

Monday 26 June 2023

**OIA IRO-417**

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Kia ora [REDACTED]

**Official information request regarding untreated wastewater overflows over the past five years.**

Thank you for your official information request dated Thursday 11 May 2023.

We have considered your request in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) and determined that we are able to grant your request in full.

The information you have requested, on untreated network wastewater overflows for the Wellington metropolitan area, is in Appendix A of this letter. Untreated wastewater pump station overflows are in Appendix B for 2021/22 and 2022/23 only and untreated wastewater Treatment Plant overflows in Appendix C.

Some of the information within those discharge forms has been withheld in accordance with [Section 7\(2\)\(a\)](#) of the Act as it is personal information about private individuals.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi,

[REDACTED]

**Group Manager, Customer Operations Group**

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[www.wellingtonwater.co.nz](http://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz)

**Our water, our future.**

## Background / context

The region's wastewater system is aging, and parts of the network are over 120 years old. When the wastewater network was originally constructed, it was designed around protecting public health, with less focus on the health of the environment.

This means the wastewater network can deal with daily average flows and up to five times more water than the average daily flow. However, if there is a blockage (what we refer to as dry weather overflows) or the network gets overloaded due to significant rainfall (what we refer to as wet weather overflows), the network is designed to transfer as much as it physically can to the treatment plants, but some wastewater will overflow from manhole lids and at certain outlets, or from pump stations into streams, rivers, and the harbour. This is designed to stop wastewater entering properties and public areas and minimise risks to public health.

As the region's water services provider, we are working with iwi, community, and our councils, who own and fund the water assets in the region, to reduce pollution in our environment. However, this will take long-term planning and significant investment from councils over many years to upgrade the wastewater network and improve environmental outcomes. We have started the planning work with our councils.

### Notifications of events

Wellington Water notifies the public of all untreated or partially treated (has bypassed the final UV treatment phase) overflows from the metropolitan wastewater treatment plants during heavy rainfall. These notifications are posted on our social channels and website, and we provide email notifications to interested parties in the relevant local community. We also report on these monthly to our councils and these reports are published on our website for each treatment plant.

We also regularly report on dry weather overflows in our quarterly reports which are provided to our councils and the Department of Internal Affairs. If there is a significant overflow event in dry weather from a network fault, we will put up warning signs near the discharge point to let people know of the risk and we will notify Land Air Water Aotearoa (LAWA) who may put up a notification on their website.

We currently do not push out notifications about wet weather overflows from the network or report them in our quarterly reports as they are not a formal performance indicator, but we are working on how we can do this within our current resources. We appreciate that these events are of public interest, and we are working to be as open and transparent as possible. Currently to mitigate public health risk, we proactively share LAWA's generic advice of staying out of the water 48 hours after heavy rainfall and we drive people to the advice on their website which includes predictions on water quality that are updated daily.

## Appendix A

### General Network Overflows

Here are the yearly totals of wastewater network overflows on our records, split across the councils that own the wastewater network in the region, since 2018.

The below data is for overflows from outlets and manhole lids in the wastewater network. Overflows from pump stations in the network are tracked separately and have been provided as a separate table in this response.

The majority of these overflows are related to blockages which result in relatively small overflows which are contained around the manhole or gully trap. These are generally caused by a combination of older, poor condition network pipes and things such as tree roots or inappropriate material such as wet wipes being flushed.

Note that systems for recording network discharge data have changed over the past five years, and accordingly there is some data variation between the years. We are working to streamline our data collection and build a detailed picture for public reporting. The data below is what we have now and may be refined as a result of our streamlining process.

Year (FY July – June)	HCC	PCC	UHCC	WCC	Total network overflows
FY 18/19	704	372	136	561	1773
FY 19/20	613	478	90	706	1887
FY 20/21	669	451	120	524	1764
FY 21/22	162	319	12	427	920
FY 22/23 YTD	94	311	3	282	690
<b>Total</b>	<b>2242</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>2500</b>	<b>7034</b>

## Appendix B

### Pumpstation overflows

Below is the data for wastewater overflows from pump stations in the network.

The majority of pump station overflows are wet weather overflows and a result of the pump station's capacity being overloaded by significant rainfall.

Please note that systems for recording network overflows data have changed significantly over the past five years, and accordingly we are only able to provide data for the past two years.

Year (FY July - June)	HCC	PCC	UHCC	WCC	Total overflows
FY 21/22	35	105	15	80	235
FY 22/23 YTD	23	75	7	45	150

## Appendix C

### Treatment plants

Heavy rainfall can cause large volumes of water to enter the treatment plant, causing it to reach its capacity. When this happens, the plants are designed to discharge the extra wastewater to the ocean. For three out of the four treatment plants, these overflows are of treated or partially treated wastewater. The Moa Point Wastewater Treatment Plant is the only plant that where there is occasional untreated wastewater discharged through the long outfall pipe during heavy rainfall.

