

Three Waters News

News, views and updates on issues relating to drinking water, wastewater and stormwater in metropolitan Wellington

What is a Whaitua and a Whaitua committee?

A Whaitua is an area or catchment. A Whaitua Committee is a group of representatives from Iwi, territorial authorities and community representatives who develop policy for a whole of catchment approach to improving water quality. In December 2014 Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua Committee was established and is working towards producing a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) which will be presented to Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) in 2017. The programme will contain recommendations for provisions for the Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua chapter of GWRC's Natural Resources Plan, and for work programmes for the integrated management of land and water resources within the catchment.

Where did the Whaitua Committee come from?

The Whaitua Committee comes as GWRC's response to the Government's National Policy Statement on Freshwater (NPS-FM) which requires regional councils, in collaboration with the wider community and iwi, to set objectives and limits for freshwater quality and quantity (the amount of water that can be extracted).

What are Objectives and Limits?

A freshwater objective describes the intended environmental outcome(s) – for example, the Whaitua Committee may wish to either improve or maintain the current state of a freshwater body (stream or river).

A 'limit' is the maximum amount of resource use available which allows a freshwater objective to be met. What this means in relation to water quality is that a 'limit' is the total allowable amount of contaminants at one point within a catchment. For water quantity, a limit is the allowable 'take' of water within a water body (including groundwater).



Fun in the sun - Porirua Harbour

What does this mean for Wellington Water?

As an entity which discharges contaminants through our stormwater and wastewater network into freshwater bodies and also as the supplier of the region's bulk water, the Whaitua process will significantly influence the 'how' of 'what' we do. Wellington Water will be required to meet the objectives and limits and in doing so will be working alongside iwi, councils, community and other stakeholders to meet those objectives.

Limits and objectives will be set in what the NPS-FM calls Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) which is simply a small catchment within a wider catchment. For Wellington Water, this means that we will have to start managing our wastewater and stormwater discharges and water takes in terms of their effects on the objectives and limits set within an FMU and also the wider catchment. This will require us to take a much more holistic approach to managing our three waters network and its effect on freshwater.



Whaitua catchment area

Major milestone for Prince of Wales/Omāroro reservoir

The Wellington City Council has unanimously granted the easement under the Town Belt Act for the construction and operation of the proposed Prince of Wales Park/Omāroro reservoir.

This is an exciting and significant milestone for the project and allows us to proceed to the next stage of lodging the Resource Consent; which we expect to do mid-to-late September.

In granting the easement, councillors acknowledged the concerns raised by some of the submitters during the process. But, ultimately, they agreed that the project is an important component of making Wellington a more resilient city.

This is also a landmark decision, the first easement to be granted under the new Town Belt Act 2016. As such it has been a valuable learning process for all parties that will benefit future projects.

For Wellington Water and our project partners, the top priority has been engaging with the community every step of the way, with the greatest integrity and transparency – something the Wellington City Council commented on in granting the easement.

So, we look forward to engaging further with the community as part of the resource consent process, which will include a third public information ensuring they have all the information they need to understand the next stage of the project.

Progress on works around proposed Prince of Wales/Omāroro site

With the consent process continuing for the proposed Prince of Wales/Omāroro, we are making good progress with associated work around the site.

Harbour bores fresh water success

The first exploratory harbour bore has been successfully completed, discovering water in sufficient volume that it could be used as an emergency supply.

