

**Stratford District Council**  
**Stratford WWTP**  
Monitoring Programme  
Annual Report  
2021-2022

Technical Report 2022-07



Working with people | caring for Taranaki

Taranaki Regional Council  
Private Bag 713  
Stratford

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February 2023

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## Executive summary

The Stratford District Council (SDC) operates a municipal wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) located on Victoria Road at Stratford, in the Patea catchment. This report for the period July 2021 to June 2022 describes the monitoring programme implemented by the Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) to assess SDC's environmental and consent compliance performance during the period under review. The report also details the results of the monitoring undertaken and assesses the environmental effects of SDC's activities.

**During the monitoring period, SDC demonstrated a level of environmental performance that required improvement and good level of administrative performance.**

SDC holds one resource consent to discharge treated wastewater into the Patea River. Consent 0196-5 includes a total of 17 conditions setting out the requirements that they must satisfy.

The Council's monitoring programme for the year under review included four inspections, wastewater analyses, and physicochemical and biological surveys (macroinvertebrate and periphyton) of the receiving waters of the Patea River.

In recent years, improvements in SDC's maintenance programme have generally enhanced the appearance of the plant and effectively controlled any produced odour. No complaints were received in relation to the operation of the WWTP. Regular inspections indicated no immediate problems with the performance of the plant. There was one overflow to land recorded during the monitoring year.

Wastewater and river quality was generally good at the time of the low flow summer receiving water physicochemical survey. However, summer and autumn biomonitoring surveys indicated a potentially ecologically significant impact on macroinvertebrate health between sites upstream and downstream of the effluent point, coincident with discharges from the Stratford WWTP. The results from the second year of monitoring periphyton indicated that the discharge was having an effect on biomass immediately downstream. The desirability of reducing such effects within the receiving waters has been recognised for some years. SDC has been working to find a solution to the excess nutrients and proposes to reduce the phosphorus in the influent, via a new Trade Waste Policy and Trade Waste Bylaw. This together with implementing a Diatomix process in Pond 2, should reduce phosphorus, nitrogen and algae levels downstream.

During the year, SDC demonstrated a level of environmental performance that required improvement, and a good level of administrative performance, with the resource consents as defined in Appendix 2. As noted above, SDC are actively pursuing options for reducing the effects of the discharge from the WWTP on the Patea River.

For reference, in the 2021-2022 year, consent holders were found to achieve a high level of environmental performance and compliance for 88% of the consents monitored through the Taranaki tailored monitoring programmes, while for another 10% of the consents, a good level of environmental performance and compliance was achieved.

In terms of overall environmental and compliance performance by the consent holder over the last several years, this report shows that the consent holder's performance is improving.

This report includes recommendations for the 2022-2023 year, including a recommendation relating to an optional review of consent 0196-5 due in June 2023.

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Compliance monitoring programme reports and the Resource Management Act 1991

#### 1.1.1 Introduction

This report is for the period July 2021 to June 2022 by the Council describing the monitoring programme associated with resource consent held by Stratford District Council (SDC). SDC operates a municipal wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) situated on Victoria Road at Stratford.

This report covers the results and findings of the monitoring programme implemented by the Council in respect of the consent held by SDC that relate to discharge of treated wastewater in the Patea catchment. This is the 35<sup>th</sup> annual report to be prepared by the Council to cover SDC's discharge and its effects.

#### 1.1.2 Structure of this report

**Section 1** of this report is a background section. It sets out general information about:

- consent compliance monitoring under the RMA and the Council's obligations;
- the Council's approach to monitoring sites through annual programmes;
- the resource consents held by SDC in the Patea catchment;
- the nature of the monitoring programme in place for the period under review; and
- a description of the activities and operations conducted at the Stratford WWTP.

**Section 2** presents the results of monitoring during the period under review, including scientific and technical data.

**Section 3** discusses the results, their interpretations, and their significance for the environment.

**Section 4** presents recommendations to be implemented in the 2022-2023 monitoring year.

A glossary of common abbreviations and scientific terms, and a bibliography, are presented at the end of the report.

