

## Consultation Summary

### 1 Historic Consultation

In 1998 the Wairoa District Council (WDC) started preparing the Wastewater Discharge Application to Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) for a consent renewal to discharge wastewater to the Wairoa River. WDC consulted with various groups within the Wairoa Community regarding this project. However, no statutory groups were approached.

Consultation began with the Wairoa District Maori Committee. This consultation eluded to two main points, these being, monitoring tests should have some specified criteria and the river mouth must be kept open.

The local community were consulted with on 14 July 1998 and six community groups were invited to attend. The discussion focused on keeping the river mouth open and the water quality of the river. A second meeting was held on 28 July 1998 and attended by the HBRC Engineering Manager to explain the reasons behind the river mouth closures and particular circumstances under which it can again be opened.

Local iwi were consulted with on 28 July 1998 with the main context of the discussion again being on keeping the river mouth open. There was only one objection relating to discharging into the Wairoa River, all other attendees were in favour of a water discharge.

From the four consultation meetings, the main points raised did not centre on the fact that treated wastewater was to be discharged to the river (with the exception of one person), nor on the quality of the wastewater discharge. However, concern was raised over the closure of the river mouth and the effects on the water quality and estuarine environment when closed.

### 2 Current Consultation Context

Whilst there is no duty to consult under the Resource Management Act (1991), through previous consenting of the Wairoa wastewater discharge (1998) and consultant experience with various other consenting projects, it was clear that engagement with the community was an important step in the consent application process. The following points assisted with outlining a consultation programme suitable for the Wairoa wastewater project.

- Recognise that the timeframes for consultation, detailed site investigations, design, and consent applications, while generous, are still finite and do not allow for endless rounds of meetings or extended periods of consideration.
- Recognise that only the Wairoa District Council and its elected members (Councillors and Mayor) ultimately have the decision-making responsibility for the project that will go forward for consenting, and that they need to make the best decisions on behalf of their entire community.
- Recognise that financial implications may limit the nature and extent of any upgrade options.
- Maintain a quadruple bottom line approach (environmental, cultural, social/recreational, and financial criteria) for ranking potential solutions and modifications.
- Ensure that all agreed solutions are technically viable and achieve quantifiable benefits.
- Ensure that all upgrade options and mitigation measures considered are clearly linked to identified concerns.
- Implement design and mitigation measures that are integrated effectively and will not cause conflicts with other measures or cause issues that previously did not exist.

- Aim to create an integrated wastewater discharge system that minimises inconvenience, and maximises benefit, for the involved and affected community.

### **3 Consultation Approach**

The project timeframe dictated when consultation began (consent expiry being May 2019, with lodging of the Best Practicable Option for consenting in November 2018). Therefore, having enough time to discuss possible options and refining the chosen option required that consultation happened in 2017. The following parties were engaged in 2017, with the intention that further consultation would take place leading up to lodging in 2018 with selected parties and means of communication:

- Hapu
- Community stakeholder group
- Community and Communication
- Interested Parties

#### **3.1 Stakeholder Group**

The Stakeholder Group was established in April 2017 and provided a common platform where representative views of different sections of the community and interested stakeholders were considered in the process of identifying and choosing the BPO for dealing with Wairoa's wastewater. This was with the view of Council seeking an option that is economically, environmentally, socially, culturally, and financially sustainable.

Through timing of engaging the Stakeholder Group in the process well before lodging, the community and council had an opportunity to discuss various options before deciding on the BPO with plenty of time to undertake conceptual design and various assessments relating to the chosen option.

##### **3.1.1 The Stakeholder Group Mandate**

- Be an active working group, functioning to create a consensus view rather than as individuals pursuing personal or sectional interests.
- Bring their diverse personal and professional experience to contribute to the assessment of issues and options.
- Provide feedback to the project team on the various options for treatment and discharge of Wairoa's wastewater.
- Be a 'sounding board' for the Council as it pursues the steps necessary to successfully select the BPO for the Wairoa Wastewater scheme and prepare the associated resource consent application(s).
- Act as the 'community conscience' for the project team.
- Provide feedback on the direction and methods of public engagement to be undertaken and assist with consultation by sharing information (where appropriate) with relevant parties.
- Ensure that the option chosen considers the outcome of public participation

Whilst it was intended the Stakeholder Group would provide valuable input to the project, the final decision of how to proceed remains the responsibility of the Elected Council.

##### **3.1.2 Membership**

Membership to the Stakeholder Group was voluntary with membership invited from the following:

- Tangata Whenua x 3
- Wairoa District Councillors x 2
- Business Representative x 1
- AFFCO Representative x 1
- Community Members x 2 (one youth and one senior member)

Note: individuals were invited to join the Stakeholder Group based on the role they fulfil within the authority or organisation and not on the basis of their individual interests.

