

TAPPED IN

Bringing you news, updates and information from Watercare



Spot the difference: Plant operator Abe Tahere holds samples of raw wastewater that enters our treatment plants (left) and the treated wastewater that is ready to be discharged (right).

When your business becomes ours

Next time you eat sweet corn, spare a thought for Abe Tahere.

The cheerful wastewater treatment plant operator is one of about 120 of our employees whose roles are directly involved with your wastewater, many of whom have seen more corn kernels than they care to remember.

Abe works at the front end of the Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant, sampling and monitoring raw waste as it enters the treatment process.

“We see everything,” he says, listing items such as wet wipes, building rags, dental floss, cellphones, home phones, toys, false teeth, crockery and cash.

All of these things made the kilometres-long journey through your private drains, into our network pipes, pump stations and holding tanks to reach the screening room at Mangere – the smelliest part of the plant.

Most of these items pose real risks to our network, treatment plants and, ultimately, the environment. For example, something as small as a bread tag can cause a pump to trip.

Another growing problem is fat.

“We call them fat-bergs,” says Abe. These ‘fat-bergs’ can get as far as the grit removal stage, building up in the grit tanks before a ‘sucker truck’ is called in.

Up to 90 tonnes of fat is removed from some of these tanks over the course of a year.

Worryingly, as well as fats and oils being wrongly disposed of down kitchen drains, Abe and his colleagues suggest our population’s high-fat diets are partly to blame.

It is enough for Abe to keep his diet “pretty green, clean and mean”.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every day, we treat about

