

Frequently Asked Questions

From Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee's rural landowners meeting: 12.02.18

Whaitua Committee.

When is the Committee going to explain the nuts and bolts of its implementation programme?

The Whaitua Committee is about to start looking at precise objectives to recommend for protecting and improving water quality in the harbour and streams of Te Awarua-o-Porirua whaitua. This means they will soon be talking with communities, including rural residents, about these goals. The Committee will seek to understand whether their recommendations are considered appropriate by the community as well as the ways we might reach the objectives together. We will be back in touch with dates for future engagement opportunities when the Committee have precise objectives to discuss with you.

What purpose has the economic modelling served?

The economic modelling that members of the rural community have been involved in will help the Committee to understand the potential financial impacts on farmers of the management approaches used in the scenario tests. This will complement other information considered by the Committee, such as modelling of the likely water quality improvements the scenarios could provide as well as rural community feedback. This feedback includes the challenges, opportunities and alternatives to using management approaches adopted in the scenario tests. Together this information is very important in shaping and understanding the types of recommendations the Committee will seek in their implementation programme.

How can I be involved in the whaitua process from this point?

The Committee would like to continue to work with the rural community and with experts like Greater Wellington's Land Management advisors to find solutions together on to how we might maintain and improve water quality. Look out for engagement opportunities over the next few months – the Committee will be particularly interested in hearing your feedback on their proposed objectives for the catchment.

Dates for these engagement opportunities will be promoted in due course. In the meantime you can email poriruawhaitua@gw.govt.nz if you're keen to hear more about or from the Committee.

Defining waterways.

How does GW define a waterway?

The definition of a waterway is provided under the [Resource Management Act 1991](#), which lays out that a river is a continually or intermittently flowing body of fresh water, and includes streams and modified watercourses.

What are the implications of this definition?

The way the definition of waterways affects how activities like stock exclusion or placing culverts or bridges are regulated often depends on the rule itself and the size and nature of the waterway. For instance, under the Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP), stock exclusion requirements apply to waterways defined as 'Category 1' and 'Category 2'. These are waterways defined by mapped areas in the PNRP and do not include many waterways in the Porirua catchment (you can see these mapped [here](#)). Category 1 waterbodies in the Pauatahanui catchment are the harbour (affecting the wetland and harbour edge), Duck Creek and a number of identified significant wetlands. There are no Category 2 waterbodies in the Pauatahanui catchment.

The Whaitua Committee will make recommendations about activities impacting waterways that could lead to changes to the proposed Natural Resources Plan. Any such recommendation will need to clearly identify where those waterways are located or how to identify them.

Could I be told to fence something that I don't agree is a waterway?

While there are currently only limited requirements for stock exclusion in Te Awarua-o-Porirua catchment, it is possible that there will be further requirements in the future. Over the next six months you will have the opportunity to inform the Whaitua Committee's decisions around any potential stock exclusion recommendations. Central government has also signalled interest in national regulations for stock exclusion.

The best way to establish whether there is a waterway on your property and how a rule may affect you is to do a walk over with a Greater Wellington advisor. If you are interested in doing this you can contact jamie.peryer@gw.govt.nz to talk with the Land Management team.

Water Quality Monitoring.

Where does Greater Wellington Regional Council monitor water in the Porirua catchment?

We carry out routine monitoring at nine Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour sites and three catchment stream sites (see map, next page). We also take measurements each year of sedimentation rates at 18 sites throughout the harbour. The details of our routine annual monitoring can be found in our [annual data reports](#), but broadly includes measures of water quality, sediment health, and invertebrate community health.

How does Greater Wellington choose sites to monitor?

We select sites to be representative of the environment we are monitoring (representative of the subtidal basins, or the intertidal flats). The sites should not be heavily 'impacted' by human activities as they are intended to be long-term state of the environment sites. Of course it can be difficult to find an un-impacted site in Porirua Harbour, but we don't select sites immediately next to point source discharges, for example.

