
Appendix 1 - Responses from Community Consultation and Stakeholder Discussion

Stakeholder Discussions

Meeting with Designers, Assessors, Surveyors, Planners, Architects: 7 December 2010

Having regulations strengthens the professional's resolve to do a job properly. For example, designer does not do anything design wise unless they have to as it all costs the client. Failure to many people is physically seeing the effluent. Education is important, for example talking to assessors, providing literature to all. People choose to ignore problems.

A risk based approach but under this have prescription regarding operational matters. People like prescription but it has dangers. Could risk assessment from part of a rule? If too prescriptive, people may go 'underground'.

Does Council already have the powers it needs in the current rules. Maybe Council just needs to beef up the design guidelines? Is there a perception that Council is tougher than they really are? Could Council target more places that numbers of people gather e.g. marae, schools? There should be a different layer of requirement for residential and commercial.

There is a movement toward Greywater, but the perception of it seems to be that it is more innocuous than it is. Water use also impacts on OSWWS.

Some tanks aren't actually fully effective until well into life, e.g. 7 years. Some areas won't be able to be remediated as the environmental damage is already done. For example, Wainui.

Terry Taylor of Terry Taylor Drainage Ltd: 6 December 2010 and 8 February 2011

Thinks there a maintenance scheme is necessary and overdue. People generally only feel compulsion to carry out preventative maintenance if required. Cleaners are in a difficult position if they tell Council about failures at the moment. A licencing scheme would make cleans more consistent. Lids need to be exposed and cleaning to bottom. It is a grey area to put risers/collars/lids on some old tanks. There are noticeable health implications. The checklists tabled at the Makorori meeting go too far and are asking cleaners to be drainlayers. Need to be careful of commercially sensitivities when feeding information back to Council. Cleaning trade can be used to help educate and bridge the gap between failures and fixing. There is some clandestine work happening. Any compulsory maintenance scheme shouldn't just be restricted to high density. Marae, some farms and some businesses should be included too. Judgement could be left to cleaner as to how often cleaning required. There should be a mandatory clean out before upgrade. A lot of inappropriate objects are found in tanks and affect cleaner's equipment. Cleaners also need to be careful not to break parts of the tank and require proper tools of the trade. Risers might not be the answer sometimes. Rules can't be too prescriptive as there are many models.

James Rogers and June Roberts of Baywaste: 3 February 2011

They tell customers to clean their tanks every three years and bigger families more often. Some people have their tanks cleaned every year. Some people also ask to be put on a three year cycle. They send reminder letters to people. Farmers appear to be on a reasonable cycle. They try to educate people about inputs. They also advise them when they think they might

need a drainlayer. There was also an attempt to get people to clean before they sell houses. Some do, some don't. Thought there would be benefits from compulsory maintenance, but recognise not everyone has the money. Thought Council could help subsidise coast communities. There is also assistance available from Tairāwhiti Health and WINZ. Some customers don't allow the backyard to be dug up but lids should be dug up for every clean. Agree collars and lids would be useful. There are tools available for tall risers. They did not think there would be a lot of additional cost if they were to fill out checklist.

Wayne's Waste: 6 December 2010

It is hard to capture new tenants. Some people don't ring unless there is a problem. Council needs to be careful about what it gets cleaners to check as they are not drainlayers. Medications are a problem. Affordability issues around changing filters etc. Issues around not knowing who has cleaned and who has not as there is no master database. Advanced Treatment Plants are expensive to run, fix and break down early in life. People are also turning off pumps up the coast. Additional work filling out sheet would be marginal. It is difficult to track effluent fields. Don't need to apply standard everyone. Important where there is high density. There is some clandestine work happening. In his experience, marae, stations are good. Waste Track is not the best way to manage data. They could send any checklist info to Council once per month. There is money available from WINZ.

