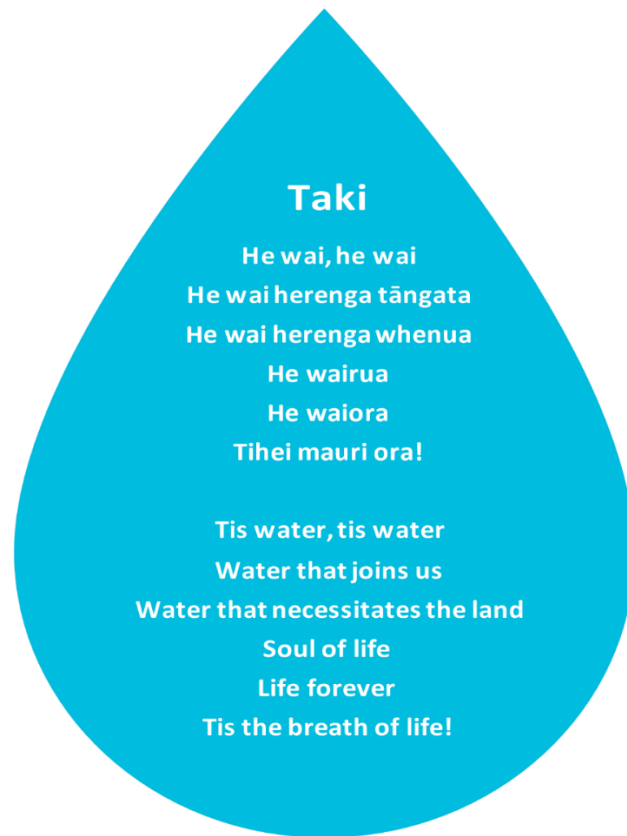


## Featherston WWTP Consent

### MONTHLY REPORT

31 August 2022





## Te Horopaki Background

The Featherston WWTP has been operating under a historic resource consent since 2012, when the existing consent expired. Subsequently SWDC lodged a new consent application to continue to discharge treated wastewater into Donalds Creek. GWRC had concerns about the discharge, and that application is currently on hold.

In 2017, SWDC lodged a new consent application to transition to a land-based discharge. This application was subsequently withdrawn in 2019 and SWDC moved to work with Wellington Water.

In 2020, SWDC commissioned Wellington Water to work towards achieving a new resource consent for the WWTP. Since then, we have been working through a process with key stakeholders, mana whenua and the South Wairarapa community in 2020 to source ideas, define objectives and criteria and develop options.

## Ngā hoaketanga

### Project Objectives

1. To obtain consent approval for upgrading the Featherston wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to improve effects on the existing receiving environment, and
2. To determine the suitability of a transition to a land-based wastewater disposal system in the future.

## He Whakarāpopoto

### Project Summary

#### Reporting period 1 to 31 August 2022

Environmental monitoring has continued this month and surveys of the existing WWTP have been undertaken. The Communication and Engagement strategy has been approved. Work is underway preparing for the first community drop-in day in September.

## Hauora o te Taiao

### Health, safety, environment & quality

#### General H&S Status

No issues. A Health and Safety Plan has been prepared for the upcoming environmental investigations.

#### General Environmental Status

The treatment plant is continuing to discharge as permitted.

#### General Quality

The Communications and Engagement plan has been approved. The Consenting Strategy is being updated following reviews.

## Ngā Kaupapa mahi o Hereturikōkā

### August project activity

#### Communications

The Communication and Engagement plan has been approved. Work is progressing on collateral for the first open drop-in session booked for 15 September. The collateral includes a media release, fliers for the letterbox drop, [website update](#) and posters (see appendix A).

**Consent**

The Consenting Strategy has been updated following reviews by Wellington Water, SWDC and legal. The next pre-application with GWRC is scheduled for 15 September. GWRC environmental experts will be in attendance and the Receiving Environment Monitoring Plan (REMP) will be a strong focus for this meeting.

**Design**

The MBBR trial has now concluded, the report for this has been delayed but the raw data is available to the project team. The trial has demonstrated that this process can achieve ammonia and nitrate concentrations below 1 mg N/L.

Work continues on the Basis of Design document. The first draft is nearing completion and will be circulated for Wellington Water review in September.

**Environmental**

The first round of soil and surface water sampling has been completed and the wetland survey undertaken. A hui onsite at the WWTP with representatives from Ngati Kahungunu and Rangitane identified the need for an additional surface monitoring location – this will be installed in September.