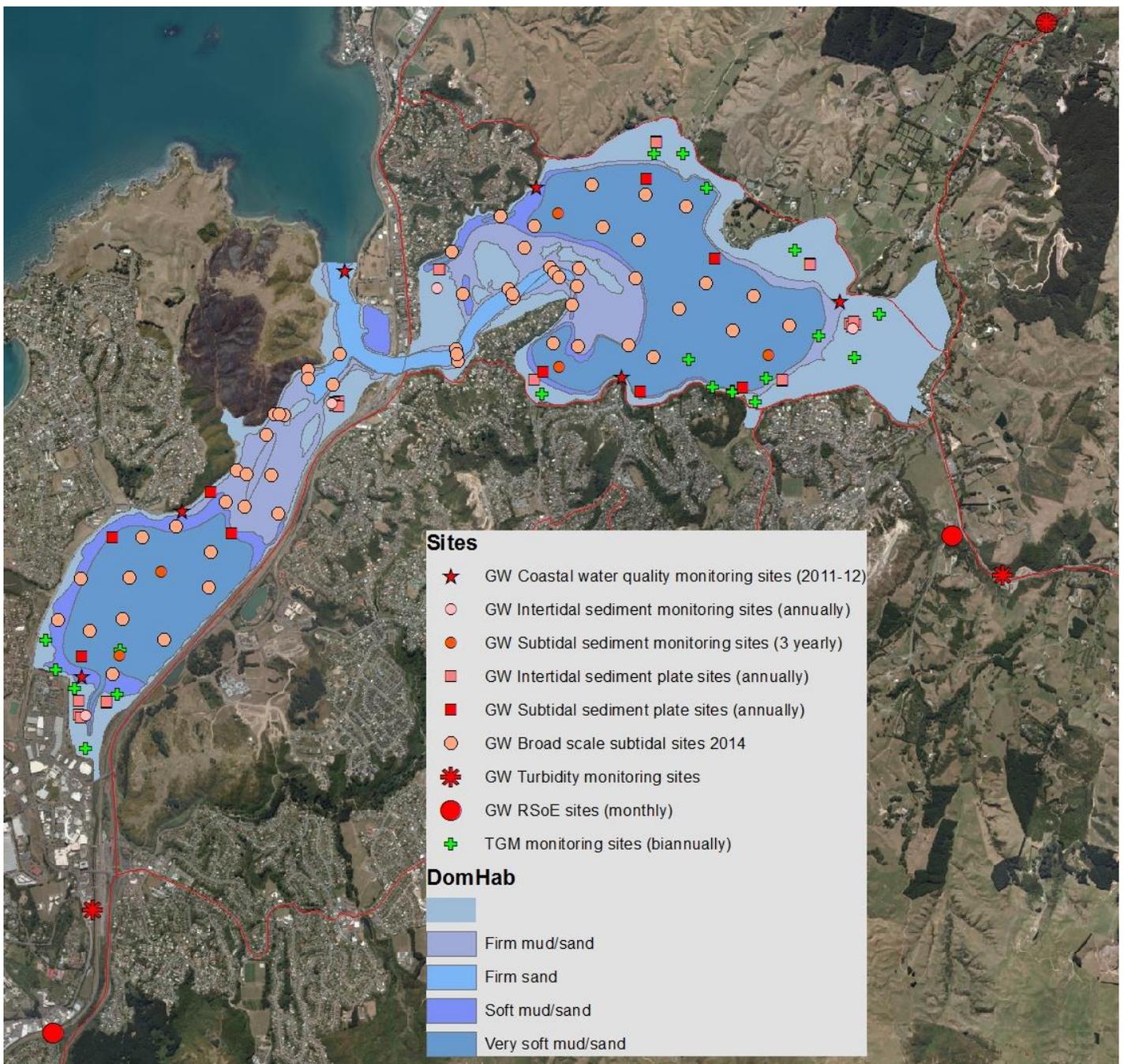
How does Greater Wellington track the source of discharge/contaminants?

Often our routine monitoring reveals a problem with water or sediment quality and this necessitates a closer look at the issue. We will then design and carry out an investigation to locate the source of the problem, the results of which can be used to direct some kind of management intervention. For example, we carried out a detailed investigation of sediment quality in the harbour in front of the Porirua CBD in 2010 to identify the

sources and extent of metal contamination. This information can then be used to manage contaminants entering stormwater.

Why isn't the water monitored as it leaves the property?