### **3.1.3 Timeline**

The Stakeholder Group operated for a fixed term (April 2017 to November 2017) and enabled adequate time for the group to select a BPO and for this to be reported to Council.

Consultation through the Wairoa Wastewater Stakeholder Group involved an extensive series of meetings and group communications as well as visiting several neighbouring Wastewater Treatment Plants. Technical reports have been presented at the meetings and the group's aspirations, values, and evaluations of options have been extensively discussed.

The key values for determining the preferred discharge option expressed by the Stakeholder Group members have been affordability and cultural values. They acknowledged the fiscal constraints facing the community and that any changes to the current wastewater system need to be technically justified, especially if there was to be an increase in rates. Acceptable annual rate increases were seen to range from \$20 to \$400 per ratepayer. To assist with putting this in perspective, a \$200 rate increase could result from a \$5M project if the Council borrowed all the needed funds. For many on the Stakeholder Group a \$200 rate increase was considered too much.

### **3.2 Hapu**

Two hui-a-hapu's were conducted in 2017. The first on the 30<sup>th</sup> July at Te Rauhina Marae. This outlined the Wastewater system and its issues, the process of consenting and community input, potential options and a holistic view of river.

People were grateful for the approach council took that looked at improving the health of the river. There was a strong desire to see wastewater removed from the river and to see some form of land discharge. Other concerns included the cost of consenting for future discharge and needing to provide hapu with background reports to show the science behind the environmental effects of the current discharge and future discharges.

The second hui-a-hapu took place on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at Whakiraangi Marae. Discussions revolved around what the community want and what options there are for wastewater discharge. This hui provided the opportunity to discuss the package option that was chosen and included improved treatment and irrigation over time, including catchment advocacy. Attendees gave their view that improving the health of the Wairoa River was most important and the idea of incorporating a catchment programme in the package was praised.

### **3.3 Community and Communication**

Community meetings were an important part of this process and acted as a sounding board to inform council of the direction and values that are important to the Wairoa Community. The initial community meeting took place on 31<sup>st</sup> July at the Wairoa Memorial Hall. This gave council the opportunity to outline the project and hear the community's view. There was a consensus to have wastewater discharge removed from the river and to improve reticulation around the town to avoid unwanted backflows onto private properties.

The second public meeting took place on 28<sup>th</sup> November at the Presbyterian Hall and allowed council to put forward the package option and to gauge the community's reaction and feedback on the chosen system. Community feedback was positive, with the thought that there will be improved treatment and a trend towards more land based discharge and an improvement to river health through a catchment programme.

Further to community consultation, several newspaper articles featured in the Wairoa Star and Gisborne Herald throughout 2017 outlining various aspects of Wairoa's wastewater and the process of consenting. This included articles outlining issues with river health, community concerns about the current discharge and informing the community of the role of the Stakeholder Group in the consenting process. Additionally, the WDC website was updated in November 2017 with a page specifically dedicated to the wastewater project. This included technical information and outlined the process to date and the next steps in the consenting process.

### **3.4 Interested Parties**

During 2017, updates were provided to the Maori Standing Committee (MSC), Department of Conservation (DOC), Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) and the Hawke's Bay District Health Board (HBDHB). These updates provided the opportunity for these parties to speak up about any issues that may affect their own values. These updates provided an avenue to inform these parties of the process ahead (with a focus on consultation), the options chosen, and the final outcome from consultation. Initial meetings began late 2016 (HBDHB) and early 2017 (HBRC, MSC).

Follow up meetings were held with HBRC and DOC in October 2017 to update these parties on the chosen options before going into the final couple of stakeholder meetings and community consultation to determine the chosen option in November 2018.

In February 2018, DOC, HBRC and HBDHB were brought together to discuss the chosen BPO option that had been approved by WDC in January 2018. This provided the opportunity to discuss any concerns going forward with this option.

Members of the Stakeholder Group also reported back to the MSC, so were able to provide updates on a regular basis throughout 2017.

## **4 The Package and Subsequent Consultation**

A Package of proposed works was presented to both the Stakeholder Group and to the community at public meetings for feedback in November 2017. It was also presented to a Council workshop in December 2017. The concept of the Package has been presented on the Council's website, in several newspaper articles and through social media.

At each engagement point, requests have been made by Council staff for views and opinions of alternatives or different directions. There has been unanimous general support for implementing the Package and very little feedback seeking changes to the Package details.