Morris Mataira: 8 November 2010, 25 February 2011, 5 May 2011 and letter dated 2 April 2011

The situation is not getting any better regarding older homes. Younger families and modern water users are also contributing to failures. Morris wants the Council to chase people rather than him and keep a record of when tanks were cleaned. WINZ and HNZC take care of a lot of homes in Ruatoria. There is a high water table. Tanks should be cleaned out more consistently and effectively than they are. Education should be delivered to residents too. Might be issues with septage pit volumes in future. Would like a pit in Tokomaru Bay. Three years is a good time frame for cleaning. Some people can go longer and don't like to clean out if it doesn't need it. WINZ help is available for some people and Morris assists with filling out forms. Include halls, businesses, schools, marae and other facilities. Education can be provided at marae. Morris has also spent quite a bit of time educating tenants about system inputs. There have been issues with advanced treatment plants. There are major cracks in some older tanks, disintegrating concrete and weak lids. There are few tanks with outlet filters. People tend to clean before tanks leak in his experience. There are often above ground obstructions to cleaning and this needs to be part of any education programme. Checklist 1 is far too much. Morris prefers Checklist 3. Suggested that discharge volumes are placed on Discharge Log.

Bruce Duncan and Alan Hall of Tairāwhiti District Health Board: 22 December 2010

There are income and affordability issues in the region re servicing OSWWS. Subsidies are a possibility but can also be discriminatory. Funding is also slow to come through. It is hard to get data from the trade to the Public Health. They think that clandestine activities are occurring.

How useful is faecal source tracking – would the Council match it to actual houses? Faecal source tracking will get cheaper over time. There could be a ban on using bores for potable uses in certain areas. Many parts of the region have a high water table.

95% of gastro-enteritis cases are missed. The DHB could encourage GPs to do sampling. But finding the source of illness is looking for needle in haystack. Publicity is a better way to minimise harm. A programme of monitoring can also raise the profile of the issue.

Staff will check their information sharing ability between the DHB and Council with the Ministry of Health. Cluster systems are another way to minimise health and environment impact of sewage disposal.

Housing New Zealand: 18 November 2010

HNZC have set up a programme for servicing and improvements of all septic systems on property in this region. This is generally three yearly for septic tanks and annually for advanced treatment plants. Individual advanced treatment plants with high use might be serviced every six months if needed.

Service reports are not received by HNZC maintenance office but possibly received by Prestige HNZC contractor. GDC can assist with information on individual properties with advanced treatment systems. Service agents provide a copy of each service report and Council keep a database of this information.

HNZC have been doing an improvement programme for septic systems over the past two years has meant replacements or upgrades of failed systems have been completed and risers and lids installed to improve many other tanks. HNZC propose to continue replacing malfunctioning advanced sewage treatment plants over time.

Through improved site assessment reporting and scoping for design of individual wastewater systems they anticipate that the suitability of the systems proposed for the users will be taken more into consideration. Lessons have been learned from the failed and malfunctioning early model advanced treatment plants installed into HNZC homes.

Len Walker: 8 November 2010 and Te Araroa 16 March 2011

More septage pits will be required. There is more water than solids due to pressure put on systems e.g. from holidaymakers. Collars are often necessary. Could a bulk contract be negotiated for them? Some people won't clean their tanks until effluent is coming out the gully trap. He tries to pass on advice and teach people about their systems. There is still a place for long drops in emergencies or for minimal use/remote situations. It depends on the situation. Need to be more stringent where there are a number of people gathering. Three years is often enough for cleaning to occur, a bit more often if a problem. It is easier if the same rule applies. An upgrade should be required when he is there 'too often'.

Particularly where sewage is on the ground. People are becoming aware of Len's business and using his services. People can clean their own grease traps. Old systems can function alright, it depends on the disposal. The more disposal field there is, the more security. If we can stop putting any new systems at Onepoto Bay we can preserve the environment there. Cleaning and dumping effluent on farms is working alright.

Community Meetings: held between December 2010 to May 2011

Pre-consultation meetings were held in Hicks Bay, Te Araroa, Tikitiki, Ruatoria, Waipiro Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Tolaga Bay, Whangara, Wainui, Makorori, Manutuke, Patutahi and Matawai.

