

## Omapere Opononi Water Liaison Group submission 51

In response to : FNDC application number APP.002667.01.04 for the renewal of the consent for the Opononi Wastewater Treatment Plant  
NRC, Rawene Hall, 15-19 May 2023



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## Scope



- Focus is on Opononi WWTP and not specifically Kohukohu
- Whole of harbour scientific considerations
- Evidence is based on involvement with Opononi Omapere Water Liaison Group
- Cultural issues are covered by other submissions
- Reference: submission 51

## Opononi Omapere Water Liaison Group (OOWLG)



- A requirement of the environmental court ruling in 2009
- Community group made up of volunteers representing the area & hapu
- Monthly plant performance metrics disclosed
- Key issues like future developments, maintenance and failures of subsystems discussed
- Founding member John Klaricich has been involved throughout term
- Engagement was mostly productive with Monthly meetings
- Why was this allowed to be shutdown in December 2019?
- Next term should reinstate this group and involvement strengthened

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## Performance and environmental study



- FNDC performance has been poor
  - Opononi plant under abatement notice since 2016
  - e.coli, nitrogen, BOD & TSS have been exceeding the limits over the consent period
  - Maintenance of wetlands and desludging not frequent enough
  - Maintenance happened around the time of resource consent application
  - Next consent term should be no longer than three years until FNDC can prove themselves
- Comprehensive environmental study of the Hokianga Harbour is necessary
  - A whole of harbour study is necessary to determine an effective solution & prioritize resources
  - DNA source tracking of e. coli needs to be expanded
  - Limited testing done indicates agriculture is a larger problem than WWTP's

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## Affordability & Interested Parties



- Affordability
  - FNDC is considering moving from a target rate to a district wide rate
  - Multi-generational are leaving the area. How do we sustain a community
  - Bed tax is a necessity, eg Air B&B works with +500 governance bodies globally
- Central Government Policy
  - Need to wait for election in October before any strategic decisions are made
  - Major parties have very different funding models and standards are not finalized
  - Who contributes: rate payer in area, ratepayer in district or tax payer
- Interested parties
  - Environmental concerns should be relevant to all but who pays?

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## CLG and Future developments



- Land Based Disposal
  - Not suitable for all areas
  - Requires moderate gradient and absorbent soils
  - Land Based disposal maybe suitable for Kaikohe
- Other future enhancements & considerations
  - Modern wetland design
  - UV treatment on outflow
  - Minimizing stormwater infiltration
  - Climate change – no provisions for Opononi plant near sea level
  - Properties & incentives to encourage to have their own water supply and waste water processing
  - Electrocoagulation a possibility – needs to productized

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## Call to Action



- Pause until after the election in October 2023
- Affordability: consider affected & interested parties
- More environmental studies are necessary to optimize outcomes
- Next consent term no longer than three years based on performance
- Community Liaison Group should be reinstated as part of the renewal
  - Powers enhanced
- Maintenance processes need to be revised

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## Backup

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## Overview & Facts



- Omapere & Opononi
  - ~420 permanent residents
  - 1300+ people in summer
  - ~460 households paying capital costs of wastewater infrastructure
    - Sewage operating & capital availability rate = \$847.54/property/year
  - ~380 households paying capital costs of water supply infrastructure
    - Water capital availability = \$667.81/property/year (not including usage)
  - Average rates in the area are ~\$3500/annum
  - Median income 15 years & older is ~\$16000
  - Multi-generational families driven out of the area
    - Properties transition into Air B&B's