**Hei tērā marama****Next month****Communications**

- Roll out collateral and updates for the community drop in session – 15 September, and
- Maintain FAQs on website to reflect engagement, develop plan for engagement with marae

**Consent**

- Finalise consent strategy, and
- Complete pre-application meeting with GWRC and their technical experts

**Design**

- Receive final MBBR trial report,
- Undertake reviews of draft Basis of Design report, and
- Develop treatment process / improvements plan and seek feedback from Wellington Water and SWDC.

**Environmental Investigations**

- Regular fortnightly surface water sampling,
- Complete first round of ecological surveys,
- Install additional flow meter, and
- Undertake next soil sampling.



## Raupapa Kaiwhaipānga

### Stakeholder Management



Stakeholder	Relationship	Issues
GWRC Environmental Regulation	Ongoing meetings to collaborate on the preferred options.  This month: arranged next pre-application meeting to include GWRC technical experts.	Issues were raised around understanding if there is legal framework that will allow operation of the plant post 1/02/2023.
Māori Standing Committee	This month: Monthly governance meeting attendance and review of key documents including comms plan and project reports.	
Tangata Whenua	Open working relationship, keen to be involved in wetland designs  This month: hui onsite at WWTP, confirmation that Ngati Kahungunu will prepare a CIA for project, Rangitane have been invited to prepare one also.	Keen to see Donald's Creek water quality improved promptly. If trials and co-design is being carried out, wants to see this managed effectively.
SWDC Councillors	This month: Assets and Services committee update provided. Concern about Featherston Community Board visibility	Concern about Featherston Community Board visibility over project – this is being managed by SWDC.
SWDC officers	Monthly Governance Group meetings and bi-weekly Project Steering Group meetings.	Affordability of the shortlisted options Consentability concerns
Featherston Community Board	No updates this month	Have noted interest in project and seeking information (see councillors note above)
Regional Public Health	No updates this month	
Fish and Game	No updates this month	
Department of Conservation	No updates this month	
Adjacent landowners	This month: regular contact with Hodder farm manager for environmental monitoring access	

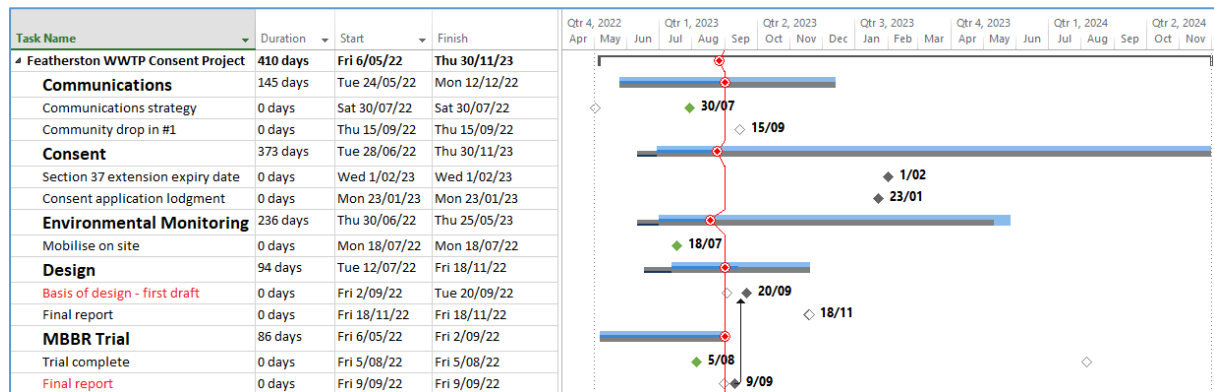
## Te Hōtaka Wā

### Programme timeline



We remain slightly behind programme. The communication strategy was late but is now complete and an additional site visit for soil testing is required.

We are forecasting to meet the deadline for consent application at the end of January 2023.