Some key questions about education and regulation were provided to focus discussions about what options were appropriate to deal with the issue and what the options might look like. Following is a summary of responses to these questions:

Focus questions	Suggestions
Who should do service checks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaners - independence of cleaners is important, avoid collusion with product suppliers • Council • Owners (or at least owners should observe the clean) • Accredited groups e.g. whanau groups
How often should septic systems be checked?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 2 years • Every 3 years • Every 5 years • Every 10 years • Owner should decide • Cleaner should decide • Exemptions for low use systems • No requirement
What should they check for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-site effects • Rate the seriousness of faults • Percentage pass or fail • Video log • Sample checklist 5 preferred option – others too complicated • Effects of tree roots
How would any information get back to GDC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaners to share data with Council • Council to hold a database
What if a system didn't pass the first inspection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good diagnose of fault • Ability to obtain second opinion • Workable time frames for repair • Ability to retro-fit or part upgrade • Enable good dialogue with Council • Any repairs from certified repairer • Install neighbourhood treatment schemes
When would a system require replacement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the system cannot be repaired • When you can see the effluent in the disposal field • Want options and reasonable time frames to achieve repair
How could we make a scheme affordable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it simple/minimum cost possible • Cleaners to inspect OSWWS • Coordinate cleanings for multiple properties • Be able to repair/retrofit/part upgrade • Standardise cost of clean • Leave it to private sector • Ability to withdraw money from Kiwisaver fund for essential service • Teach budgeting so replacement can be achieved where necessary

Focus questions	Suggestions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the availability of WINZ money for clean, repair etc • Alternative options to advanced treatment plants • Only apply a compulsory maintenance scheme where necessary • Tap into Economic Development Agency • Keep status quo
What arrangements would need to be in place at first if a system was introduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Consultation • Adequate time frames to take required actions
What kind of education should be provided about this issue? How should this be delivered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidelines for cleaners • Provide guidelines for owners about system types, design, operation, maintenance including management of inputs into system (water, chemicals, medication) • Incentivise/promote use of certain products • Council to educate via print, website and face-to-face delivery, property managers, marae, school curriculum • Round-the-tank workshop – physical demonstration of clean and tank function • Provide information about greywater • Focus on educating people moving from town to country and also new ratepayers in District • Promote awareness of related issues e.g. where the nearest drinking water bores are located

General comments from the community were that they wanted Council to define the problem further. People thought that data would assist in gaining commitment from landowners to maintain their tanks. It was suggested that evidence of faecal coliforms be monitored. Some people acknowledged that there are difficulties with obtaining scientific data about faecal contamination. It was suggested that Council should look at all kinds of water pollution together and also look at nitrogen.

Council should find a balance between regulation and affordability taking into account functional versus environmental failure. However, where there are serious constraints, Council should be more stringent. Some thought very problematic areas should have a directive from Council to reticulate. Drainage was also a related issue that impacts on OSWWS that many communities wanted addressed. A few areas are prone to drainage issues and flooding and because of this septic systems will prove problematic during times where excess water is present.

Some people said they had a good relationship with septic tank cleaners and cleaners were already identifying problems although others said they had concerns about the quality of cleaning services they were receiving. People were concerned about getting the right solution for their property as some systems had provided problematic due to cost and operation. People were also interested in other on-site wastewater management options in certain circumstances for example, long drops, greywater, composting toilets and holding tanks. People were generally supportive in principle of compulsory maintenance of OSWWS in townships but not so much in the remote settings.

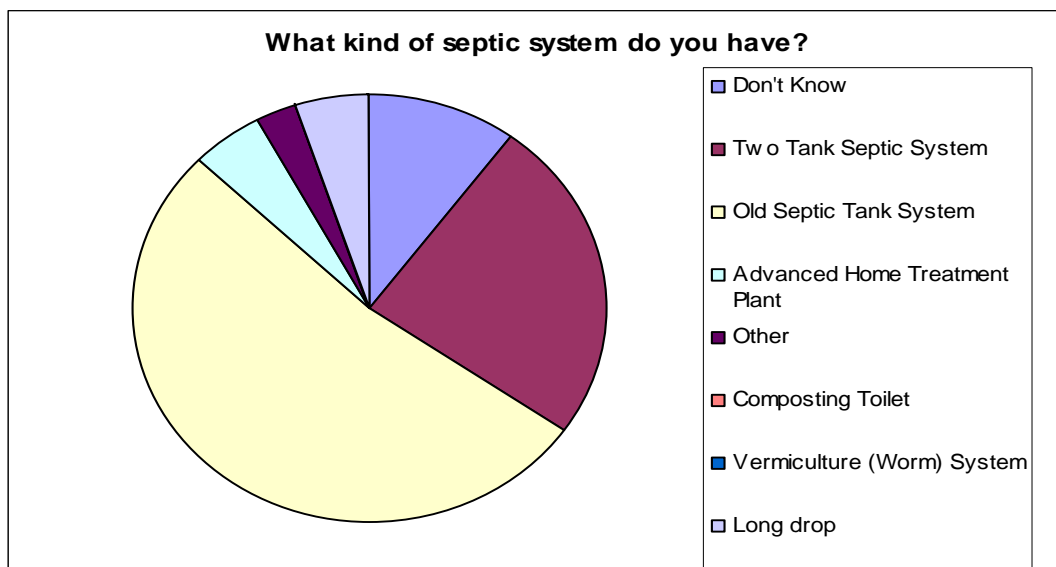
There were concerns from all communities about the affordability of any compulsory maintenance scheme or upgrade requirement, particularly in more deprived communities. It was suggested the onus could be on the sellers to produce paperwork to buyers when property is sold.