#### 1.1.3 The Resource Management Act 1991 and monitoring

The RMA primarily addresses environmental 'effects' which are defined as positive or adverse, temporary or permanent, past, present or future, or cumulative. Effects may arise in relation to:

- a. the neighbourhood or the wider community around an activity, and may include cultural and social-economic effects;
- b. physical effects on the locality, including landscape, amenity and visual effects;
- c. ecosystems, including effects on plants, animals, or habitats, whether aquatic or terrestrial;
- d. natural and physical resources having special significance (for example recreational, cultural, or aesthetic); and
- e. risks to the neighbourhood or environment.

In drafting and reviewing conditions on discharge permits, and in implementing monitoring programmes, the Council is recognising the comprehensive meaning of 'effects' in as much as is appropriate for each activity. Monitoring programmes are not only based on existing permit conditions, but also on the obligations of the RMA to assess the effects of the exercise of consents. In accordance with Section 35 of the RMA, the Council undertakes compliance monitoring for consents and rules in regional plans, and

maintains an overview of the performance of resource users and consent holders. Compliance monitoring, including both activity and impact monitoring, enables the Council to continually re-evaluate its approach and that of consent holders to resource management and, ultimately, through the refinement of methods and considered responsible resource utilisation, to move closer to achieving sustainable development of the region's resources.

### 1.1.4 Evaluation of environmental performance

Besides discussing the various details of the performance and extent of compliance by the consent holders, this report also assigns a rating as to each Company's environmental and administrative performance during the period under review. The rating categories are high, good, improvement required and poor for both environmental and administrative performance. The interpretations for these ratings are found in Appendix II.

For reference, in the 2021-2022 year, consent holders were found to achieve a high level of environmental performance and compliance for 88% of the consents monitored through the Taranaki tailored monitoring programmes, while for another 10% of the consents, a good level of environmental performance and compliance was achieved.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 WWTP system

Stratford town sewage is treated by an oxidation pond system (Photo 1) and combined successive maturation cell system (2.6 ha and 1.7 ha in area), that was upgraded in 2009. Changes made to the system during the upgrade included:

- flow recorder installation at the inflow structure to the primary pond;
- splitter chamber replaced with an influent chamber (to prevent overflows);
- installation of a step screen system at the influent;
- relocation of the tanker waste disposal area to Esk Road;
- a new trade waste connection from the regional stockyards on Esk Road into the system; and
- improvements to the pond system itself.

A full history of the pond system and upgrade process can be found in the 2014-2015 annual report (TRC, 2015).

In 2013 a short-term consent was granted to SDC to cover an interim period of investigations covering issues and options for the Stratford wastewater treatment plant system going forward.

SDC now propose to reduce phosphorus in the influent primarily by implementing a new Trade Waste Policy and Trade Waste Bylaw which will prevent the high loading via trade waste, the majority of which was coming from outside the Stratford district. A Diatomix system will be installed in Pond 2 in order to reduce phosphorus, nitrogen and algae levels. The Diatomix system is a natural, biological process which may take up to 12 months to produce obvious results once installed.

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<sup>1</sup> The Council has used these compliance grading criteria for more than 18 years. They align closely with the 4 compliance grades in the MfE Best Practice Guidelines for Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement, 2018



Photo 1 Stratford WWTP

### 1.3 Resource consents

SDC holds one resource consent, the details of which are summarised in the table below. Summaries of the conditions attached to the permit are set out in Section 3 of this report.

A summary of the various consent types issued by the Council is included in Appendix I, as is a copy of the permit held by SDC during the period under review.

**Table 1 Resource consent held by SDC for the Stratford WWTP**

Consent number	Purpose	Granted	Review	Expires
<b>0196-5</b>	To discharge treated wastewater from the Stratford Wastewater Treatment Plant into the Patea River	May 2020	June 2023	June 2034

### 1.4 Monitoring programme

#### 1.4.1 Introduction

Section 35 of the RMA sets obligations upon the Council to gather information, monitor and conduct research on the exercise of resource consents within the Taranaki region. The Council is also required to assess the effects arising from the exercising of these consents and report upon them.

The Council may therefore make and record measurements of physical and chemical parameters, take samples for analysis, carry out surveys and inspections, conduct investigations and seek information from consent holders.

The monitoring programme for the Stratford WWTP site consisted of five primary components.