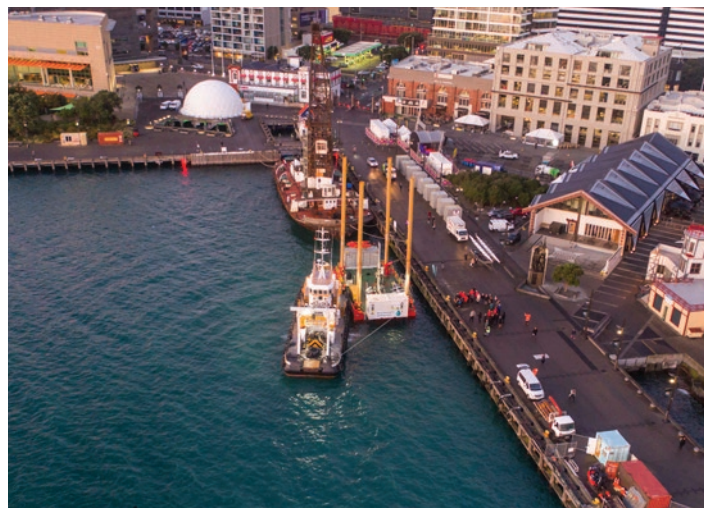
The barge and drilling rig Tuhora found freshwater in both the upper Waiwhetu and the Morera aquifers in this first bore at a site approximately 800 metres off the Miramar Peninsula.

The fresh water found would require treatment to be used for drinking, as early tests have identified levels of manganese, iron and ammonia.

The bore hole has been grouted to protect against any cross contamination between the upper and lower sections of the aquifers and any seawater contamination.

The first bore has also been a scientific success with core samples of the seabed collected for scientific research by our project partners GNS Science. The data will provide first ever insights into the geological nature of this areas of the seabed.

Drilling at a second site, near Matiu/Somes Island is expected to commence in the next few weeks.



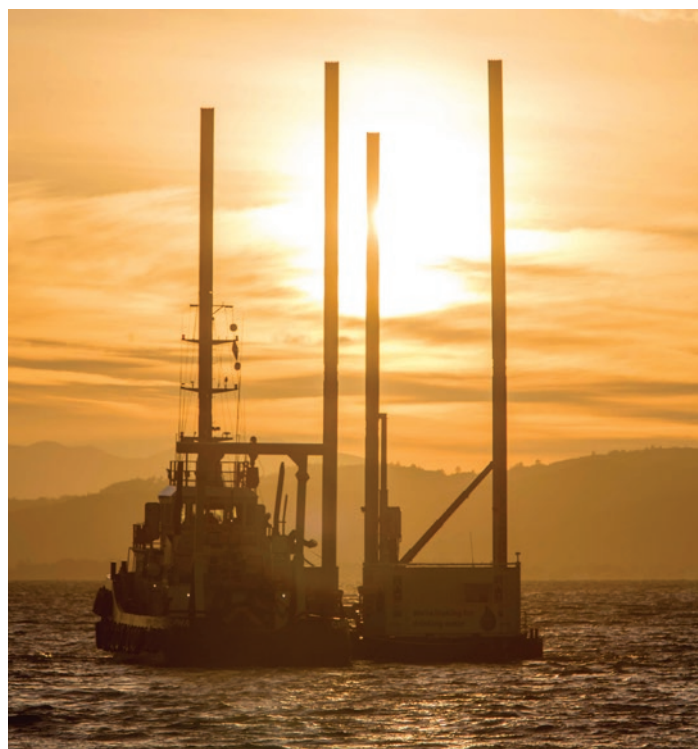
The barge leaving Taranki Street wharf

Wallace Street corridor utilities mapped

Contractors have completed investigations locating the existing wastewater pipes, water mains and power cables that supply the residents of Wallace and Rolleston Streets.

A physical inspection was required to identify the source of underground cables and inlet and outflow water pipes, and this information will inform the proposed water network improvement projects, during the construction of the Prince of Wales/ Omāroro Reservoir, including the watermain and wastewater pipe renewals, and stormwater pipe upgrades.

Engineers will now commence design work on the project which is expected to be completed and ready to share with the community by the end of the year.



Community focus – Wellington Underwater Club

The Wellington Underwater Club was established in 1951 and is the oldest active scuba diving club in New Zealand. The Club has seen many generations of divers all with a shared spirit for underwater exploration and a passion for the marine environment.

The club recently started a citizen science group called Project Baseline Wellington. Divers and snorkelers are able to take photos of the healthy kelp forest in Wellington's harbour and along the coast and then record the kelp as an environmental indicator. By sharing observations the club hopes that residents and visitors will connect with the marine environment and become active ocean stewards.