If a business or property requires a resource consent because the water discharging from their activity is expected to impact the environment, then they will need to carry out some kind of monitoring to show they are doing everything possible to reduce their impact on the environment. Water quality is not monitored on individual properties because householders are not allowed to discharge anything other than rainwater into the stormwater drains. For information about monitoring waterways on your own property, see the Citizen Science section of this document on page 5.



Above: Water quality monitoring sites in Te Awarua-o-Porirua catchment.

Fencing off/retiring land.

General information:

Retirement of land refers to the permanent removal of stock -typically with fencing- and the afforestation of that land with exotic forestry species or leaving the land to naturally revert to native species cover. With increasing vegetation there is greater cover of the land and more root systems in the soil holding the soil profile together. Over long time periods, with a nearby seed source and without major weed incursions, land that is retired will eventually return to native bush.

In an erosion control context, land retirement is a tool to change the land use from one where erosion risk is higher to one where some of the risks of erosion are mitigated. Erosion control prevents increased or avoidable sedimentation of waterways.

What are the benefits of retiring or pole planting land?

Although the initial set up costs of retiring land can be expensive, such as fencing and plant establishment, there are a number of benefits to the landowner to consider this option. A carefully planned and planted exotic forest can provide a source of income in the future through the proceeds of harvesting the timber. With forestry now being part of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), there are potentially economic benefits to a property to use a forest as a way of storing carbon. Further information on this can be obtained from the [Ministry of Primary Industries](#). Finally, allowing an area of land to naturally revert to native vegetation can be a low cost way of taking low fertility land out of livestock grazing that provides in return biodiversity benefits as well as reduced erosion risk.

Whilst there is often a perceived loss of grazing value with retiring land, steep or boggy areas often don't hold a lot of grazing value anyway. Retiring these areas can make farm and stock management easier and reduce the risk of losing stock in steep or boggy areas. Retirement of such areas can also free up resources from things such as weed control, fertiliser and time spent mustering, this resource can then be put into achieving improved production from better classes of land, and therefore overall loss of production is minimised.

The reversion of native bush can have a significant positive effect on biodiversity. Where Manuka is the dominant reversion species, there is the added benefit that these areas could be using for Manuka honey production.

Another option for treating erosion prone land where stock grazing is still required is the planting of poplar and willow poles in high erosion risk paddocks. The benefits of this approach is that it allows stock grazing to take place whilst establishing trees with large root systems that reduce erosion risk. The poles are planted with a plastic sleeve that is self-removing and prevents stock damage whilst the pole establishes. Poplar and willow poles also provide the co-benefits of stock shading and fodder during droughts.

If my land is fenced off, will it have to become a public walkway?

No, the rights of the owner do not change if land has been permanently retired and there is no requirement to create public access. Private land is still private land and the owner has full rights to exclude whom they wish and use trespass regulations. We do recognise that this may be hard to ensure when looking at large areas with multiple access points. We are continuing to have conversations about this with partners and landowners, and are happy to speak to landowners in person to discuss concerns about individual properties.

Citizen Science:

Opportunities for landowners:

For landowners wanting to monitor waterways on their own properties, basic monitoring can include easy and cheap options such as water temperature, water flow and habitat assessments (width and depth of stream, what plants are along the stream bank, pipes entering stream, etc). Macroinvertebrates and fish can be identified and counted/photographed; GWRC can provide identification guides and may be able to offer training if required. Macroinvertebrate identification and e-guides, as part of [NIWA's Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment Kit \(SHMAK\)](#), are available online -

To gain an understanding of water quality, testing of the water for nitrate and phosphate and *E. coli* can be done using test kits which can be purchased (\$45 - \$205 depending on kit). A full SHMAK kit with manual retails for \$595 + gst [from NIWA](#) - however Wellington City Council has some that can be borrowed (contact Daniela Biaggio, Daniela.biaggio@wcc.govt.nz).

Citizen Science activities ongoing in the Porirua catchment:

There's already a lot of citizen science activity going on in the catchment, with schools involved in initiatives around fish passage, inanga spawning, stream water quality, and cultural indicators. The wider community has been involved in water clarity and seagrass initiatives with the Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet (GOPI). There's also some work around the use of Manuka along stream banks and the use of 'socks' along streams with ESR (Environmental Science Research Institute).

