

Alissa Sluys

From: Sandy-Lee Bell >
Sent: Tuesday, 26 September 2023 9:40 am
To: Alissa Sluys
Subject: OOWWETP - comments on the proposed conditions
Attachments: SLB Comments on the revised consent OOWTP pdf .pdf; OORRA 16 September public meeting minutes final 1 pdf.pdf

Kia ora

Please find attached my Personal comments to the proposed conditions to the Opononi/Omapere Waste Water Treatment Plant renewal.

I am also the Secretary for the Opononi/Omapere Residents and Ratepayers Association (OORRA).

I would like to provide further comments on the proposed conditions, by way of providing the Minutes taken from the Public Hui held at the Opononi Hall on September the 16th 2023.

On behalf of OORRA - Please find attached the Minutes, I submit this to also be considered in the recommendations.

Nga mihi
Sandy-Lee Bell

To: Hearing Commissioners, Northland Regional Council

Submitter: Sandy-lee Bell

Submission on: Revised Consent Conditions for Opononi/Omapere Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Kohukohu Wastewater Treatment Plant

Applicant: Far North District Council

Description of activity: Short term discharge permit to wastewater

My recommendations for this renewed application for both Omapere-Opononi and Kohukohu WWTPs are:

1. The Consent Holder needs to critically evaluate why the WWTPs has been non-compliant for much of the time; this would inform what current management practices they need to improve in the short term i.e. the next three years.
2. The Consent Holder must prepare a Site Management Plan (SMP) that covers all operations and maintenance of the Opononi-Omapere Wastewater Treatment System (OPO-WWTP) and submit it to the Northland Regional Council' assigned monitoring officer and the Community Liaison Group within six months of the date of commencement of this consent.
3. It is NOT for the Consent Holder to invite representatives and form the Community Liaison Group (CLG). It is for the local people to determine the makeup of the CLG, which I believe should be led by local hapū and community representatives.
4. That the purpose of the CLG is to find a culturally and environmentally appropriate land-based treatment and discharge within the three year time frame AND to discuss and make recommendations to the consent holder on the maintenance programme and identify opportunities to improve the quality of the wastewater discharge.
5. The Best Practicable Option (BPO) is to have a LAND BASED TREATMENT and DISCHARGE. Milestones are to be set and met to arrive at this solution over the 3 year period. This includes evaluation of the Electro-coagulation process and discussion with landowners.
6. New monitoring sites are required both within the Waiarohia Stream and close to the pipe outfall within the Harbour to more accurately reflect environmental affects.
7. Recognition of Climate Change and an Emissions profile are required.
8. The Terms of Reference should be written by the CLG and they should have control of frequency times, dates and places of the meetings. Annual meetings will definitely not be sufficient to get through the necessary work.
9. That the monitoring standards are not to be lowered, but raised and that monitoring be extended to include Maturanga Māori forms of monitoring in consultation with the CLG.
10. We do not want treated wastewater discharged into the costal marine area of the Hokianga Harbour any longer than 3 years.

Regards

Sandy-lee Bell

Opononi and Omapere Residents and Ratepayers Association

Minutes from Public Meeting Saturday 16th September 2023, Opononi Hall

To discuss the Revised Resource Consent Conditions for Opononi Omapere Wastewater Treatment Plant

In attendance: Suzie Campbell (OORRA Chair), Roger Brand, Sandy-lee Bell (Secretary)

Ken Franklin, Linda Franklin, Joe Carr , Hikurangi Cherrington, Blue Newport, Dave Adams, Maria Barnes, Rae Dellaca, Kara Dodson, Heather Randerson, Sheena Ross, Ian Derbidge, Oliver Knox, Janine McVeagh, Donna Washbrook, Robert Moetara, Sam Lees, Hohepa Paati, Jessie McVeagh, Marcia Body, Erin Williams, Dallas King, Thalea Tane, Mark Ambler, Lance Byers, Janice Howe, Denise Batchelor, Rob Anderson Judy Reinken, Kathryn Darby, Bernadette Birch, Evu Taipari Paati, Yanje Klaricich, Reto Blattner, Clifford Morgan

Apologies: Ana Bercich , Linda Kaye, Hone Taimona, Gilda Hessel, Cheryl Turner.

Hiku Cherrington opens meeting

Roger Brand (OORRA Deputy Chair) begins the meeting by outlining where we are at with the Revised Resource Consent Conditions for Opononi Omapere Waste Water Treatment Plant (OOWWTP) application by FNDC (dated 16 August 2023) to Northland Regional Council; if and when granted this would allow Council to continue operating under a new Resource Consent.

There is a Deadline 12pm Friday 29th September 2023 for written responses from public submitters to these latest Revised Conditions.