Since the chosen BPO option includes a continual discharge to the Wairoa River, consultation with Customary Marine Title groups and associated hapu was an important step which was initiated in May 2018 (see attached letter). The limited feedback from these groups did not express any concerns or request changes to the proposal. These groups have been sent the consent application on the day of consent lodgement with HBRC.

Other groups consulted include DOC, HBDHB and HBRC, all of whom have been supportive.

Additionally, since land discharge is a preferred option in the package, local interested land owners have come forward registering an interest to utilise wastewater as a form of irrigation across their properties. Separate consenting applications are underway to apply for a discharge to land for these properties. This process requires its own consultation and any potentially affected neighbours and hapu may need to be notified of the proposed activities.

Further, updates to WDC councillors and the MSC are proposed to continue on a regular basis through this year and will include updates to the newly formed Infrastructure Committee.

On 13 November 2018 the outline of the consent application for a surface water discharge, and how it relates to the already approved package, was presented to the WDC Infrastructure Committee. The same presentation was given to a meeting of the Stakeholder Group. Both meetings accepted the strategy of the consent application and the consents being sought. Further, on 14 November 2018, the DHB was met and the same summary presentation was provided. These recent meetings affirmed the proposal of ongoing river discharge while adopting a wider catchment approach to improving Wairoa River health.

14 June 2018

Good Earth Matters  
C/- Grey Wilson  
23 Tiniroto Road  
RD 5  
FRASERTOWN 4160

Attention: Grey Wilson

Dear Grey

**CUSTOMARY MARINE TITLE CLAIMANT CONSULTATION REGARDING RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATIONS FOR WAIROA'S TREATED WASTEWATER DISCHARGES**

As you are aware, on 9 January 2018 Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC), under s88 of the RMA, rejected Wairoa District Council's (WDC) application for discharge resource consent for the riverbank overflow discharge because of a lack of consultation with Customary Marine Title (CMT) applicant groups prior to lodging the application. In response to HBRC's letter, on 15 May 2018 Jamie Cox of WDC wrote to each nominated representative of the various CMT applicant groups (as listed by HBRC) describing the entire suite of wastewater discharges for which resource consents will be sought and seeking their feedback. A copy of this letter is attached.

There have only been two responses to date, and both of those were expressing interest in gaining a better understanding of the discharges. Phil Lake of LEI phoned one representative to discuss the proposal and overall their views appeared to be supportive of the proposal. The other representative expressed an intention to meet LEI staff and then with Jamie Cox of WDC but they never made contact to arrange this meeting nor did they visit WDC offices. Neither of these CMT representatives have subsequently contacted ourselves or WDC to express any concerns or provide any other feedback.

On the basis of this lack of interest and/or concern from CMT applicant group representatives, we believe that WDC have now fulfilled the s62(3) of the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 requirement to notify and consult these parties prior to lodging an application for resource consent which may affect their interests.

Please contact me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely

**Low Environmental Impact**



Hamish Lowe  
hamish@lei.co.nz



## **CMT Consultation Regarding Wairoa's Wastewater Discharges**

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### **Enclosure**

» **Consultation letter sent to CMT applicant group representatives**

### **Copy to**

» **Jamie Cox at WDC**



# WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL

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E [administrator@wairoadc.govt.nz](mailto:administrator@wairoadc.govt.nz) A Coronation Square, Queen Street,

Wairoa

[Sent by Email : Post]

15 May 2018

Customary Marine Title Claimant Group  
Address 1  
CITY PCode

Attention: Name

Dear Name

## WAIROA WASTEWATER DISCHARGE CONSULTATION

Wairoa District Council operates a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) for the Wairoa urban community. It currently discharges the treated wastewater into the Wairoa River near the coast, but its resource consent to do so will expire in May 2019 and Council needs to seek new discharge consents soon.

Council have engaged Lowe Environmental Impact (LEI) to assist with developing a long-term solution to their wastewater discharge and to seek the relevant resource consents to authorise the discharge of treated wastewater.

As a Customary Marine Title applicant, Council is required by the RMA to consult with you prior to lodging a resource consent with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council for any wastewater discharge to, or potentially affecting, the coastal marine environment. You may be aware of this project and may have attended previous consultation meetings, but we are specifically contacting you now as a Customary Marine Title applicant to initiate this consultation and to seek your feedback on the proposed discharges.

### Wairoa's wastewater system

The Wairoa wastewater treatment system comprises reticulation (pipes) and pump stations that collect and transfer the raw wastewater to the WWTP, which then discharges the treated wastewater into the Wairoa River, as shown on the attached map. The WWTP was constructed in 1980-81 and its discharge only occurs during out-going tides between 6 pm and 6 am each night except when large storms force it to discharge outside those hours (larger storms drive continuous discharges for a few days). It has recently been found that the main discharge pipeline can't always cope with the flow needing to be discharged from the WWTP, and a manhole near the edge of the riverbank overflows to release the excess volumes.