## 1.4.2 Programme liaison and management

There is generally a significant investment of time and resources by the Council in:

- ongoing liaison with resource consent holders over consent conditions and their interpretation and application;
- discussion over monitoring requirements;
- preparation for any consent reviews, renewals or new consent applications;
- advice on the Council's environmental management strategies and content of regional plans; and
- consultation on associated matters.

## 1.4.3 Site inspections

The Stratford WWTP was visited four times during the monitoring period. The main points of interest were plant operation, maintenance, upgrades, and performance and the discharges of treated wastewater. These inspections provided for the operation, internal monitoring, and supervision of the plant to be reviewed by the Council.

## 1.4.4 Chemical sampling

The Council undertook sampling of the discharge from the site, as well as the in-river water quality either side of the discharge point and mixing zone.

The Stratford WWTP final effluent from the maturation cells was sampled on four occasions.

Sampling of the Patea River either side of the discharge was carried out concurrently, with additional bacteriological (faecal coliform) and metal analyses included during one sampling occasion under summer low flow conditions.

## 1.4.5 Biomonitoring surveys

Two biological surveys were performed in the Patea River (one spring, one summer), to determine if the discharge of treated wastewater from the site has had a detrimental effect upon the communities of the stream.

## 1.4.6 Periphyton surveys

Periphyton biomass was assessed at four sites in the Patea River (Photo 2). These surveys are scheduled monthly, however due to high river flows there will be some months where these will not be able to be undertaken. Eight surveys were carried out during the 2021-2022 year.



Photo 2 Periphyton monitoring at site PAT000356

## 2 Results

### 2.1 Water

#### 2.1.1 Inspections

**4 August 2021**

The step screen waste bin was covered and wastes were fully contained. Minimal odour was emanating from around this area. The influent flow rate was 144 m<sup>3</sup>/hr (40 L/s). Three of the four aerators in the main pond were operating and the pond was a turbid, pale green colour. Pond level was higher than normal. In excess of 250 mallard ducks, Canadian geese and black swans were present.

Cell 1 was just breaching the dividing walls via the overtopping channels. Several Canadian geese, mallard, teal and paradise ducks were observed, along with some black swans nesting. The pond was slightly turbid brown and relatively clear. The treated effluent discharge flow rate into the Patea River was estimated at 40 L/s with a slight visual effect (discolouration) observed in the receiving water. No significant odour was noted around the ponds.

Several issues were noted in relation to the ponds, these included: noticeable wave band scouring, weedy wave bands, an undercut drain, debris in situ after a previous overflow incident, and the outlet screen partially blocked with accumulated debris impeding the discharge flow. Cattle were not grazing the pond perimeters, although electric fences remained in situ.

SDC were asked to ensure the screen on the Pond 1 outlet was cleared and maintained to a satisfactory standard, especially during periods of high flows.

**23 November 2021**

The step screen waste bin was covered and wastes were fully contained. There was a slight odour emanating from around this area. The influent flow rate was 194 m<sup>3</sup>/hr (54 L/s). Three out of four aerators were operating on the main pond. The pond was slightly turbid and a grey brown colour. Wildlife consisted of several mallard and teal ducks, and black swans. It appeared that the ultrasonic bird scaring devices may be helping to prevent birds from gathering near the southern end of the pond.

Cell levels were normal, showing the dividing wall channels. Canadian geese, black swans, mallard, teal and paradise ducks were all present. The cells were slightly turbid, and green/brown in colour. The treated effluent discharge flow rate into the Patea River was estimated at around 40 L/s with no significant visual environmental effects noted at the point of discharge.

No significant odour was emanating from the ponds. The Esk Road trade waste facility was also inspected and found to be compliant.

**19 January 2022**

The step screen was operating and wastes were fully contained. The influent flow rate was 22 m<sup>3</sup>/hr (6 L/s). Three out of four aerators were operating. The pond was a turbid dark green. Wildlife was numerous.

In excess of 2,000 birds were observed on the cells, this consisted of Canadian geese, mallard, teal and paradise ducks, and several black swans. The effluent discharge into the Patea River was estimated at 8 L/s and this resulted in a noticeable visible impact on the river and a reduction in the black disc measurement downstream.

Minimal odour was noted, mainly near the influent step screen end. The Esk Road unloading facility was inspected and found to be compliant. As mentioned in previous inspection notices, SDC was reminded that the bird population needs to be controlled.

