

DrainWise Putanga Wai

The challenge for DrainWise

Stop raw sewage being released into the rivers.

— Toni

😊 56 😞 3

Illegal spouting connections, surface flooding into gully traps and leaky lateral pipes on residential properties is the main source of water getting into the wastewater network during heavy rain. When that happens, some people can't flush toilets in their homes, sewage can flow back up pipes onto their properties and can spill out of manholes onto roads which is a high risk to public health. So to avoid this, we have to open emergency wastewater valves to release it into our city's waterways.

Homeowners are responsible for making sure rainwater is drained to the right place. For the last three years we've been completing inspections in the worst-affected neighbourhoods to identify where there are issues and working with homeowners to get their drainage fixed. Council has focused largely on improving both its ageing wastewater network and the capacity of its stormwater network, but the reduction in overflows is not at a level we all want.

Requirements in our Freshwater Plan, the impact on water quality in our waterways and the health of people, means tackling the issue to prevent discharges is hugely important to all of us.

Focus on public, enforce private

We'll replace 54km of old wastewater pipes in the public network, staged over the next 30 years. In the next ten years that'll mean an investment of \$15m for renewals. We'll also increase network performance with \$4m for additional jetting maintenance and surveillance for blockages to help the system to cope with extra water (and help prevent overflows in dry weather too).

As private property flooding is the main reason for sewage overflows, we propose to invest \$6m (40% of the estimated total cost) over ten years to reduce flooding on private properties. This

investment would be limited only to properties that are the worst contributors. We'll take on debt to fund the work each year, and increase rates to pay it back over time. And, we'll also look for alternative funding of \$7.8m to do more.

We'll continue inspections in the worst affected areas, assisting homeowners where we can. This option means we'll continue to rely on homeowners to make and pay for repairs. While this option is a lower cost to ratepayers, it means it could take longer to achieve any substantial reductions in overflows.

Our preferred option

Rates increase

▲ 3.0%
over ten years

\$19m for public pipe renewals and maintenance

\$6m for stormwater on private properties funded by debt and rates

Pay for private

This option is to fix and fund more private property issues with money from rates. There are significant environmental, cultural and public health benefits and so the community may want to fund more than the \$6m budgeted, up to a total estimated cost of \$14.6m.

We would still do all of the work to replace and maintain the public pipe network. But we could

invest a greater portion of council funds to fix more private property issues. This means we would take on more debt to fund the work each year, and increase rates to pay it back over time.

This option is more expensive for ratepayers, but provides greater confidence in reducing the amount of sewage overflows.

Another option

Rates increase

▲ 3.4-4%
over ten years

\$19m over ten years for public pipe renewals and maintenance

\$9.4-\$14.6m for stormwater on private properties funded by debt and rates