



Further treating wastewater sediment will improve freshwater quality

In our September 2022 update, we outlined the proposal for a new consent for the Featherston wastewater treatment plant that Wellington Water is developing on behalf of the South Wairarapa District Council.

Since then, we have been working with the Council and mana whenua and listening to community feedback as we test and refine the proposal before lodging the consent application with Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) in January 2023. Here's an update on feedback and progress to date:

Community feedback

Through our community drop-in session and online feedback, some key themes have emerged:

Land treatment trial – People have been concerned about how treated effluent will be applied to the land. We can confirm it will be applied directly onto the ground or below the surface - no spray irrigation will be used. Once applied to land, natural processes in the soil and vegetation will provide additional treatment and help keep nutrients in the treated effluent out of freshwater.

Wetland and adjacent vegetated area – People have supported the proposed use of a wetland, especially a raised wetland, to filter and provide additional treatment of the wastewater prior to being discharged into Donalds Creek.

Affordability of the project – People generally understand that the scale of the proposed upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant needs to be managed given the small rating base and the wider network issues (e.g. inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the wastewater network) that need to be addressed within the district.

Your feedback and queries are welcomed. Visit the website below to complete and submit the feedback form.

Removing sediment a key focus

A key change to our proposal is a greater emphasis we're putting on removing sediment from wastewater, before its discharged to the environment. This is a change to the original consent proposal, which focused our treatment processes on reducing ammonia levels.

We are making this change after considering advice from technical experts at the Greater Wellington Regional Council, who confirmed that focusing treatment on removing sediment will achieve the greatest environmental outcomes, over other affordable options outlined including ammonia treatment. This is because the sediment was having a greater impact on water quality and clarity compared to ammonia, and therefore reducing the sediment concentration is expected to result in greater improvements in Donalds Creek and, ultimately, Lake Wairarapa water quality.

While the focus is on removing sediment, the proposed wetland and vegetated area will help reduce ammonia levels through a natural treatment process.

Check out the proposal again in the September 2022 update at:
www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp/documents

A key value is **Te Mana o te Wai** – the vital importance of water, and the protection of the health and wellbeing of our freshwater

Visit wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp for information and to provide feedback.