**400
MILLION
LITRES OF
WASTEWATER**



to a high quality across our

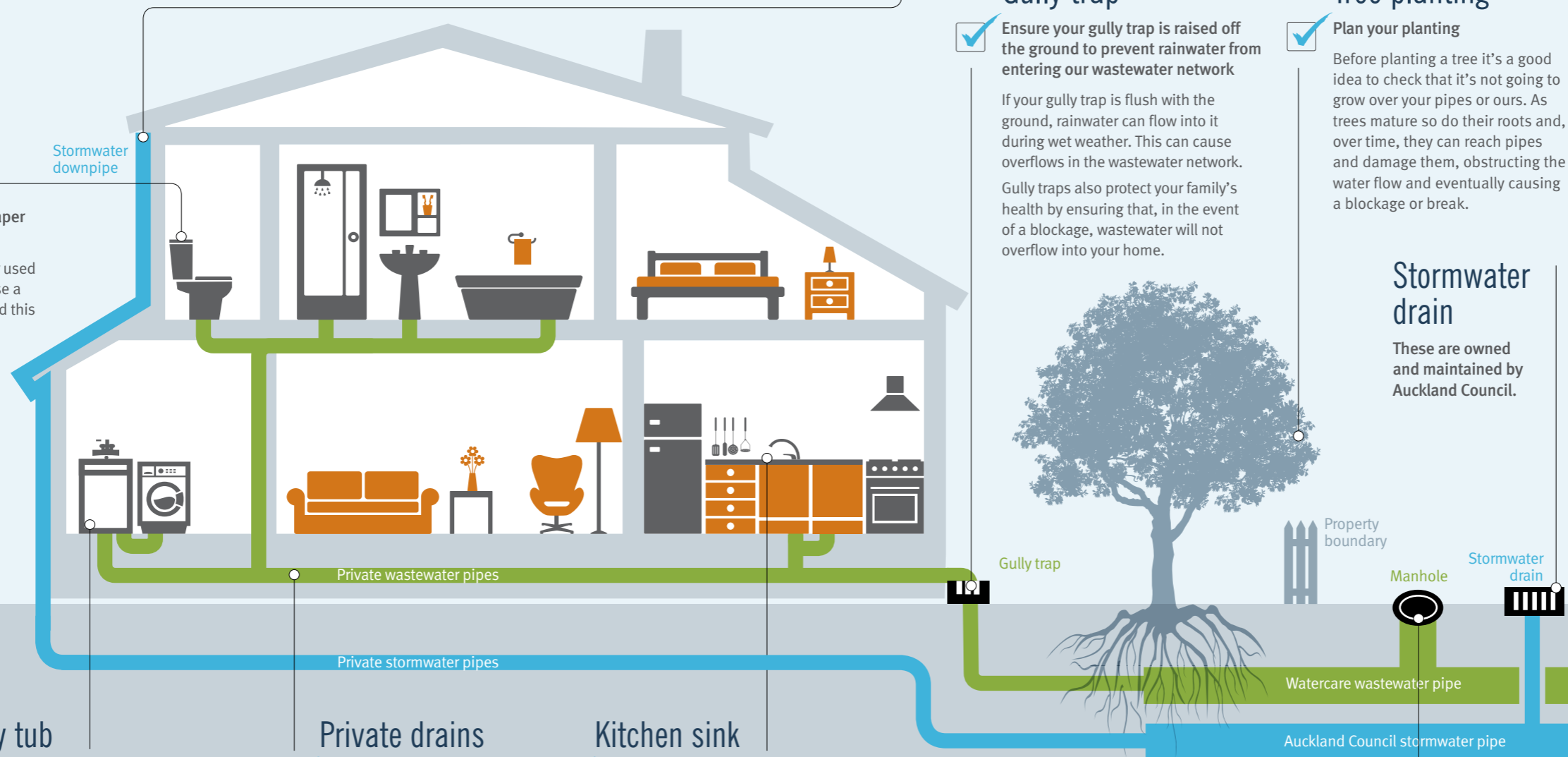
**18
TREATMENT
PLANTS**



KEEPING YOUR PIPES FLOWING

Every time you flush the toilet, pull the plug from a sink or have a shower, the wastewater drains into your private plumbing and out to our network.

While the wastewater that enters our network consists predominantly of water, it also contains human waste, food scraps, fats, debris, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Some of this matter can build up in private and public pipes, causing blockages and overflows which can be harmful to our health, harbours and waterways. This is why it is important for all of us to be conscious of what we pour or flush down our private drains.



Toilet

✓ Flush away toilet paper and human waste

Flossed your teeth or used wet wipes? Please use a rubbish bin to discard this type of waste. Other items that may block your pipes or ours include nappies, personal hygiene products and rags.

Stormwater downpipe

✓ Check that your stormwater downpipe connects to the stormwater network, not our wastewater network

When stormwater enters the wastewater network, it can cause overflows. You can help us to reduce the frequency and volume of overflows by:

- making sure your stormwater downpipe connects to the stormwater network and not our wastewater network
- making sure your gully trap is raised off the ground to prevent rainwater from entering our wastewater network.

Gully trap

✓ Ensure your gully trap is raised off the ground to prevent rainwater from entering our wastewater network

If your gully trap is flush with the ground, rainwater can flow into it during wet weather. This can cause overflows in the wastewater network. Gully traps also protect your family's health by ensuring that, in the event of a blockage, wastewater will not overflow into your home.

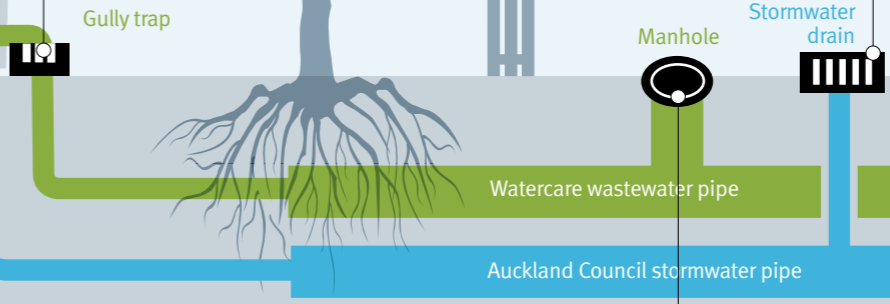
Tree planting

✓ Plan your planting

Before planting a tree it's a good idea to check that it's not going to grow over your pipes or ours. As trees mature so do their roots and, over time, they can reach pipes and damage them, obstructing the water flow and eventually causing a blockage or break.

Stormwater drain

These are owned and maintained by Auckland Council.