Club members have been organising and participating in shore and underwater clean ups around Wellington for many decades. One clean-up involved teaming up with Plastic Free Peninsula at the Miramar wharf. The purpose of this was to show school kids what sort of rubbish can be found underwater and how it affects marine life.

The club enjoys sharing passion and showcasing the beauty and the importance of the marine environment as they believe that this is a great way to inspire people to do little things which produce a positive impact. There are many places around Wellington where historic artefacts can still be discovered and shipwrecks, wharfs and other marine sites and interests provide fascinating insights in our maritime history.

Shelly Bay is a very popular site and just a few weeks ago the club took photos, videos and measurements documenting a big anchor and pulley wheel.

If you are interested in finding out more about Wellington's underwater environment or if you would like to join our projects or just want to go for a dive get in touch by email to wellington.underwater@gmail.com. You can also follow us online:

Wellington Underwater Club



www.wuc.org.nz



www.facebook.com/Wellington-Underwater-Club-231703176891615



Our videos on Vimeo: www.vimeo.com/wellingtonunderwater

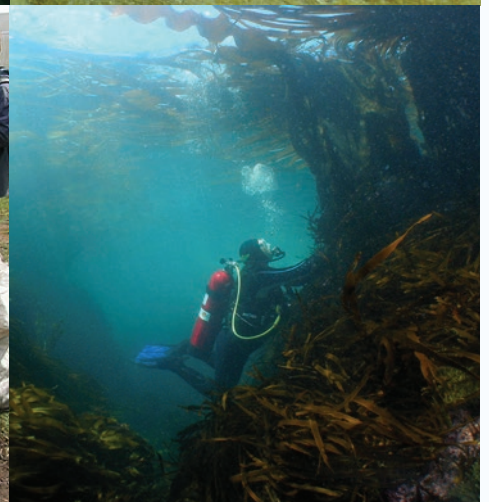
Project Baseline Wellington



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Beach Planting Day – Friends of Petone Beach

Following the story in our last newsletter about the wonderful work The Friends of Petone Beach have been doing we decided in late July to join them and Hutt City for a community beach planting day. Over a 4 hour period we managed to plant about 900 plants along the Petone foreshore. The sun came out and aside from a few sore backs the next day we all had a great time.



Lower Hutt's Water will be permanently chlorinated

Greater Wellington Regional Council recently voted to permanently treat the Waterloo treatment plant using UV and chlorine in line with international best practice. Our role at Wellington Water has always been to provide safe and healthy water to our customers and to provide good advice for our councils - that's what we've done. As you can expect there's been a lot of social media discussion and it's good to see that many of the recent posts have been "Yep we don't need another Hastings event". "I'd rather have chlorine than E-coli" is another comment.

Obviously there are arguments on both sides. When on Mike Hosking Newstalk ZB Havelock North came up in discussion a few times and it's interesting to see that when people do look at the evidence with an objective viewpoint - it really is the sensible thing to do.

The public fountains at Buick Street and The Dowse, Lower Hutt are not chlorinated. Both are being treated with UV light and on-site filtration.



Mayor Ray Wallace enjoying a refreshing glass of water

Remedial work on Papawai Stream

Remedial work to reduce erosion in Mt Cook's Papawai Stream has been completed well in advance of the fish migration.

Papawai Stream, its flows and habitat, are significant in terms of the local ecological values as it contains rare native fish and other stream life including elvers.

A gabion wall has been built to shore up the stream banks, reducing damage from the high volumes of silt and debris that get washed into it during heavy rain.

The combination of the construction of a swale, or grassy ditch, the length of the Salisbury Terrace playing field, and an upgrade of the capacity of the existing stormwater pipe, will also now significantly increase the volume of water which can be carried from the stream.

A "scruffy dome" (a grated manhole cover), was also upgraded to increase the volume of water that can flow into it.

The remedial work has already delivered benefits. Even with the recent high rainfall, flooding of nearby roads and homes has substantially decreased. And they will result in long term ecological benefits for the site of the proposed Prince of Wales/Omāroto reservoir.