



ATTENTION: BLUEBAY & OPOUTAMA RESIDENTS

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT UPDATE: WHAT TO EXPECT



WHAT IS HAPPENING AT BLUE BAY?

The Opoutama wastewater treatment plant infrastructure is being upgraded to ensure that the treatment is environmentally anchored and future-proofed against the summertime population increase.

What is being done at Blue Bay:

- Installation of underground storage tanks at the self-contained vehicle dump station.
- Upgrade of the wastewater treatment process to better treat wastewater which will improve the discharge quality of the water.
- Expansion of the underground discharge field.

What to expect during this time:

- What is that smell? In late August, you may be able to get some hints of odour from the plant when the main tank lid is lifted to decommission the existing system and install the new treatment system within the same tank.
- Noise from power tools can be expected, such as concrete cutters being used within the main plant facility.
- An occasional hiab and truck will also be used also during the plant upgrade. Larger machinery will be used for construction of the discharge field
- Increased traffic flow can also be expected at times through Blue Bay with work vehicles travel to and from site, and parked on site.

KEY POINTS

UPGRADE TIMEFRAME

June – November 2021

HOW THIS MAY AFFECT YOU

Slight odour at times from the plant

Noise from trucks and construction equipment

Work vehicles parked and driving through Blue Bay and outside of the treatment plant

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

More information can be found on the following information sheet, on the Wairoa District Council Wastewater webpage, or call the Council on (06) 838 7309

OPOUTAMA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Projects planned to improve the wastewater system at Opoutama:

- 1: Installation of underground storage tanks at the caravan dump station.
- 2: Upgrading the wastewater treatment plant to improve discharge quality.
- 3: Expansion of the underground disposal field beside the treatment plant.

WHAT is being done to improve the treatment process?

1. *Installation of underground storage tanks at the caravan dump station.*
 - Two underground tanks are to be installed at the location of the existing caravan dump station near the toilets in Blue Bay (see attached plan). This will allow the caravan dump station to reopen.
 - There will be no discharge to the surrounding environment as the effluent will be contained within the tanks and pumped out and transported to the Wairoa Wastewater Treatment Plant when full.
 - An alarm will notify WDC staff via SCADA when the tanks need emptying.

2. *Upgrading the wastewater treatment plant to improve discharge quality.*
 - The new treatment system being installed harnesses the power of natural, environmentally friendly bacterial processes to treat the water better than what is currently being done.
 - The existing concrete tanks will be reused to house a new Advanced Fixed Bed Biological Treatment System.
 - The tank lids will be taken off so that the existing, ineffective equipment can be removed.
 - New tank partitions, biological media, aeration, and associated equipment will be installed and commissioned, to remove more harmful nutrients from the water.
 - A temporary side-stream process will be used to treat the flow of wastewater during construction to ensure no decline in quality.

3. *Expansion of the underground disposal field beside the treatment plant.*
 - The underground disposal field works like an underground drainage system where the treated water is evenly spread through the ground. The microorganisms growing and living in the soil and the vegetation of the disposal field treat the water again to make it even safer.
 - This extra discharge field will not have any negative effects on the environment.

- The new disposal field will be similar to the existing disposal field which consists of a series of 25mm diameter plastic pipes evenly distributed over top of 1m depth of 100-150mm diameter clean stone wrapped in drainage cloth.
- The location of the upcoming disposal field expansion is shown in green below.



Figure: Locations of existing and proposed disposal fields.

WHY are these changes needed?

1. *Installation of underground storage tanks at the caravan dump station.*
 - The two tanks will allow for effluent to be contained and tested, and to enable Wairoa District Council to reopen the dump station. When the tanks are full, the effluent will be transported to the Wairoa wastewater treatment plant for treatment and discharge.
 - Collecting the effluent in these tanks will give the Council the opportunity to test the types of waste being disposed from the caravans.
 - HBRC have confirmed this project does not require a resource consent as there will be no effluent discharged to the environment.
2. *Upgrading the wastewater treatment plant to improve discharge quality.*
 - The wastewater treatment plant is currently not operating correctly and therefore not treating the effluent to an environmentally safe level – the bugs in the water are not being removed properly before being dispersed through the disposal field. The upgrades to the treatment system will fix this.

- The water being discharged from the plant is tested monthly, as well as the ground water and coastal waters nearby to check for any impact to the environment from the disposed water. The testing shows that there is no negative impact on the receiving environment or on seafood.
 - The purpose for these upgrades is solely based on the discharged water results not being good enough. However, no evidence has suggested that the environment has been negatively affected to date.
 - HBRC have confirmed that the resource consent variation to provide for the upgrade has been processed on a non-notified basis and no consultation or engagement is required.
3. *Expansion of the underground disposal field beside the treatment plant.*
- The expansion of the disposal area (refer green highlight in picture) is allowed for and identified in the existing resource consent and will reduce the likelihood of any surface runoff or surface ponding in the area.
 - The amount of treated water going into the ground of the disposal field (refer orange highlight in picture) is at times higher than the 50mm/day application rate that the resource consent allows for, and frequency of this occurring will increase due to ongoing development in the area.
 - Opoutama has historically attracted and continues to attract a large population during the holiday period, meaning the wastewater flows to the plant have increased, therefore enlargement of the disposal area is required to ensure compliance.
 - As more of the development at Blue Bay has been established, the volume of effluent discharged has begun to exceed the allowable limits and will continue to be breached more frequently in future. The need to expand the disposal field is clear.
 - HBRC have also confirmed that there are also no conditions on either the land discharge or air discharge consents, therefore no additional engagement or consultation is required.

HOW is the work being done?

- One of the best parts about this work is that it is not funded with ratepayer's money – these improvements are government funded from the Three Waters Stimulus Package that Wairoa was granted to improve our water infrastructure.
- Small cranes, excavators and concrete trucks will visit from time to time. Some shipping containers and equipment will be temporarily stored on site.
- There will be no impact or changes to the roadway access at any point during construction.
- There will be occasional noise from power tools.
- There may be evidence of some odour for a short period when the tank lids are removed.

WHEN is the work being done?

- Work will be undertaken at varying times from June to November 2021.