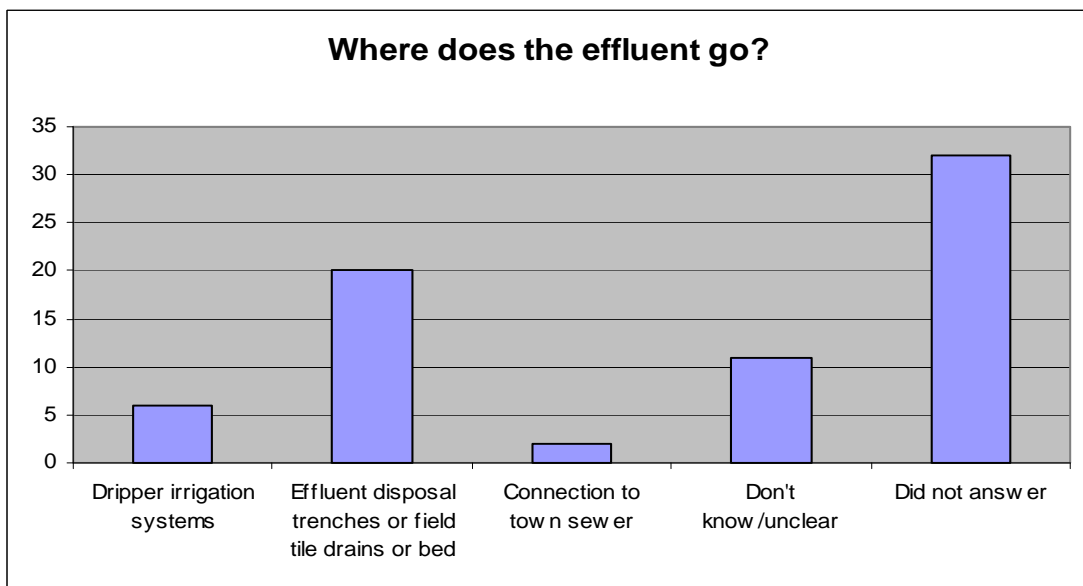
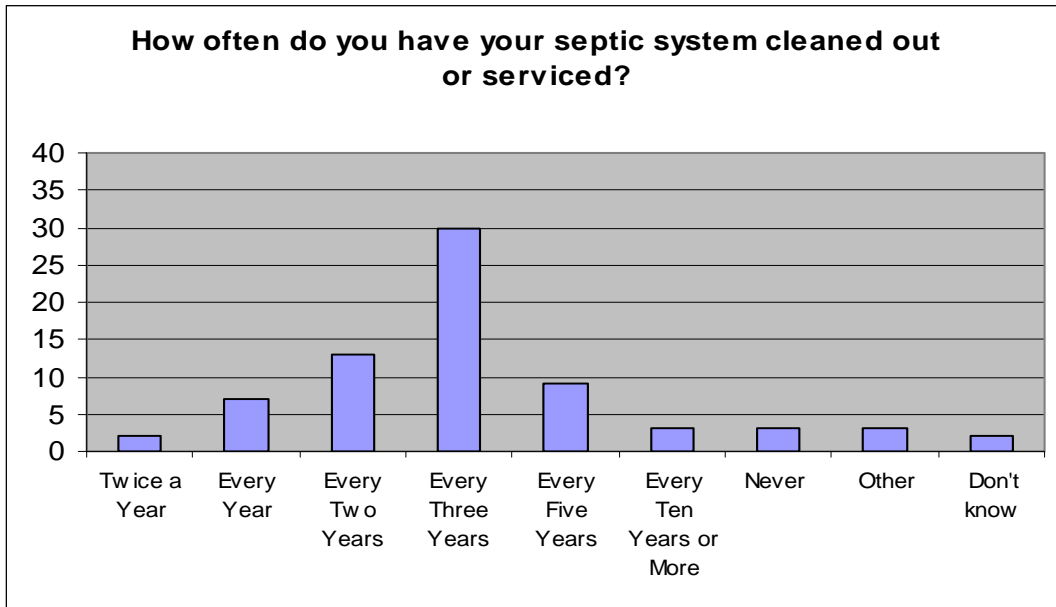
All communities wanted some level of further education about design, operation and maintenance of tanks and some thought this would have a big impact on any problems. Another suggestion was that perhaps Council should start with a public health focus i.e. targeting places many people gather, e.g. schools, marae, commercial premises. Illegal works happening at present need to be addressed. Some thought status quo should remain.