Porirua residents have also been involved in shellfish counts in the harbour, organised by GOPI, Ngāti Toa, Greater Wellington and NIWA. They are done every three years and are the longest running citizen science initiative of its kind in NZ. To speak to somebody about citizen science opportunities in the catchment, you can contact sheryl.miller@gw.govt.nz

Get involved in Citizen Science:

Find out if your area has a community care group or community garden already established. You can check out the following websites:

<https://www.meetup.com/Community-Action-Wellington/>

<https://www.naturespace.org.nz/>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/volunteer/groups/wellington-kapiti/>

<https://wellington.govt.nz/services/community-and-culture/community-gardens>

<https://www.facebook.com/Wellington-Community-Care-Group-277385866024947/>

or pop into your local library. Alternatively you can contact Sheryl Miller at Greater Wellington: sheryl.miller@gw.govt.nz

Greater Wellington can provide advice and support for establishing a monitoring project. We have also been running training sessions for established community care groups and school groups.

Groundwater.

What do we know about groundwater in the catchment?

The geology of Te Awarua-o-Porirua whaitua only permits for limited groundwater resources.

- Shallow groundwater to depths less than 6m has been encountered along stream channels such as the Kenepuru stream and Porirua Streams. This groundwater, which is directly connected to the streams, is generally of low yield due to the silty clays and tight formations and is of poor quality due to commercial and domestic influences. Groundwater taken from this shallow source is generally related to short term dewatering for infrastructure development such as excavations for sewer, stormwater and petrochemical tanks installations.
- Relatively higher yield shallow groundwater along streams that transverse the Transmission gully expressway development such as in the Horokiri Catchment. This groundwater, which is directly connected to the Horokiri Stream, has been abstracted for dust suppression with yields as high as 5 l/s.
- Low yielding deep groundwater: Emergency bores (80-100m deep) at Postgate Park and Titahi Bay school grounds which were drilled into fractured greywacke aquifer had low yields of less than 2l/s.
- Some localised deeper groundwater resources have been identified along Haywards Road (SH58). However these resources have not been mapped or developed due to inadequate understanding of their potential.

Taking water from groundwater directly connected to surface water or from a spring is controlled by the minimum flows and allocation limits for the stream it is connected to. For example, a shallow groundwater bore taking water in the Horokiri catchment falls within the allocation limit for the Horokiri Stream.

If a groundwater resource was identified in the future, the Proposed Natural Resources Plan could be changed to reflect new knowledge. Any person wishing to take water from such a groundwater resource would need to apply for a resource consent and would have to establish that their water take would be consistent with sustaining the groundwater aquifer water is being taken from.

Greater Wellington's commitment to good practice.

How does Greater Wellington protect water quality during land-based works?

Greater Wellington is responsible for issuing consents for activities that affect water quality, such as works in the bed of a stream or discharging sediment from an earthworks site. When a resource consent is issued, compliance checks are set up. The frequency of these depends on the nature of the activity. Officers will visit a site and assess how well an activity is being carried out in accordance with the consent conditions and provide a compliance rating based on this assessment. Sometimes an activity requires more visits because of poor compliance or if the site is particularly risky in terms of causing potentially adverse effects.

What can I do if I feel there is an issue with compliance?

Outside the time that an officer is visiting, Greater Wellington relies on local people to let us know that there may be an issue with the compliance of a consented activity or if they are concerned about environmental effects. To report an activity that concerns you, phone 0800 496 734 to alert the environmental protection officer on duty. You can find out more about the types of environmental incidents we respond to [here](#).

How does Greater Wellington ensure good practice in managing its own land in the catchment?

Greater Wellington is committed to good management practice in the way we conduct our own activities and manage our land. In Te Awarua-o-Porirua whaitua, this means management of regional parks, forestry owned by Greater Wellington, biodiversity management and advice on good management in land use practices.

All of Greater Wellington's parks within Te Awarua-o-Porirua whaitua have received detailed Sustainable Land Use Plans (SLUP). Through the implementation of these SLUP's, and working closely with the Land Management and Biodiversity departments, good practice is demonstrated through farm management, riparian and wetland restoration, erosion control, biodiversity enhancements and more.

Parks such as Battle Hill display a range of good management practices and we encourage landowners to visit our parks to observe these practices. One example of good practice at Battle Hill is Greater Wellington's fish passage restoration strategy which was developed for the park, prioritising the identified barriers for remediation works. A subsequent resource consent was granted to remediate two barriers in accordance with current best practice advice. The work was completed under this consent in January 2018 and will continue to be monitored.