## Ngā Mahi Matua

### Key critical path activities

Key Activity Status	Due Date	Progress	Expected/Actual Completion
Communications Strategy	30/7/22	Complete	29/8/22
Community drop in #1	14/9/22	Work is underway preparing for this	15/9/22
MBBR trial report	15/7/22	Trial report is late. Raw data is available to design team	9/9/22
Draft Basis of design report	2/9/22	First draft is nearing completion, the delayed MBBR report will impact this.	16/9/22
Draft AEE report complete	14/11/22	Environmental monitoring to inform this is underway	14/11/22
Final AEE	21/1/23		21/1/23
Lodge short term consent	23/01/2023	This is the hard deadline on the schedule.	23/01/2023

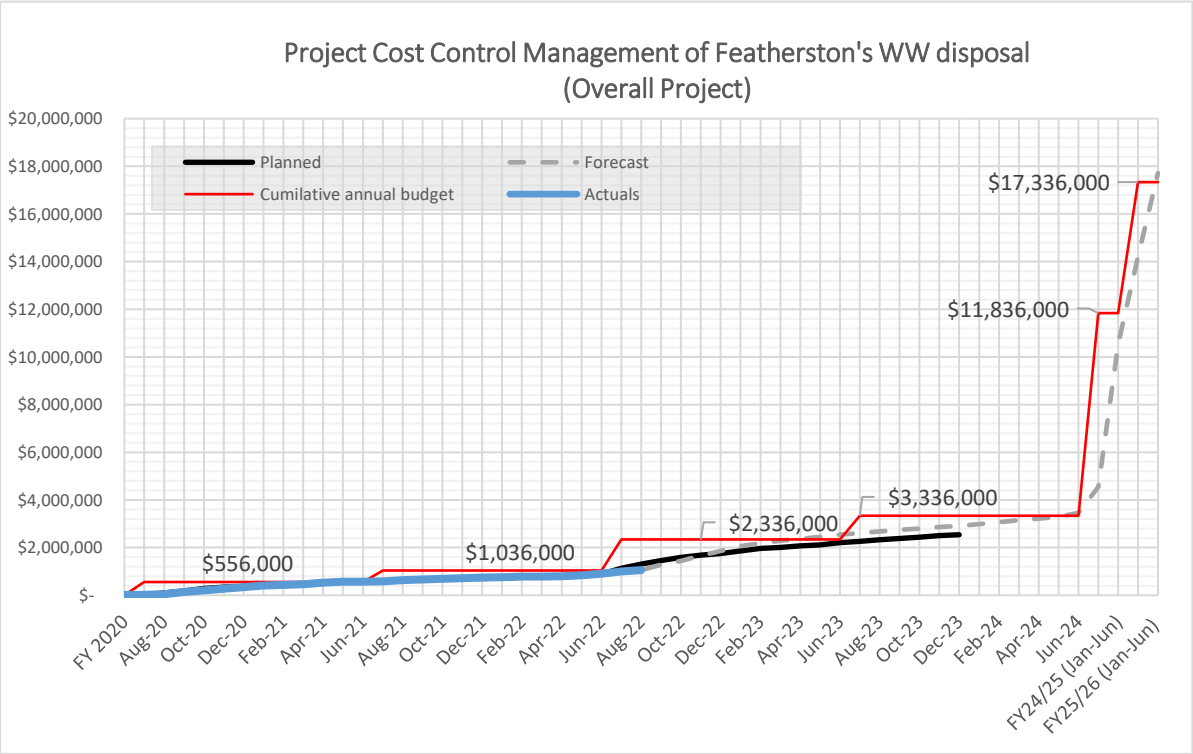
# Whakapaunga utu

## Project Expenditure



The 2022/23 budget is \$1.3m.

The budget is tracking behind forecast mainly due to the wet weather causing delays in mobilising site investigations. Work is progressing and it is expected that this will be corrected in the next couple of months.



## Pūtea āpiti

### Contingency

There is a \$300,000 contingency for this phase of work.

Additional costs have been incurred for the MBBR trial extension (x 2), additional soil sampling and an additional flow meter.

The remaining contingency is \$256,500

## He Panonitanga



### Scope change

- Additional soil sampling and permeability tests due to wet weather.
- Additional surface water flow monitoring location

The estimated financial impact of this change is \$25,000 to be funded by contingency (as above).

