

Mangere Matters

October 2014

Working with you

As one of the largest and most sophisticated facilities of its type in the world, Watercare's Mangere plant occupies a significant place in its local community – and the way Watercare talks with and listens to that community is an example of its approach to stakeholder relations across all its business operations.

Established more than 15 years ago, the Mangere Community Liaison Group (CLG) provides a forum for Watercare to sit down with its neighbours and discuss issues of importance to all.

The CLG includes representatives from neighbouring Makaurau Marae, the local Residents and Ratepayers Association and the Local Board. Its meetings are regularly attended by Council officers and other bodies with particular interests in the Manukau Harbour, and by plant staff.

Meetings are held at the plant every three months, with the next meeting scheduled for early December. If you would like to attend, or would like any more information, please contact the CLG secretary, Alistair Shanks by emailing ashanks@water.co.nz

Mangere waters get a clean bill of health

Auckland Council's latest Safeswim report gives the Manukau Harbour a clean bill of health for swimming at both Mangere Bridge and Oruarangi Awa, the two monitored sites closest to the Mangere treatment plant.

Between November 2013 and March 2014, more than 1,500 samples were taken from 69 sites across the region, with health warnings required for a total of 96 days at 18 sites. Mangere Bridge and Oruarangi Awa were two of the 42 sites that did not exceed any guideline levels for the entire season, meaning they out-performed popular beaches including Little Oneroa, Mission Bay, and Takapuna.

The results come as no surprise to public health expert Dr Francesca Kelly. Dr Kelly chairs the Microbiological Review Group, one of several independent groups that monitors the performance of the Mangere plant, and says that since the removal of the oxidation ponds her group has held the view that the risk of swimmers contracting waterborne disease from the Mangere plant is negligible.

"Given the other bacterial and viral inputs into the Manukau, the recreational areas around the plant would certainly be as safe for swimming as elsewhere in the harbour – if not safer," says Dr Kelly.



BNR plant to boost treatment capacity

Work is under way on a new Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) facility at the Mangere plant.

Expected to be built by the end of 2017, the new facility will increase the plant's BNR treatment capacity by more than 20 percent.

The construction of the BNR facility is also a catalyst for the construction of a new access road to Puketutu Island – a part of the project that Project Manager Sven Harlos says is about aesthetics as much as it is about practicality.

“The new facility will extend the plant across to the south side of Island Road, so a new road is essential on health and safety and operational grounds,” says Sven.

“However, it also gives us the opportunity to create something that will add to the experience for the many people who come to enjoy Puketutu Island and the Mangere Coastal Walkway.”

The new road, which will run between Ascot Road and the causeway, is expected to be completed in March 2015.



Fast Fact

Biological Nutrient Removal is a process to remove nitrogen and phosphorus from wastewater.

High levels of these compounds promote the growth of algae, the presence of which reduces the nutrients available for other plants and animals. When algae decompose, oxygen is removed from the water, threatening fish and shellfish.

BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand) levels measure the amount of organic residue in the effluent and are a proxy for water quality; the resource consent conditions governing Watercare's Mangere plant specify strict maximum permitted levels for BOD.

Contract signing brings CI a step closer

Work on the Central Interceptor moved a step closer with the awarding of the detailed design contract to a team led by Jacobs Engineering.

Watercare's Major Projects Manager, Tim Munro, says the team's first task has been to address issues raised during the appeal against the consents granted to Watercare in November last year.

Since then, Watercare and the remaining appellants have been working through a mediation process that Tim says has given each party a better understanding of the other's concerns.

“We're making good progress towards resolving their outstanding concerns and having the design team involved has been a great help,” says Tim.

Meanwhile, Wastewater Operations Manager Mark Bourne says concerns about how the Central Interceptor will affect the Mangere plant's operation are misplaced.

“The Central Interceptor will increase the volume entering the plant by less than two percent, which is well within the existing consent levels and will have a negligible effect on the quantity or quality of what is discharged,” says Mark.

Mark says the level of suspended solids in the treated effluent currently discharged from Mangere is lower than levels in the broader harbour. Biochemical Oxygen Demand levels and levels of bacteria and other pollutants are also consistently well under the limits set by the resource consents governing the plant's operation.