The final hearing before Commissioners is on 12th October at the Opononi Hall.

Roger gave a short history of the WWTP resource consent that ran out 31 August 2019. It took the Council until late 2021 to publicly notify the application for consent renewal. 200 public submissions were received of which 198 were opposed to the renewal; there was an overwhelming call for land based discharge of wastewater.

Showed a map of Waiarohia catchment area with the WWTP location at a critical location for customary and public use. There are 460 households serviced by the OOWWTP, discharging and average total of 357 cubic metres (in August) of wastewater daily into the Harbour; this equates to 776 litres per household each day. This is not only culturally unacceptable but also environmentally unsustainable.

The health of Hokianga Harbour is a reflection of all our health and the value we place on it, with the WWTPs having a pivotal position on health of the awa, stream and surrounding environment.

Roger noted the public/infrastructure activities in close proximity of WWTP; refuse and recycling centre, lime quarry, Coastguard centre, bowling club and axeman's carnival ground making it an important centre for the local community; and close by the Whakarongotai Marae.

Roger showed photographic and Google Earth/website images of wetlands and the oxidation ponds; and Cartographic map of area around WWTP from 1850's showing grasslands and Ngati Korokoro kainga on south side of Waiarohia Stream and a current view over same area showing farmland covered in gorse and tobacco weed. This could be a possible sight for future land based discharge from WWTP.

Copy from Hone Taimona's 'Brief of Evidence' (submitted to the Hearing) was read as an example of the overriding sentiment from the Hearing.

6. REMEDY OR MITIGATION OF CULTURAL IMPACT

6.1 We recognise the need for a wastewater system to provide for the people on the existing reticulated sewage systems. However, as any human waste into our awa (rivers, streams), wai, moana or the Hokianga Harbour is absolutely unacceptable, regardless of being 'semi-treated', we categorically state that no sewage system that results in any discharge entering the Hokianga Harbour can be considered culturally acceptable.

6.2 The only acceptable remedy or mitigation is for sewage and/or any discharge of wastewater, regardless of the state of treatment, to go onto and through land. This system must also provide for the protection of mauri ora (life force) of our harbour and moana.

6.3 Hapū must be empowered to co-manage our shoreline with relevant agencies in a way that recognises the significant value as our hapu beginnings and acknowledges and protects the ancestral values located in and along the shore, waters and river mouths, and the existing natural characteristics of our rohe. Our hapū, as kaitiaki, must be involved at the highest level, according to our own tikanga, in seeking acceptable solutions for the wastewater and any associated activities.

It is now clear that the application needs to reflect:

- Hapu and community led Community Liaison Groups (CLG) to coordinate the management of the WWTPs
- No more disposal of sewage wastewater of any description into the waters of the Harbour.
- Three years consent terms with clear timelines for achieving alternative treatment and disposal to land.
- Effective monitoring to record short and longer term environmental changes.

Roger displayed two clauses from the latest resource application which are strongly contestable:

7. The Consent Holder must, within three months of the commencement of this consent, form and invite representatives from the following groups to form a Community Liaison Group:

- (a) Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa;
- (b) Te Rūnanga A Iwi o Ngāpuhi;
- (c) Nga hapū o Hokianga;
- (d) Ōmāpere and Opononi Communities (duly appointed)

and:

9b. Schedule and hold regular meetings for the duration of the Consent, at least annually unless the Community Liaison Group agrees a less frequent schedule.

In answer to '7' there is little faith in the Council being able to form this Group when it has

failed over the past four years; and for '9', annual meetings (possibly 2) over a three year term are unlikely to adequately achieve a meaningful outcome.

Though it was applauded that the proposed term of consent is now **3 years** and not, as previously 35 years.

There is currently considerable social and political change especially with the Ngapuhi Treaty settlement and the result of the coming national elections in balance. However the presence of kahika Moko Tepania and three Maori Councillors is seen as a positive influence.

We believe the only acceptable way forward for the Community Liaison Group is :

- Our CLG determining its own composition
- Our CLG writing the Terms of Reference for engagement with Council that includes the times, dates and places of meeting
- Our CLG having control over the agenda and timelines for development of an alternative treatment process and disposal to land, which includes consultation with landowners.
- Our CLG to decide on an appropriate name/title and legal status

The floor was now open and Roger invited Dallas King from Te Maui O Te Wai to speak.

Dallas King - Convenor and Kaikorero from Te Mauri o Te Wai (TMOTW)

Firstly acknowledgment to Ngati Korokoro Hapu in the house.

TMOTW are here to tautoko, to best support the aspirations of Hapu Ngati Korokoro and Community.

Thanks given to the Community and Hapu for attending this meeting.

Believes Ngati Korokoro should lead out, to be in charge of the direction through Whanau/Hapu/Tikanga.