## He Whakahaere Raru



### Risk Management

Current top 5 risks

ID #	Risk Description & Consequence	Initial Rating	Mitigation	Rating
23	Risk of missing the Section 37 deadline of Feb 23  There is a short amount of time to prepare the consent application and consult with key stakeholders before submission. This is cause by not obtaining endorsement to proceed with the project.	High	Follow PMP and drive discussions with GWRC to demonstrate progress.	Medium
19	Budget limitations / Affordability (High I&I adds to this risk)	High	Clear limitations in place, improvements prioritised to meet this	High
4	There is a risk that if partners or stakeholders have a significant objection to the project or specific detail of the project, then additional work may be required to understand and resolve these issues or alternatively resulting in a shorter-term consent.	High	Regular meetings with key stakeholders via the Project Governance.	Medium
20	Regulatory / RMA changes	High	Legal and planning teams staying up to date with future changes. Consent strategy being developed with future RMA changes considered.	Medium
18	Level of Iwi engagement	High	Early and regular engagement. Co-design on elements of proposal i.e. wetland	Medium

## Ngā Take Issues



ID #	Escalation Issue	Action	Action party	Date Required	Ranking (Low, Med, High)	Status
3	High I&I	Analyse impact of high I&I readings to our ability to meet conditions for discretionary activity	GHD	August	High	Open

## Ngā Whakatūpato Early Warnings

- Additional scope with budget implications for the following:
  - additional mobilisation activity for soil sampling and permeability tests (due to wet weather) and additional surface water monitoring– estimate \$25k
- Delays to programme
  - The wet weather has delayed mobilising the environmental investigations. This means that there will be less data available for the consent submission. There is a risk that if sufficient data is not collected prior to January lodgement date, the lodgement could be delayed.
- I&I impact to design feasibility
  - The I&I issue will potentially impact the feasibility of a short-term or long-term plant upgrade. We are working with the wider Wellington Water team to understand the issue and possible mitigations or solutions for the consent.
- Materials and Labour shortages and costs
  - There is a national shortage of people and materials estimated to be up to 30% in the construction sector. As we move into construction phase we are expecting the costs estimates to increase.

## Appendix A – Community Engagement material

# We have a proposal for future treatment of Featherston's wastewater

Come and find out about it, ask questions and  
let us know what you think

**1pm to 8pm**

**Thursday 15 September**

**Supper Room, ANZAC Hall, 62 Bell Street, Featherston**



Meanwhile visit  
**[wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp](https://wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp)**  
for information.

# We have a proposal for future treatment of Featherston's wastewater

**Learn about the proposal, ask questions and provide feedback.**

**1pm to 8pm, Thursday 15 September, Supper Room, ANZAC Hall, 62 Bell Street, Featherston**



## Featherston's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) needs a new resource consent in 2023.

Wellington Water, on behalf of the South Wairarapa District Council, has developed a proposal for a new consent that will:

- Upgrade the plant to improve performance
- Allow time to trial and implement innovative treatment systems
- Support the principles of Te Mana o te Wai
- Inform investment in transitioning to land-based treatment over time

Come along and find out more about the proposal and how we've worked to balance affordability with meeting the environmental and cultural aspirations of the community and mana whenua.

We look forward to seeing you, having a chat and answering your questions.



Meanwhile visit  
[wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp](https://wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp)  
for information.

# Finding a solution for Featherston's wastewater treatment

A key value is **Te Mana o te Wai** – the vital importance of water, and the protection of the health and wellbeing of our freshwater.

## What you asked for

- Improved water quality
- Better environmental performance
- Catering for growth
- Using natural processes
- Resilience | Affordability

## A balance between

- Community aspirations
- Mana whenua values
- Council role as investor
- Greater Wellington Regional Council requirements as consenting authority

Featherston's wastewater treatment plant has been operating under a historic resource consent since 2012. There's been a process to find a fit-for-purpose solution for a new consent.

→ **2012**  
The resource consent for the discharge of treated effluent to Donalds Creek from the Featherston Wastewater Treatment Plant expires

→ **2012**  
Council lodges a new consent (water-based discharge), which is still on hold

↓ **2017**  
Council lodges a new resource consent seeking to transition from a water based discharge to a land based discharge. This application was publicly notified.

**January 2023**  
Council commitment to lodge a new consent application in 2023

**June 2022**  
Affordable proposal identified

**February 2021**  
Council considers shortlist options for affordability and environmental outcomes

**December 2020**  
Workshop long list into short list incorporating community, stakeholder and mana whenua feedback

**July to October 2020**  
Wellington Water engages with community, stakeholders, and mana whenua to identify local values and aspirations, and to develop a long list of options.

**2020**  
Council withdraws 2017 consent and engages Wellington Water to identify a long-term consenting solution



# The proposal

South Wairarapa District Council is seeking a fit-for-purpose solution that delivers value to the local community and Mana Whenua.

