



Wairoa In Focus

Your Community, Your Future

Solution sought for Wairoa wastewater woes

Cultural considerations will play a significant part in the development of a plan to turn Wairoa's ageing wastewater system into a modern setup that will serve the town well into the future.

Last month, Council approved the spending of \$350,000 from depreciation reserves to go towards investigations into wastewater reticulation inflow and infiltration within the town.

These preliminary investigations will involve extensive work such as surveying with CCTV and smoke testing. Once the investigations are carried out, council staff will have a very good understanding of all the issues, as well as have various options to move the project forward.

Part of the initial investigations will be to look at the cultural implications of developing a new system.

WDC's Maori Standing Committee have resolved to advocate on behalf of tangata whenua in regards to protecting the river, which is central to spiritual and physical wellbeing, as well as to tribal identity.



Recent stormy weather serves as a perfect example of a situation where the Wairoa Wastewater system is placed under pressure. Preliminary investigations into a solution for the town sewer problems will begin soon.

As part of the WDC, the committee will be actively involved in the process to bring the wastewater system up to an acceptable standard.

This will involve working closely with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council, which has the official responsibility of monitoring and

protecting the river.

Public meetings will be held throughout the process, beginning with the investigation phase.

The entire project is expected to take several years due to the complicated nature of the problem and the costs involved.

Main problems with the existing Wairoa wastewater system:

Overflows into the Wairoa River during wet weather – During heavy rain, wastewater overflows from three pump stations into the Wairoa River. There is also another overflow point downstream from the Kopu Road pump station. WDC's wastewater discharge consent does not permit these overflows.

Excessive discharges from the Wastewater Treatment Plant – During wet weather, wastewater flows into the treatment plant are six times the flows experienced during dry weather. As a result, there are times when there is inadequate storage in the ponds at the treatment plant and it is necessary to discharge wastewater to the outfall for longer durations than those specified in the discharge consent.

Wastewater overflows on private property – wastewater has been reported to overflow from gully traps on several private properties during wet weather.

Commercial cooks require licence

A feast of flavours are now available with the development of various weekend markets around the district over the past few years.

The Wairoa District Council encourages enterprising locals to share their culinary talents, and would like to take the opportunity to remind food sellers of their responsibilities to their customers.

Anybody preparing food for sale, including catering, must register at council for a health licence – a requirement under the Health Act 1956.

The process for applying for a health licence begins by picking up an application form from the WDC office and returning it with all the required details filled out. After this, Environmental Health Officer Victor Minter will be in touch about organising a time to come and inspect the kitchen where the food will be cooked.

Food prepared for sale must be made in a commercial kitchen, rather than a domestic kitchen. The major difference is that the commercial kitchen is only used for preparing food for sale – not household cooking.



Cooking commercial-style Everjean

Mr Minter will look to make sure all the basic requirements are met, including hot and cold running water, proper storage to avoid contamination and easy-to-clean work surfaces (eg no unpainted wood), as well as helping to make sure policies are in place to cover issues such as pest control and sickness. "Our aim is to

encourage people to develop their enterprises in a way that ensures the health of their customers. We want to work with people and have the resources to do this in a positive way," he said. Several Wairoa market food sellers have already obtained their health licence, and Mr Minter expected more to do so.

"If you have a health licence, you have reassurance for your customers that the food is being prepared under hygienic conditions."

Health licences are not required for fundraising events, such as sausage sizzles, which only need a permit. To avoid this being taken advantage of, there is a limit of 12 times a year that one person or organisation can make use of the fundraising permit.

Winter warmth

Freezing weather has served to highlight the need for good insulation to keep families warm and healthy during winter.

Wairoa District Council is assisting with the promotion of the Wairoa Home Insulation Programme in the interests of community wellbeing. The programme is available for a small number of homes, with the focus on homes located in the Wairoa urban area between Achilles Street, Kopu Road, Ormond Road and Kiwi Road (north). Home owners and tenants with a private landlord can apply to be a part of the programme, provided they hold a Community Services Card.

Various criteria are in place to prioritise for the programme, with top priority going to families living in homes built prior to 1978, particularly if there are children under the age of 10 living in the home, or if someone has a respiratory condition. Residents over the age of 65 will also be taken into account when assessing priority.

Application forms can be filled out through Age Concern, Kahungunu Executive, Waikaremoana Hauora, Mahia Hauora, Ngati Pahauwera Hauora or Wairoa Waikaremoana Maori Trust Board.

All applications must be completed in full, on the approved form, and will be forwarded to the selection team for final approval. Houses owned by Housing New Zealand are not included in the programme.

Last call for registrations

Dog owners have until Monday to take care of their annual registration obligations.

Dog control team leader Des Jane said property inspections will begin in September and infringement notices will be issued for any dogs found unregistered.

The inspections also gave officers a chance to check on dog welfare and living conditions.

"If you want to own a dog, it needs to be registered. We'd much rather you came in and paid the fee than us having to issue an infringement notice," he said.

Owners of unregistered dogs will have to pay \$300 plus the registration fee.

For the diary:

Council meetings:

September 13
October 11
November 8
December 13

Forum:

September 27
October 25
November 22

Maori Standing Committee:

August 26
September 30*
October 28
November 25*

*Meeting will be held on a marae

Meetings are held in the Council Chambers in the Queen Street offices and are open to the public, unless otherwise specified.

WATER WATCH

Households on both private and public water supplies need to be aware that some plumbing fittings have the potential to allow minute traces of metals to accumulate in fittings for several hours. Although the health risk is small, the Ministry of Health advice is to flush a mug full of water from the drinking water tap each morning before use.

For more information phone 838 7309 or visit www.wairoadc.govt.nz