On clause 7. of the latest recommendations -

Te Runanga o Te Rarawa; Te Runanga A Iwi o Ngapuhi, Nga hapu o Hokianga; to understand that they have a 'supportive role' in this kaupapa.

Community and Hapu to work hard at relationship building, find the common ground and put energy into that, let people know what is important.

Our sciences as Te Iwi reaches back 1000 years, this is our own understanding for our living world.

Its not OK to discharge water with excrement into the wai;

Why do FNDC persist that it goes into the water ?

This is not conducive and practical to the current climate and environmental changes.

As Tangata Whenua I will not permit my views to be dismissed - "teko is teko, and we will not except the discharge of it into the wai"

Ngati Hau and Ngati Kaharau remembers that Ngati Korokoro were there to give their support.

Shaping of the CLG is very important - layout your own terms of reference, so you can best get on with the mahi, weaving together and understanding, this is what you should aspire to. Supportive of having future meetings on Marae, they bring a totally different dynamic, like when you go into a forest you adjust your behaviour. Council are not able to manipulate the korero when on Marae.

Through robust discussions come robust outcomes.

3 years should move you to where you want to be.

Rawene treatment costs for alternative measures were originally marked out as costing 20 million - however the Electrocoagulation unit is costing them \$350k – coming from a \$1.1 million central government ‘Better Off’ funding.

Roger opens the floor to other speakers

Sheena Ross - Ngati Korokoro

Sheena Ross thanks Dallas. Our Moana has taken beating and needs to stop.

We have served notice on Council, Runanga and Iwi.

Iwi and Runanga do not live here, so why should we include them.

In support of a Hapu lead and support from the Community, if we need to go into it together we only want one rep (in reference to OORRA) to come in with us.

Invited Clifford to speak.

Clifford Morgan -Ngati Korokoro

This is a watershed moment !

How things were envisioned by our tupuna were around trade and settlement, so we have never seeded our sovereignty, we are here to stand up for our rights.

Mentioned the need to create an autonomous structure.

We don't recognise the other entities outlined in the council recommendations.

We hold a certain position, we will go side by side with the project to get the outcomes we all want.

If we get it right it will be looked upon by the rest of NZ as an example.

Mark Ambler - Ngati Korokoro

10 yrs ago meetings were held in Omanaia/Rawene and Whakamaharatanga in reference to council wanting to take water from the Waimamaku River - which we did not allow.

In reference to Te Rarawa and Ngapuhi Iwi involvement -they are not in our area.

Joe Carr from the Northern Regional Council tautoko everything Dallas said and he has support from the Northern Conservation board. He felt that Council doesn't give a shit about shit in the harbour. He discussed Council's loss of social license with the Far North community and it's poor management of the waste water treatment plants throughout its Northland.

FNDC submitted no technical data from Kohukohu scheme as they haven't been testing in appropriate places to get reliable data. Concerned about cumulative effects of discharge throughout the whole of the Hokianga Harbour and all 4 WWTPs consents should be considered processed at the same time.

Kaikohe WWTP a disgrace and should be helped by ultra violet scrubbing and disinfecting before being discharged into river and thence Harbour. At a meeting at Ahipara re WWTPs Hilda Harawira stood up to NRC re the Hokianga Harbour. Again talked about having a 3 year extension so all consents can be processed together.

Roger replied that for now we need to concentrate on the OOWWTP consent renewal.

Jessie McVeagh spoke as the Kaikohe Hokianga Community Board representative and gave an apology for Tanya Filia as the other KH community board member. Moko Te Pania and the other councillors and community board members on FNDC support the community in their fight for land based systems at OOWWTP.

Jessie McVeagh - as an Individual

On the Terms and References - make these how you want them to be.

In reference to responding to the amendments by the 29th September - you can only comment if you originally made a submission, but you can offer support through speaking on behalf of someone or party. This is a massive opportunity to make a written comment. There will be no discussions or opportunity to speak at the Final Hearing on the 12th October.

Make comment on what you individually understand about the consent.

Methods of treatment and measurements of oxidation ponds is not scientifically bound on the eco system.

All that was discussed today put it forward into the written comments. This level of agreement today has been very powerful, its a combined wonderful result.

Janine McVeagh - Offered her own written comments up for anyone to read and use as guide when returning their comments back to council. Will forward to OORRA secretary for distribution alongside minutes from this meeting.