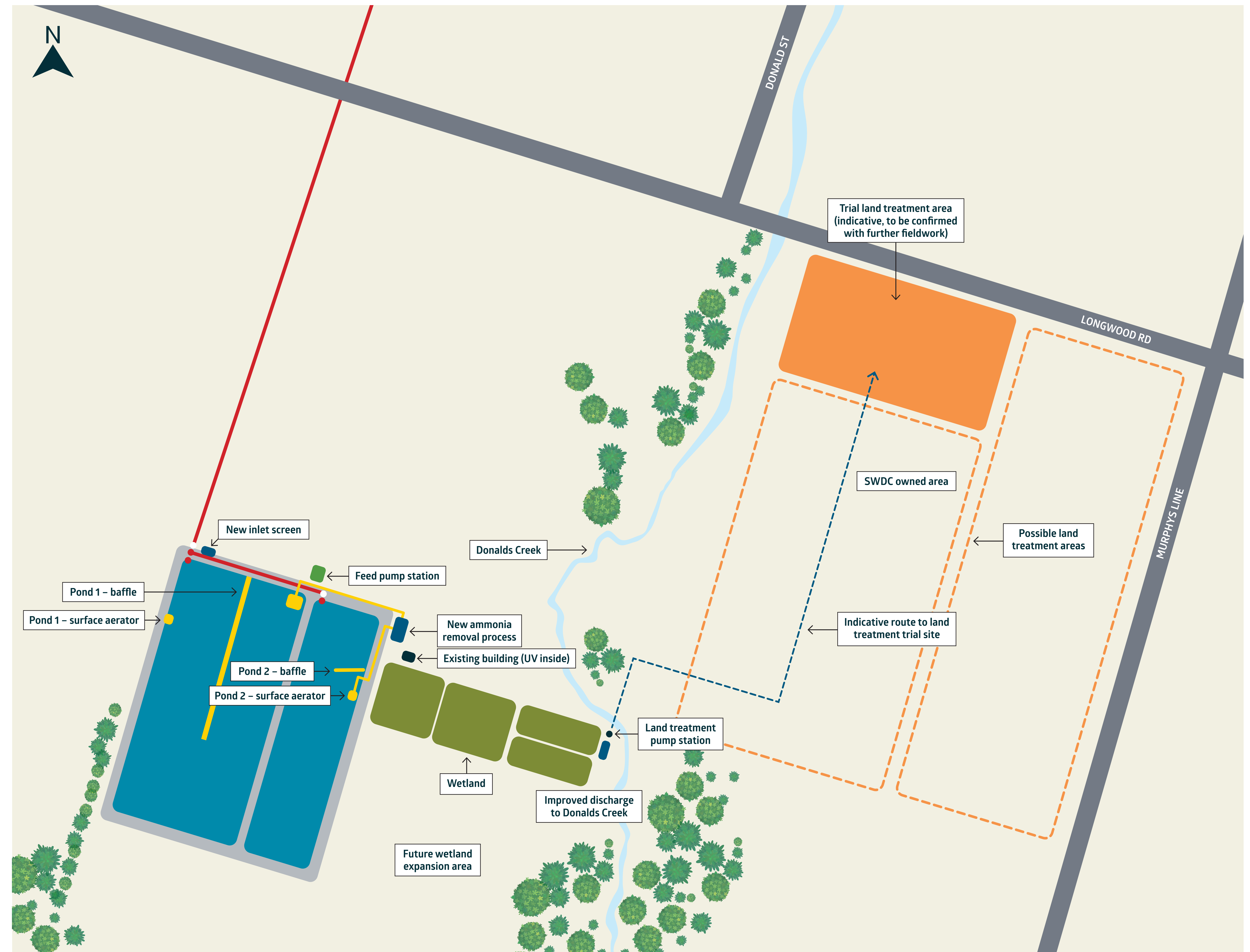
The proposed solution will upgrade and improve the performance of the plant.

It will also allow time to trial and implement innovative treatment systems including:

- Process for removal of ammonia
- Land treatment trial
- Introducing a wetland to further enhance the quality of the treated wastewater before discharging to Donalds Creek.

Affordability is a big factor. That's why we're proposing a solution that allows us to test and monitor these new techniques that will:

- Deliver value for money for local ratepayers
- Support the principles of Te Mana o te Wai
- Inform long-term investment, supporting the transition to land-based treatment over time.