Calendar Year	Number of untreated wastewater discharges at Moa Point
2018	0
2019	0
2020	0
2021	0
2022	2
2023-present	1

**Temporary Wastewater Discharge & Notification Form**

<b>Site</b>	Moa Point WWTP	<b>Notifier</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	0800-928-371	<b>Phone</b>	
<b>Date</b>	16/02/2022	<b>E-mail</b>	@veolia.com

Discharge Information		
Location	Short Outfall at Tanrakena Bay	
Cause	Heavy rain in the catchment area.	
Consent	Number	N/A
	Consented? (Y/N)	N
Weather Conditions	Heavy rain caused by Cyclone Dovi	
Actions Taken	Notifications issued. Sampling campaign initiated. Signs erected.	
Comments	Due to the heavy rain from Cyclone Dovi, the Moa Point WWTP experienced a short outfall discharge. Veolia will investigate what caused the short outfall discharge. Early assessments indicate the high rains and restrictions of the network resulted in the discharge.	

Is there any direct contact between wastewater and the following (Y/N)	
Human food sources (i.e. puha, watercress, grazing pastures)	N
Human drinking water supply source	N
Surface or ground water systems	N
Human recreation activities both land and water	Y

Discharge Parameters		Units	Result
Date	Start	DD/MM/YYYY HH MM	12/2/2022 23:48
	Stop	DD/MM/YYYY HH MM	13/2/2022 04:48
Duration		hh:mm	5:00:00
Average Flow	Plant Inlet	litres per second	3795
	Discharge to Coastal Marine Area	litres per second	42
Maximum Flow	Plant Inlet	litres per second	4094
	Discharge to Coastal Marine Area	litres per second	132
Total Treated Volume		cubic metres	47541
Discharge Volume	Coastal Marine Area	cubic metres	323
Dilution Ratio		--	N/A

Interested Party	Contact Details	
	Phone Number	Email Address
Wellington Water	04 912 4400	customer@wellingtonwater.co.nz WWTPManager@wellingtonwater.co.nz
Greater Wellington Regional Council	0800 496 734	notifications@gw.govt.nz
Regional Public Health	04 570 9002	healthprotection@huttvalleydwb.org.nz

**Temporary Wastewater Discharge & Notification Form**

<b>Site</b>	Moa Point WWTP	<b>Notifier</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Phone</b>	0800-928-371	<b>Phone</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Date</b>	23/02/2022	<b>E-mail</b>	[REDACTED]@veolia.com

Discharge Information		
Location	Tarakena Bay	
Cause	Currently under investigation	
Consent	Number	N/A
	Consented? (Y/N)	N
Weather Conditions	Heavy rain	
Actions Taken	Notifications issued. Signs opened. Sampling campaign initiated.	
Comments	Discharge of untreated wastewater through the short outfall at Tarakena Bay. Veolia are currently investigating the cause of the discharge.	

Is there any direct contact between wastewater and the following (Y/N)	
Human food sources (i.e. puha, watercress, grazing pastures)	N
Human drinking water supply source	N
Surface or ground water systems	N
Human recreation activities both land and water	Y

Discharge Parameters		Units	Result
Date	Start	DD/MM/YYYY HH MM	20/2/2022 06:05
	Stop	DD/MM/YYYY HH MM	20/2/2022 06:46
Duration		hh mm	0:41:00
Average Flow	Plant Inlet	litres per second	3100
	Discharge to Coastal Marine Area	litres per second	38
Maximum Flow	Plant Inlet	litres per second	3129
	Discharge to Coastal Marine Area	litres per second	151
Total Treated Volume		cubic metres	7468
Discharge Volume	Coastal Marine Area	cubic metres	97
Dilution Ratio		--	N/A

Interested Party	Contact Details	
	Phone Number	Email Address
Wellington Water	04 912 4400	customer@wellingtonwater.co.nz WWTPManager@wellingtonwater.co.nz
Greater Wellington Regional Council	0800 496 734	notifications@gw.govt.nz
Regional Public Health	04 570 9002	healthprotection@huttvalleydwb.org.nz

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023 11:53 AM  
**To:** Info Mailbox  
**Subject:** WASTEWATER DISCHARGE NOTIFICATION - Moa Point WWTP

Kia Ora Koutou

You are receiving this email because your email address appears on either the mailing list for the Moa Point Wastewater Treatment Plant or our list of interested parties.

This email is to let you know that because of High rainfall within the catchment leading to higher inflows than the plant is designed for at 09:30 19/04 there has been a discharge of Untreated wastewater at Short outfall into the ocean at Tarakena Bay which will make the water appear cloudy or murky.

Wellington Water recommends all recreational water users follow the advice of [Land, Air, Water Aotearoa \(LAWA\)](#) which suggests staying out of the water for two to three days after heavy rain.

To stop receiving these emails please contact:

Email: [customer@wellingtonwater.co.nz](mailto:customer@wellingtonwater.co.nz)

Ngā mihi

[REDACTED]  
**Information & Escalation Coordinator**

Customer Experience



Ph 04 912 4470 Mob [REDACTED]

Private Bag 39804, Wellington Mail Centre 5045  
Level 4, 25 Victoria Street, Petone, Lower Hutt

[www.wellingtonwater.co.nz](http://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz)

Wellington Water is owned by the Hutt, Porirua, Upper Hutt and Wellington City Councils, South Wairarapa District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council.

We manage their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services.