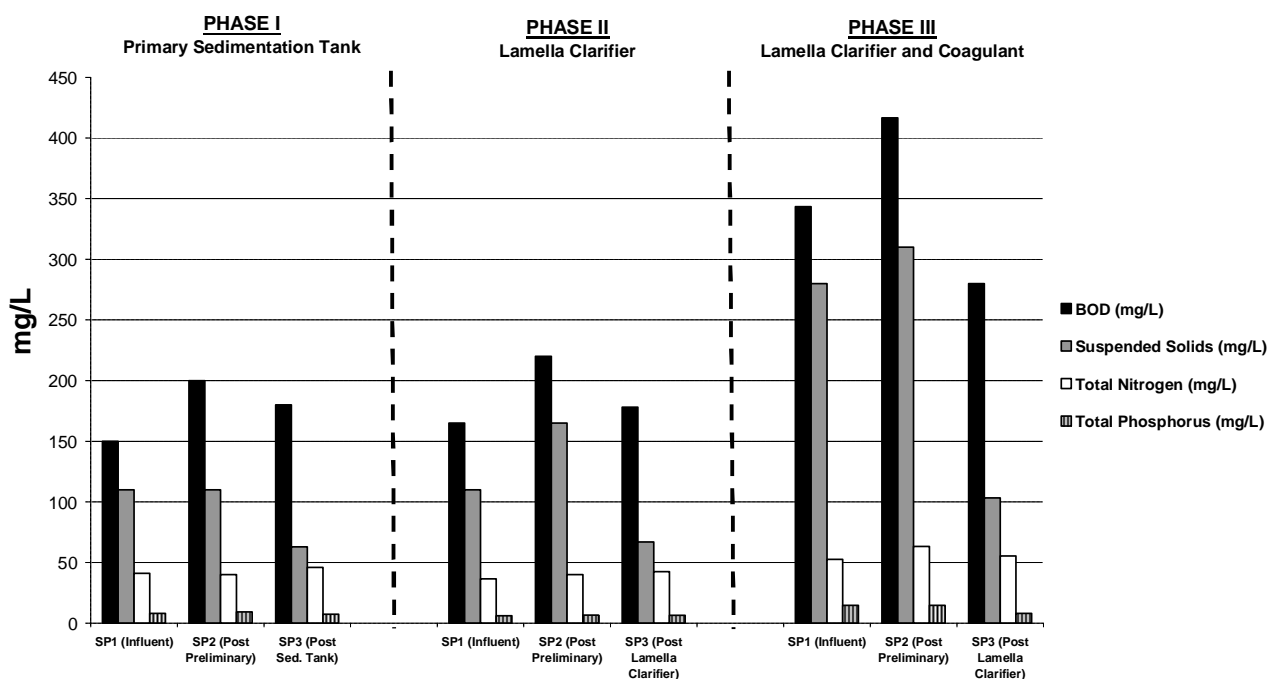
*Phase III:* operation of the lamella clarifier with coagulant dosing of the preliminary effluent (Fig. 2c).

Poly aluminium chlorohydrate (PAC 23) was used as the coagulant at a dose concentration of 30 ppm. The dosing station was located between the step screen and the lamella clarifier unit (Fig. 2c), where the preliminary effluent was pumped from a holding pit to the lamella clarifier at a rate of approx. 2.5 L/sec.

Testing was performed on samples from the influent (raw) wastewater (SP1), preliminary treatment effluent (SP2) and effluent from either the primary sedimentation tank or the lamella clarifier unit (SP3; Fig. 2). Samples were composites of at least 5 grab samples, blended over the course of the day, to represent both peak and off-peak daily flows.

## 2.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, the BOD<sub>5</sub> and SS concentrations were found to be higher in the preliminary effluent (SP2) than in the raw influent (SP1). This observation is likely due to solid material breaking up during the preliminary treatment process. As such, removal efficiencies for each parameter were calculated as the percentage reduction in value recorded between SP2 and SP3.



**Figure 3.** *Evaluation of the performance of the primary sedimentation tank (Phase I; values represent samples taken on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2010), lamella clarifier (Phase II; values represent the average of composite samples taken on 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2010) and lamella clarifier and coagulant (Phase III; values are the average of samples taken on 31<sup>st</sup> March, and 6<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2010).*