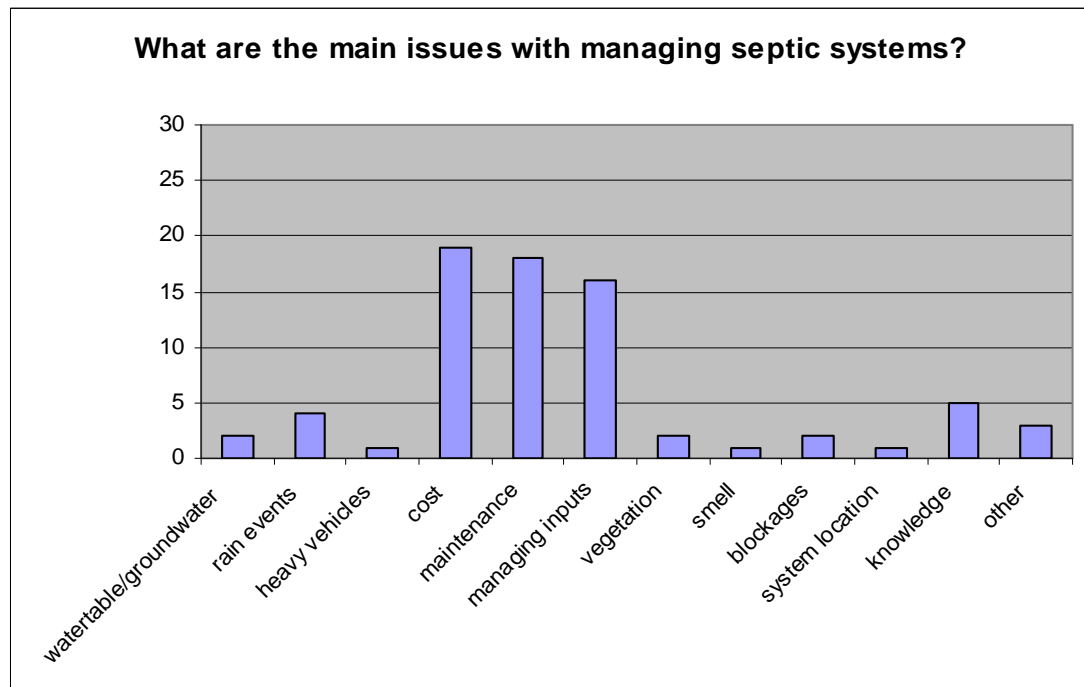
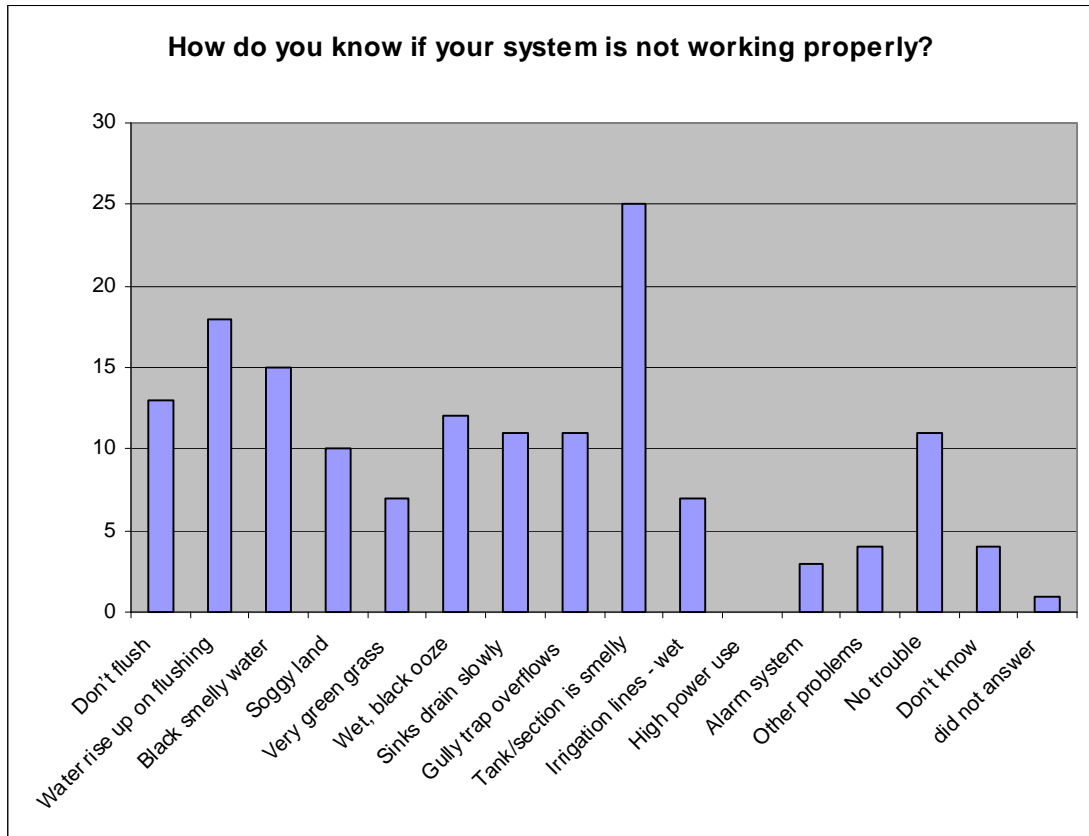
October 2010 - February 2011