The pump stations can also overflow during large storms, as the pumps and reticulation can't contain the wastewater flows which are dominated by stormwater that has entered the leaky reticulation. Council is fixing the leaky reticulation and upgrading the pumps to reduce the flows through the wastewater reticulation system, but this won't be fully effective for some years into the future; extreme storms will probably always overload the system. It is important to note that the Wairoa River is flooding when these overflows occur and that the overflows are mainly stormwater, not raw sewage.

Previous studies have shown that the environmental effects of the discharges are less than minor and difficult or impossible to detect within the river. However, Council recognises that they cause public health concerns and are offensive culturally as well as to the wider community. Discharges to rivers are less acceptable nation-wide than they were 20-30 years ago, and national RMA standards are driving Councils to stop discharging treated wastewater into waterways.



## Consultation to date and development of plans for the future

Since early 2017 Council has consulted with the local community through a stakeholder group, hui-a-iwi, media publicity, and public meetings. The stakeholder group were presented with detailed information about the existing system and its challenges and key constraints, and then given the opportunity to identify their key values and aspirations for the future system. A large number of possible options was narrowed to a small group, and then they identified and refined a preferred integrated solution. The public meetings in August and November 2017 were presented with summarised information from the stakeholder process and invited to have their say.

The outcomes of both the stakeholder group and public consultation were that a package of measures was widely endorsed by the Wairoa community. The key aims were to implement changes over a long timeframe in an affordable manner that would maximise irrigation of treated wastewater to farm land and reduce or ideally cease the discharges to the river. Along with these measures they endorsed actions in the upstream rural catchment to improve the river's water quality before it reached Wairoa.

## Proposed changes to the wastewater system

In February 2018 Council agreed to implement a package of measures as summarised below which reflected the outcomes of the community consultation.

<b>Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements</b>	<b>Wastewater Irrigation</b>	<b>Catchment Advocacy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Extra treatment</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Filtration - sand/media to remove algae and particulate</li><li>• Disinfection - Ultra Violet Light Treatment to reduce bugs even further than current treatment</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Reticulation upgrades</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sewer pipe replacement</li><li>• Pump station upgrades</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Discharge management</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ceasing illegal connections</li><li>• Add storage to allow for continuous slower discharge rate</li><li>• Maintain existing discharge</li><li>• Make upgrades</li><li>• Change to 24/7 discharge</li><li>• Make changes over time</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Irrigate neighbouring land</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjacent land</li><li>• Potentially council land including Landfill forestry</li><li>• Other farmers in area as needed</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Provide some storage to reduce summer river discharge</b></li><li>• <b>Develop over time based on willingness and funding</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Contribute to driving catchment improvements</b></li><li>• <b>WDC to be part of catchment decisions</b></li><li>• <b>Work with HBRC and community to make changes</b></li><li>• <b>Work with community to create opportunities</b></li><li>• <b>Partial funding of catchment administration</b></li></ul>

The aims of the integrated package are:

- to reduce the flows needing pumping and treatment so that pump station overflows cease and treatment can be more effective;
- to disinfect the treated wastewater so it avoids public health concerns when discharged to the river;
- to store treated wastewater for irrigation and to extend the timeframe for ceasing all discharges to the river; and
- to extend irrigation schemes so that the nutrients and water are beneficially recycled and to reduce discharges to the river so that they only occur during wetter seasons.

In addition to the package, the riverbank overflow discharge will continue to occur until it is resolved by reducing wastewater flows and increasing the river discharge outlet's capacity.

## Consenting requirements

Council needs to obtain a short-term consent for the riverbank overflow discharge and long-term consents for each of the irrigation schemes, each pump station overflow, and the main discharge outlet. The focus for local consultation to date has been on the long-term consents, but the short-term discharges are also relevant for you as customary marine title claimants.

## **Sources of further information and how to give us your feedback**

There is a lot more information including technical reports and community feedback on our website [www.wairoadc.govt.nz/services/water/wastewater/wairoa-wastewater-project/](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/services/water/wastewater/wairoa-wastewater-project/) so please feel free to browse through the available information to understand more details of our proposal.

Please contact Hamish Lowe at LEI (phone 06 359 3099 or email [hamish@lei.co.nz](mailto:hamish@lei.co.nz)) to provide your feedback on these proposed wastewater discharges or if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Jamie Cox  
Tumu Mataarotanga/Engineering Manager  
**Wairoa District Council**

[jamie@wairoadc.govt.nz](mailto:jamie@wairoadc.govt.nz)