Hohepa Paati put in a submission for the Mangamuka Bridge community for the Kohukohu WWTP. He commented on the danger of overflow discharge polluting gardens, kai moana beds and the local urupa around the Harbour. He acknowledged Ngati Korokoro. (He works the Opononi Area School) Hohepa addressed issues raised by the General Conditions 7 and 9 re Community Liaison Group and Meeting Schedule, making the community responsible for makeup and scheduling would be a big step forward for the community working together and for work under tikanga for a better world view than that supported by Council. Sovereignty was never ceded to the crown but imposed. The Treaty of Mangungu (doctrine of discovery) discussed. Mangamuka is a watershed for all playing a part; you cannot separate the wellbeing of the hapu and community from the wellbeing of the whenua.

Rob Anderson talked about the importance of oxygenation in treating wastewater. The system should be an aerobic system rather than an anaerobic system, and use Ultra violet cleaning before discharge into the harbour..

Roger Brand stressed that with any treatment system, land-based discharges were the preferred option.

Dallas King in reply to Rob; NO human water with human excrement to be discharged into the harbour under any circumstances.

Marcia Body from Utakura , discussed the water from Lake Omapere that runs into the Hokianga Harbour, this is polluted with agricultural runoff. The water at Horeke is unsafe to swim in and the Utakura river is often a bright green colour. We have to say no to further discharge into our waterways. She stressed the importance of putting in a plan together, run by Hapu to get the council to stop discharging waste water from WWTPs and overflow from Lake Omapere into the Harbour.

Bernadette Birch from Motukiore lives in Horeke, expressed worry about health of Lake Omapere. It is not normal because of all the horticultural run off. Horticulture needs to come up with a sustainable way to move forward. Ngapuhi left out of decision making process and impact of horticultural runoff not recorded. Wellness of Hokianga people linked to health of Harbour. FNDC takes reading at full tide from edge of Kohukohu wharf, this not often enough to get a good understanding of what is happening. The application for discharge to the awa from the Kohukohu WWTP is not what the community want.

Roger Brand suggested other points from the Application that needed changing or adding within our responses..

1. Council need to critically evaluate why the WWTPs has been non-compliant for much of the time; this would inform what current management practices need improvement in the short term i.e. the next three years.
2. A timeline is required that reflects what developments are needed during a three year consent term to achieve a land-based discharge of wastewater. This includes evaluation of the Electro-coagulation process and discussion with landowners.
3. New monitoring sites are required both within the Waiarohia Stream and close to the pipe outfall within the Harbour to more accurately reflect environmental affects.
4. Recognition of Climate Change and an Emissions profile are required.

But the most important outcome is the Liaison Group from Opononi Omapere hapu and community that can talk on our behalf and be responsible for directing the Council in the best way forward with our wastewater treatment system. The Ratepayers (OORRA) is supportive and wishes to be part of this Liaison Group. We are now looking to Ngati Korokoro to bring together hapu in achieving this goal.

Roger Brand thanks everyone for coming to korero and invites all to now enjoy the kai so graciously provided by the Land family.

Waiata: Pura Nei

Meeting closes 12.15pm

Addendum: Additional Material

Emails received from Hone Taimona, Ana Bercich and Linda Kaye after invitation to the Public Hui went out on the 7th September.

Kia ora,

I respectfully offer my apology for this hui due to another engagement. I believe the people of the Hokianga have indeed acted as a united front in this regard. The changes to the conditions for consent are acceptable to me, although we must still insist and lobby for the cessation of waste water discharge into our harbour.

I support the election of members to the CLG to oversee the the implementation of the consent changes and if required any other actions.

I wish you best outcomes on the day.

Nga mihi nui Ana Bercich

Thank you so much for this notification.

Unfortunately, I will be away on 16 September. I do very much want to join with you on this work. I think it's critically important that all the communities around the Hokianga work together and co-ordinate our work.

I am very concerned that the proposed revised conditions of consent for KWWTP have added the qualification of only "in the event that it is feasible" to a land-based system for Kohukohu. This totally undermines the outcome we have advocated. It also is expressly contrary to the wishes of local iwi.

I am also concerned that there seems to be a suggestion that Kohukohu representatives have already been "duly appointed" to the proposed CLG. I could be mis-reading that paragraph. I hope so, because, I don't know who they are or how they have been "duly appointed."

So, although I can't make it to the hui, I do ask that you continue to advocate for no sewage into the whole Hokianga harbour, rivers, streams, moana.

Please do keep me on the mailing list as I will do my very best to participate in person, by email and zoom.

PS, Although I can't make it to the meeting, I would very much like to be part of the CLG.
Nga mihi nui and aroha nui,
Linda Kaye

Kia ora ano raa,

Would like to render our apologies for the community hui this morning as we have a wananga at Pakanae marae today.

Our Pakanae Resource Committee supports and has always supported the recreation of a community roopu to work collectively with our local council on our water and wastewater issues and all other infrastructure matters that need a collective community response, action and movement.

We will catch up the community movement in the near future that should also hold an appropriate name in Te Reo.

Ka nui te mihi Hone