Manholes

✓ Give us a call

If you come across a spillage from a manhole, please phone us on (09) 442 2222. We will turn up within one hour to investigate the issue.

Laundry tub

✓ Pull the plug on soapy water only

Do not pour hazardous waste such as paint, pesticides, solvents and used automobile oil down the drain. More information can be found at www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

Private drains

✓ Ensure your private wastewater drains are maintained

Old and leaky pipes allow stormwater to seep into the wastewater network, overloading the pipes and causing overflow.

Kitchen sink

✓ Scrape your cooking fats into the bin

The sink may be the most convenient place to drain your cooking juices but, once cool, fats harden and may block your pipes or ours.

DID YOU KNOW?

Our wastewater network has almost

8,000 KILOMETRES

OF PIPES,

AND

165,610 MANHOLES



BEING FULLY SUSTAINABLE

- The wastewater treatment process is almost entirely chemical free, relying on bacteria to break down organic materials which are then converted to biogas.
- Biogas produced in our wastewater treatment plants at Mangere and Rosedale generates more than two thirds of the plants' electricity needs.
- Overall, our wastewater treatment plants generate 143,855 kWh of electricity a day. That's enough to power 6,563 households.



Watercare's Hunua 4 ambassador Christine Murray helps Athens Road resident Hannah Taylor get her shopping home.

Ambassador a helping hand for pipeline project neighbours

Losing access to your driveway can complicate simple daily tasks but, for residents most affected by our Hunua 4 pipeline project, help is never far away.

We have employed a full-time ambassador to minimise the disruption caused by the construction work in residential streets.

Once completed, Hunua 4 will be a 28-kilometre water pipe running from Redoubt Road Reservoir in Manukau through to the Khyber Pass Reservoir in Grafton, delivering water to communities along the route.

Ambassador Christine Murray spends her time around the construction area, where residents' access to their driveways is restricted.

"I'm out on the street, visible every day so if I see anyone struggling with their bags, or if courier deliveries arrive, I'm there to help," Christine says.

"One resident relies on Meals on Wheels deliveries, so I'll collect them each day and take them down to him."

Athens Road resident Hannah Taylor, a busy mother-of-two, says Christine was a "saviour" one day when she found herself caught in a downpour with both kids in tow.

"It was absolutely bucketing down and Christine appeared with an umbrella and walked us home," she says.

While being without driveway access during the day has had its challenges, Hannah is looking on the bright side.

"For me, it's been as painless as it could have been under the circumstances. I think of the positives, like I get more exercise and the kids love watching the diggers and all the construction work, it's fascinating.

"It's also been quite good with bringing the community together. I've met people who I hadn't met yet because we're all out there watching construction."

Watercare stakeholder liaison advisor Rochelle Gill says every effort has been made to keep residents informed and minimise the disruption.

"We know it's not easy being unable to park your car in your garage, so Christine is there to help with the groceries, help mums with their prams – the kinds of things you usually take for granted."

A security guard monitors the streets at night and assists residents walking to and from their cars.

Christine takes all the rubbish bins down to a collection point for emptying twice a week. Two stakeholder liaisons are also on hand to inform residents of the construction progress and work to mitigate any disruption.

For more information, please call 0800 900 007 or email hunua4@water.co.nz.



Servicemen Wesley Sio and Tafunai Olo don Watercare-branded high-visibility vests with their ID cards visible while connecting a water meter.

When we visit your property

Watercare staff and contractors working on or near your property will never require access into your home.

However, if they need to work on your property or will be undertaking work that affects your water supply or wastewater service, they will knock on your door to inform you.

If you would like to verify the identity of a Watercare staff member or one of our contractors – we use Meter Reading Services Limited, DataCol NZ, City Care and Downer – please ask to see their identification card. They are required to carry these as well as wear high-visibility vests or tops at all times.

You can also call us on (09) 442 2222 or the contracting company if you would like further confirmation of a person's role or contract with Watercare.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Tapped In is your newsletter.

If you would like to talk to us about any stories from this edition or your ideas for future issues, we'd love to hear from you. To get in touch, please phone our communications team on (09) 442 2222 or email info@water.co.nz. You can learn more about what we do at www.watercare.co.nz.