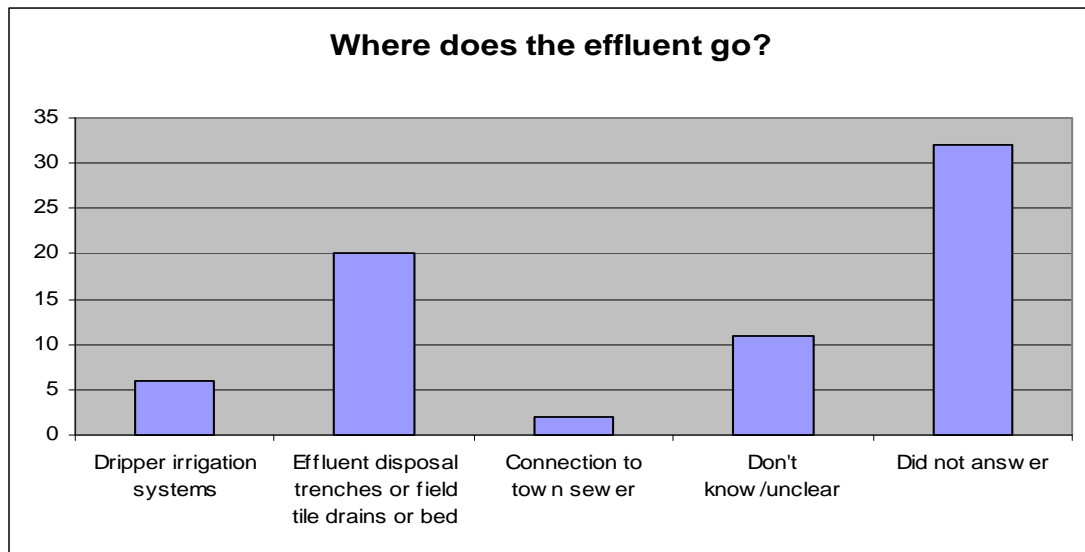
- Officers also prepared a short survey for septic system owners to ascertain the types of tanks people have, how regularly they maintain them and the issues people have with their septic tanks. The survey gave officers an idea about how many tanks in the District were failing or prone to failing and the maintenance practices of system owners. The survey continued from October to February and yielded 74 responses. The main issues with managing septic systems are cost, maintenance and managing inputs into systems.
- About half of the people surveyed clean out their tanks once every three years. The rest clean out anywhere between annually and every ten years, or never.
- Half the people surveyed had older conventional style on-site wastewater systems. There were people that didn't know what kind of system they had. There was low awareness of the type of disposal fields they had.
- People had experienced a variety of signs that their tank was not working properly.