For more information go to [wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp](https://wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp)

What are your thoughts on the proposed Featherston wastewater treatment process?

If you would like to receive regular updates on the projects please give us your:

Name: ..... Email: .....



For more information go to [wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp](https://wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp)



# The proposal

South Wairarapa District Council is seeking a fit-for-purpose solution that delivers value to the local community and Mana Whenua.

The proposed solution will upgrade and improve the performance of the plant.

It will also allow time to trial and implement innovative treatment systems including:

- Process for removal of ammonia
- Land treatment trial
- Introducing a wetland to further enhance the quality of the treated wastewater before discharging to Donalds Creek

Affordability is a big factor. That's why we're proposing a solution that allows us to test and monitor these new techniques that will:

- Deliver value for money for local ratepayers
- Support the principles of te Mana o te Wai
- Inform long-term investment, supporting the transition to land-based treatment over time.



# Proposal for a new consent for the Featherston wastewater treatment plant

## Overview

South Wairarapa District Council has commissioned Wellington Water to develop a proposal for a new consent for the Featherston wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). This proposal seeks to deliver on the outcomes we all want – protecting fresh waterways, improving environmental performance and catering for growth – while also being affordable for South Wairarapa’s ratepayers now and into the future. A consent application is to be lodged with consenting authority Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) in January 2023.

## The proposal

It is proposed that the application for a consent will incorporate upgrades to improve the performance of the FWTP.

It will also provide time to trial and implement innovative treatment systems including:

- A process to remove ammonia
- Land treatment trial
- Introducing a wetland to further enhance the quality of the treated wastewater before discharging to Donalds Creek.

The monitoring and testing of these new treatment systems will support the SWDC’s long-term investment in the FWTP over time to:

- Support the transition to land-based treatment over time
- Give effect to the principles of Te Mana o te Wai
- Improve environmental outcomes to meet new measures introduced under National Policy Statements and regulations
- Deliver value-for-money for ratepayers

A key value is **Te Mana o te Wai** – the vital importance of water, and the protection of the health and wellbeing of our freshwater



## How did we get here?

The FWTP has been operating under a historic resource consent since 2012, when the existing consent expired.

Subsequently SWDC lodged a new consent application to continue to discharge treated wastewater into Donalds Creek. GWRC had concerns about the discharge, and the application is currently on hold.

In 2017, SWDC lodged a new consent application to transition to a land-based discharge. This application was subsequently withdrawn in 2019 and SWDC moved to work with Wellington Water.

In 2020, SWDC commissioned Wellington Water to work towards achieving a new resource consent for the FWTP.

Since then, we have been working through a process with key stakeholders, mana whenua and the South Wairarapa community in 2020 to source ideas, define objectives and criteria and develop options.

In finding a fit-for-purpose proposal we have worked to incorporate and balance a range of factors.

## How much is it going to cost?

Part of the refinement and development of the proposal will involve a full costing. However, there is currently \$17 million allocated to upgrading the treatment plant in the 2021-31 SWDC Long Term Plan.

## What does land treatment mean?

This is a natural process using ground conditions to filter and manage nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) found in the treated effluent. The process helps keep these nutrients out of freshwater, including Lake Wairarapa and Donalds Creek. A high concentration of nutrients can have a negative impact on the overall health and ecology of rivers and streams, adversely impacting fish species. This process involves dispersal of the treated effluent onto land in appropriate conditions. There is no odour as the effluent is fully treated.



### What you asked for

Improved water quality  
Better environmental performance  
Catering for growth  
Using natural processes  
Resilience | Affordability

### A balance between

Community aspirations  
Mana whenua values  
Council role as investor  
Greater Wellington Regional Council  
requirements as consenting authority

## What next

During the coming weeks we will be talking to the community about the project through a range of channels.

**This will include a public drop-in session on Thursday 15 September 1pm to 8pm, at the Supper Room, ANZAC Hall, 62 Bell Street, Featherston**

Over the coming months Wellington Water will work with the SWDC and mana whenua to test and refine the proposal before lodging a consent application with GWRC in January 2023.

The proposal is also part of a wider programme of operational and project investments helping address a range of water network issues impacting the Featherston community.

Addressing the wastewater treatment plant issues will benefit the wider South Wairarapa community, with improved environmental outcomes, catering for growth in the region, and confirmation of technology and natural-based solutions that could be installed at other points in the network if proven to work.