Porirua City Council's commitment to good practice.

What can I do if I see illegal dumping in the catchment?

During the rural landowners meeting on February 12, we heard concerns about dumping, and those concerns have been passed on to the General Manager – City and Community Infrastructure. The matter has been referred to the new Compliance Manager, and will be followed up.

If you notice dumping in the catchment, call Porirua City Council on 04 237 5089 and lodge a complaint/advice. Keep a record, and ask if Council will get back to you to advise what has been done.

What can I do if culverts are blocked and need clearing to prevent flooding?

Call Porirua City Council on 04 237 5089 and advise us of the issue. Keep a record, and ask if Council will get back to you to advise what has been done. Porirua City Council has recently appointed a new Roothing Manager, and that person will take over responsibility for the roading team and managing the Downer contract.

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour Strategy and Action Plan.

What actions are being taken with regard to the Strategy and Action Plan prior to the 2020 review?

We are continuing to implement the Harbour Strategy and Action Plan according to existing commitments and already-allocated funding for harbour-related work-plans. PCC officers have reviewed future work priorities related to the Strategy and will be reporting the outcome of their review to the quarterly meeting Harbour Strategy Joint Committee on 22 March, when the outcome of that review will be available to the public. The outcomes are likely to include more resourcing for the Land Management Advisory service, and also a greater focus on known urban contaminant sources.

The Whaitua Committee is talking about future actions. What is being done for the harbour now?

The Strategy is a multi-agency document, with PCC coordinating its implementation and servicing the Joint Committee, by agreement with the key stakeholders (WCC, GWRC, Ngāti Toa & PCC). The Strategy outlines the

agreed three objectives for cleaning up the harbour – reduce sedimentation rates, reduce contaminant inputs, and ecological restoration. There is an ongoing programme of short- and long-term work that comes under four headings:

- Regulatory – give statutory strength to the Strategy by aligning statutory documents with the strategy objectives – Eg. Regional Policy Statement (RPS), Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP), District Plan reviews, Long Term Plan (LTP), Annual Plans, Asset Management Plans (AMPs), bylaws. This includes the work of the Whaitua.
- Projects – specific and direct interventions to improve harbour health: Significant litter efforts, Land Management advice and subsidies, harbour edge rehabilitation, planting, harbour edge accessibility and amenity improved to raise public awareness of harbour and stream issues.
- Education – Business education through the ‘Take Charge’ programme to reduce industrial waste entering the harbour, improving the condition of the wastewater and stormwater infrastructure – this is a big-ticket item with a significantly increased budget for 2017/18 - to \$18M - to reduce waste contaminant overflows to streams and harbour. Significant ongoing investment in harbour/streams education programmes.
- Research and monitoring – GWRC has a monitoring programme and established baselines data to monitor changes in the harbour and inform management decisions.

How are you educating people about the harbour?

The Porirua Harbour Trust, Enviroschools and Mountains to Sea Wellington coordinate and support school environmental education programmes, largely focused around Porirua Harbour and catchment issues. Currently 43 of the 51 schools in the catchment are involved in these programmes, with active intention to reach the outstanding 12, most of which are in the upper Porirua Stream catchment. The focus has been on stormwater pollution over the past year. The programmes provide practical opportunities for schools through stream and harbour edge clean-ups, planting, neighbourhood street drain labelling and information, drain art, school art journal development and publication, and most recently design and content of harbourside interpretive panels.

The [12-part mini-documentary series](#) on Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour, ‘Living Waters’ is available to view online and still the best summary of the variety of challenges and potential solutions facing Porirua Harbour. The DVD of the series is available by request from the Porirua Harbour Trust and Pataka.

A new permanent exhibition featuring the history of Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour in the youth gallery of Pataka was opened late last year.

The Porirua Harbour Trust and Porirua City Council are partnering and underway with developing ‘rural guidelines’ for distribution or access by landowners. The aim is to provide practical advice on land and stream management, identify contact people or organisations for common issues (eg. Roding, rubbish, power etc), sources technical or funding assistance). The panel developing the draft guidelines includes rural residents and feedback will be sought from landowners when a draft is completed.