The survey results are shown below:









May 2010

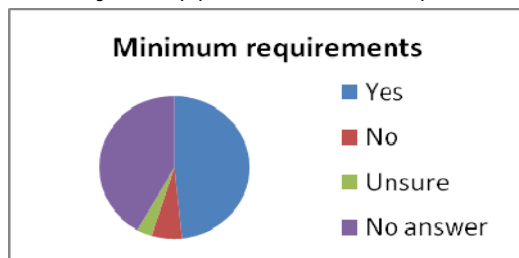
At an earlier workshop held with the Wainui Community many participants indicated they were generally supportive of a management requirement for their wastewater systems.

A full record of workshop notes is contained in Council files.

The following are the results of a survey carried out at this workshop.

Servicing and minimum standards for septic systems:

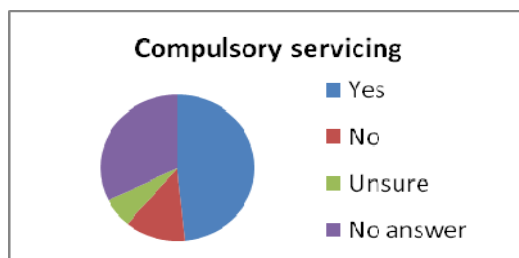
1. Would you support minimum requirements for existing septic systems?



Additional comments:

- What is absolutely necessary
- Based on absence of functional failure

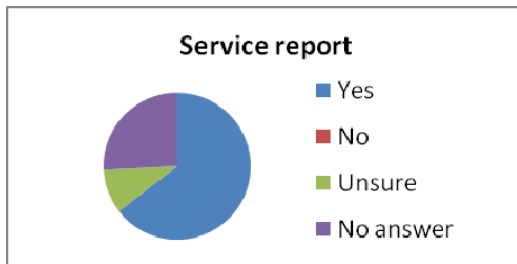
2. Would you support a compulsory requirement for servicing septic systems?



Additional comments:

- On an acceptable frequency
- Resistance to 'big brother' requirements
- Depends on how it's monitored
- Keep it simple

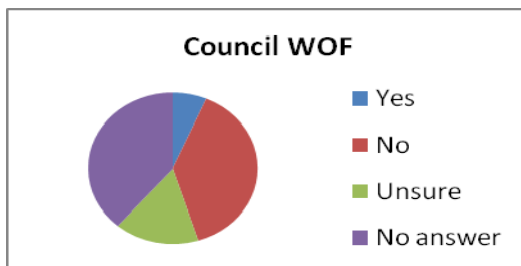
3. Would you be prepared to get servicing done and provide a service report to GDC?



Additional comments:

- Already get system serviced
- At what cost?
- Do it at time of tank pumping and servicing

4. What do you think about a GDC run WOF service scheme for a set payment?



Additional comments:

- Depends on the cost
- Should be an individual responsibility

5. Do you have other ideas and suggestions?

<p>Provide information on good septic tank maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information needs to be clear • Education needs to be constant • Educate householders to check system working 	<p>Develop a WOF scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanks checked by servicemen • Tanks checked at time of servicing • Look at Waiheke Island system • Need to have a cap on the costs • WOF should apply to whole District
<p>Reminders to householders of good management practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good practice leaflets in with rates demand • Fridge magnets • Toilet cistern reminders for visitors and tenants 	
<p>Produce a list of septic friendly products</p>	