While this is an important project, future investment decisions may be impacted by the current Government's Three Waters Reform.

Visit [wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp](https://wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp) for information



## Media release

7 September

### **New consent application for Featherston wastewater treatment plant**

South Wairarapa District Council has commissioned Wellington Water to seek a new consent for the Featherston wastewater treatment plant on behalf of the Council.

It is proposed that the application for consent will incorporate an upgrade and other improvements to the performance of the plant. It will also allow time to trial and implement innovative treatment systems, supporting the transition to land-based treatment over time as well as improving environmental outcomes to meet new measures introduced under National Policy Statements and regulations.

South Wairarapa District Council Chief Executive Harry Wilson says the current proposal delivers a fit-for-purpose solution for the future management of Featherston's wastewater.

"The Featherston community has been waiting a long time for a solution to manage the town's wastewater now, and into the future. While affordability is a big factor in that, it has to be balanced with environmental and cultural outcomes.

"That's why we're proposing a solution that provides us with time to test and monitor new techniques that will deliver value for money for local ratepayers, give effect to the principles of Te Mana o te Wai and support the Council's long-term investment."

The proposal includes upgrades to improve the performance of the plant and reduce ammonia, a land treatment trial and introducing a wetland to filter and diffuse treated effluent prior to being discharged into Donalds Creek.

Wellington Water chief executive Colin Crampton says working on behalf of South Wairarapa District Council to develop the proposal is a significant project.

"This is a vital part of Featherston's infrastructure, and our job is to support the Council to achieve its regulatory and strategic objectives and meet the aspirations and values of the community, mana whenua and stakeholders."

As part of identifying the solution Wellington Water engaged with the community in 2020 seeking ideas and concerns around future management of the town's wastewater.

"The engagement process has indicated that improved water quality, better environmental performance, enabling growth, resilient water supply and the use of natural processes are key considerations for the Featherston community.

“This feedback has been incorporated into the proposal that we are now developing and will lodge a consent on behalf of the Council in January 2023. We’ve incorporated this feedback into the proposal.”

Mr Wilson says the proposal is also part of the Council’s wider programme of operational and project investments helping address a range of water network issues impacting the Featherston community.

“Addressing the wastewater treatment plant issues will benefit the wider South Wairarapa community, by delivering improved environmental outcomes, enabling regional growth and confirmation of the capability of technology and natural-based solutions to be installed at other points in the network.”

“While this is an important project, future investment decisions may be impacted by the current Government’s Three Waters Reform.”

The proposed approach was communicated to elected members on 13 July at the Assets & Services Committee meeting. Over the coming months, South Wairarapa District Council and Wellington Water will be informing and engaging with the community and working with mana whenua to test and refine the proposed solution that will be the subject of the consent before lodging an application with Greater Wellington Regional Council in January 2023.

There will be a public drop-in session on Thursday 15 September at the Supper Room, ANZAC Hall, 1pm to 8pm where people can find out more and ask questions. More information [www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp](http://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/fwp)

ENDS

Media contact:

Sheil Priest  
General Manager Communications & Engagement  
South Wairarapa District Council  
027 252 2863

Note to editors:

**Consenting background:**

- The existing authorisation for the plant and discharge of treated effluent to Donald’s Creek is due to expire in 2023.
- The authorisation is an extension of a historic consent that originally expired in 2012, when the South Wairarapa District Council applied for a new consent for the continuation of discharge to Donald’s Creek. Following a request from GWRC for further information the application was placed on hold. During this period changes to the application were sought to move to a land-based disposal approach. GWRC requested a new consent application be lodged for this.
- In 2017, the Council lodged a new consent application to transition to a land-based discharge.

- In 2020, the Council withdrew its 2017 consent and engaged Wellington Water to identify a solution.
- Since then, Wellington Water has been working with mana whenua, the community and stakeholders to identify options for a long-term solution that meets local aspirations for improved environmental performance and caters for growth whilst remaining affordable to South Wairarapa ratepayers.
- In 2021, Wellington Water presented a shortlist of options for long-term treatment of Featherston's wastewater to the Council. However, councillors had concerns that none of the options were affordable and would impose too great a cost on ratepayers.
- The Council asked Wellington Water to find a pragmatic and affordable solution that will achieve a new consent from Greater Wellington Regional Council, whilst work continues towards a long-term solution that meets the community's aspirations.