

Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant Consultative Group

Media Statement

19 September 2014

The Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant Consultative Group (“**the Consultative Group**”) held its third meeting last Saturday at Point Wells.

The Consultative Group was formed following two local open-days run by the owner of the Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant, Watercare Services Ltd (“**Watercare**”) at which feedback was sought on upcoming resource consent applications that will authorise the future operation of the wastewater treatment plant. A range of individuals and organisations from the Omaha, Point Wells and Matakana communities expressed an interest in participating in a consultative forum and so the Consultative Group was formed.

Membership of the Consultative Group is open to any individual or organisation that wishes to participate and currently includes a number of individual residents and representatives of organisations such as Omaha Beach Community Inc, Omaha Shorebird Protection Trust, Point Wells Community and Ratepayers Association, Whangateau Harbourcare Group and Whangateau Residents and Ratepayers Association.

Because the idea of a Consultative Group was seen as being somewhat novel, members considered that a key initial task was to agree a “Terms of Reference” within which the group would operate (copy attached).

The Terms of Reference state that the overall **objective** for the Consultative Group is:

“[To] participate and attempt to achieve consensus in respect of:

- a. The effects of the current and future discharges from the Omaha WWTP on the environment, including but not limited to the Whangateau Harbour.
- b. The contributions of factors other than the discharges from the Omaha WWTP that may be affecting the Whangateau Harbour and how these may change over time.
- c. Development of resource consent applications by Watercare that will enable the treatment and discharge of wastewater from the Omaha WWTP in an environmentally appropriate manner for a period of up to 35 years.
- d. Identification of other initiatives that may contribute in improving the quality of the Whangateau Harbour, noting that these may not be within the responsibility of Watercare.”

Amongst other things, the Terms of Reference also record that:

- The participation of all those with an interest will be promoted and provided for.

- All relevant information will be shared.
- A consensus outcome will be worked towards.
- The meetings will be independently chaired.
- New participants are welcomed and previously provided information will be made available to them.
- Media statements may be released from time to time through the group.
- The Consultative Groups findings are expected to be made public, either on an interim or final basis.

Watercare will be including all material considered by the Consultative Group on its website and this will go live within the next week to 10 days.

A highlight of the most recent meeting was a presentation by leading environmental scientist, Dr Mark James, who summarised his understanding of all the existing information about the effects of the wastewater treatment plant on the environment and where he believed further work was necessary (copy attached).

The next meeting will discuss his presentation and focus on obtaining stakeholder feedback.

Anyone wishing to receive further details should contact: Nicholas Woodley, Watercare, 09 539 7759