

GDC Wastewater – Overflow Discharges Hearing (13-14 July 2021)
Josie McClutchie | Submitter
Supplementary Statement 14-July 2021

Tena koutou katoa

- My name is Josie McClutchie. I'm a Turene St resident.
- In my written submission I've detailed how I became involved with this issue as an affected homeowner. Today I'm going to summarise some of the main points.
- When I started this journey in 2012, Turene St, was not programmed into GDC's drainwise work-plan. I was shown an aerial map of Drainwise's priority areas and it did not include Turene St or Seymour – at the time. That is, until me and a small group of my neighbours complained as a collective about the sewage overflows to our properties.
- It took from 2014-2018 to get Council to be as responsive as they are now. And although it's long overdue, I'm really pleased to see how proactive Council has become in the last three years and the improvements to the network that have been made. And not just on Turene St but in the surrounding Kaiti area
- Prior to me arriving to Turene St there had been decades of neglect by Council of the street's sewer network. According to two long-time Turene St residents their complaints to Council about the street's frequent sewage overflows went ignored from since the 70s.
- And this is consistent with the historical mismanagement of the wastewater network by Council detailed in Brad Coombes 2000 report. In the report the research shows that the local authority had for decades taken a least-cost approach to managing Gisborne's sewerage issues. Which included discharging untreated sewage into our waterways.
- Since 2018 there has been a lot of activity on my street and the neighbouring streets and I'm really grateful for the urgent attention our area is now getting from Drainwise.
- As the applicants team outlined yesterday, there's been a lot of investment by Council into helping homeowners eliminate stormwater issues - from installing stormwater drains to fixing gully traps and downpipes.
- And there's been major investment into trying to reduce sewage overflows to the most vulnerable properties with the installation of non-return valves and more regular jetting of the sewer lines. The front of my place has one.
- But that still does not fill me with the greatest of confidence that Council's longterm wastewater management plan is robust or that it works toward eliminating the need for opening the valves when there is a rain event.

- And without the technical or engineering expertise there's no way for any of us ratepayers to really know.
- That's why I would like to see an independent review. To give the community a better level of confidence in Drainwise's longterm plan going forward.
- I agree with Council that there needs to be a lot more compliance from private property owners – if the Drainwise programme is to be a success. And I applaud Drainwise's new 'kind' approach that they'll be taking to engage home owners in getting commitment to address any infrastructure repairs.
- For a long time I have advocated for that kind of engagement as a way to encourage compliance from home owners. Many of whom have inherited ageing infrastructure, inadequate clay pipes and or poor workmanship done in the 60s & 70s. And for many the costs to repair these problems will be a huge barrier.
- Otherwise I don't think there would be too many homeowners that would not want to repair their drains if they could and knew how, I also don't expect Council to be responsible for the cost but maybe there's another financial avenue starting us in the face?
- The Gisborne ratepayers have a Trust Tairawhiti that we're beneficiaries of and the Trust manages income bearing assets on our behalf. I understand that the it doesn't fund infrastructure but do wonder if there is the possibility for Trust Tairawhiti to provide interest free loans to property owners who need help to afford any repairs?
- The Trust actively promotes that it exists to assist the wellbeing of our people, the success of our businesses, and the future of our region. So it would make sense for the Trust to Invest in our community's infrastructure by way of their commercial arms.
- The other key part to compliance I think is an ongoing community education programme. Again I applaud Drainwise's education campaign that was started in 2019. I was involved in that initiative – because I was really keen to be part of the solution. Unfortunately or fortunately, going through the issues that I've had with the wastewater network has taught me a lot.
- But I believe the campaign needs to be an ongoing thing in order to really influence a change in attitudes and behaviours – and it was good to hear yesterday that Drainwise thinks so too.
- Lastly, I have a spiritual and cultural connection to the local rivers and sea.

GDC Wastewater – Overflow Discharges Hearing (13-14 July 2021)
Josie McClutchie | Submitter
Supplementary Statement 14-July 2021

- I whakapapa to this area through my Rongowhakaata, Ngai Tamamuhiri, Ngati Porou whanau. Growing up the local river and sea was our mahinga kai. My father is a fisherman. He fished and dived the area all his life. His role was to provide kaimoana to marae, tangihanga, whanau and our pakeke. At one time he was thekaitiaki of the hapūka for the iwi of Tuwhakaitiora in Onepoto, Hick's Bay.
- So my cultural connection to the local awa and moana runs deep. From a Maori perspective the protection and conservation of our waterways and kapata kai is paramount. When human waste contaminates these bodies of water not only is it a fundamental breach of our practices and beliefs but it desecrates a taonga – or a precious resource.
- For me, the waters we once gathered kai from no longer feel safe to consume the fish from or for my daughter and whanau to swim in.
- As is true for the Whanganui people – ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au – I am the river, the river is me. When the health of the river is at risk it puts the health of its people at risk.
- Sewage discharges into our rivers has gone on for long enough. It's time, our Council looked to cease the operational practice of discharging sewage into our rivers.

Thank you.

BRAD COOMBES (Ecological impacts and planning hearing.) Done for the CFRT on behalf of the Turanga claimants.