28 April 2022

The step screen waste bin was covered and wastes were fully contained. Minimal odour was emanating from around this area. The influent flow rate was 37 m<sup>3</sup>/hr (10 L/s). Three out of four aerators were operating on the main pond and this was a turbid dark green. The outlet screen was clear. Approximately 50 Canadian geese and black swans were observed.

Cell levels were low. Wildlife was abundant, with Canadian geese, mallard, teal and Paradise ducks, plus black swans present. The pond was turbid and dark green in colour. The treated effluent discharge flow rate into the Patea River was estimated at 10 L/s with no significant visual environmental effects noted in the receiving water.

The SDC WWTP and surrounds were found to be satisfactory. No significant odour was emanating from the ponds. The Esk Road trade waste facility was also inspected and found to be compliant. SDC were using a bird scaring device around the ponds to discourage the bird population and this appeared to be successful with bird numbers significantly reduced.



Photo 3 View of Stratford WWTP primary pond with aerators operating

## 2.2 Results of effluent monitoring

### 2.2.1 Effluent quality

Samples were collected from the outlet of the tertiary maturation cell during inspections. The sample was tested for additional parameters on 19 January in conjunction with the low flow survey of receiving waters. These results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Results of effluent monitoring on at site OXP005002

Parameter	Unit	Date				2009-2021 Range
		4 Aug 2021	23 Nov 2021	19 Jan 2022	28 Apr 2022	
BODCF	g/m <sup>3</sup>	2.3	5.5	3.0	3.7	1.3 - 45
Chloride	g/m <sup>3</sup>	13.9	22	24	30	12 - 35
Conductivity	mS/m@25°C	-	-	30.1	-	36.7 - 37.3*
<i>E. coli</i>	/100 ml	-	-	9,800	-	1,515-8,660
pH	pH	6.9	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.1 - 8.8
SS	g/m <sup>3</sup>	-	-	43	-	5 - 86
Turbidity	FNU	9.9	14.2	28	18	3.7 - 71
Temperature	°C	10.5	19.9	23.1	14.3	6.2 - 22.8
<b>Nutrient Analyses</b>						
NH <sub>3</sub>	g/m <sup>3</sup>	0.0175	0.32	0.146	0.0079	0.042 - 0.58
NH <sub>4</sub>	g/m <sup>3</sup> N	8.5	23	8.4	0.96	0.870 - 25.4
NNN	g/m <sup>3</sup> N	0.59	0.12	1.6	-	0.31 - 4.28
DRP	g/m <sup>3</sup> P	0.64	2.8	1.9	2.6	0.695 - 4.97
<b>Metal Analyses (acid soluble)</b>						
Cadmium	g/m <sup>3</sup>	-	-	< 0.0010	-	<0.001 - 0.005
Chromium	g/m <sup>3</sup>	-	-	< 0.010	-	<0.01 - 0.03
Zinc	g/m <sup>3</sup>	-	-	< 0.02	-	0.008 - 0.035
Appearance		Turbid, pale green	Turbid, grey brown	Turbid, dark green	Turbid, dark green	

\* conductivity previously measured at 20°C

The tertiary cell effluent quality was typical of a well-treated secondary oxidation pond waste with low filtered BOD<sub>5</sub> and moderate suspended solids levels and *E. coli* bacteria. Nutrient levels were typical of the secondary oxidation pond treated effluent.

Metal concentrations were less than minimum detectable levels. None of these metals' concentrations measured in the effluent at the time of the survey would be expected to exceed toxic levels for aquatic fauna given the dilution provided in the receiving waters of the Patea River.

## 2.2.2 Dissolved oxygen levels

The dissolved oxygen (DO) concentration in WWTPs varies both seasonally and during the day as a result of a combination of factors. The photosynthetic activity of the pond's microflora together with fluctuations in influent waste loadings on the system are the major influencing factors. Minimum DO concentrations are generally recorded in the early hours of daylight, and therefore pond performance has been evaluated by standardising sampling times toward mid-morning for all regular inspection visits during the monitoring period.

The Stratford WWTP effluent was analysed for DO, chloride and temperature, and the results are displayed in Table 3.

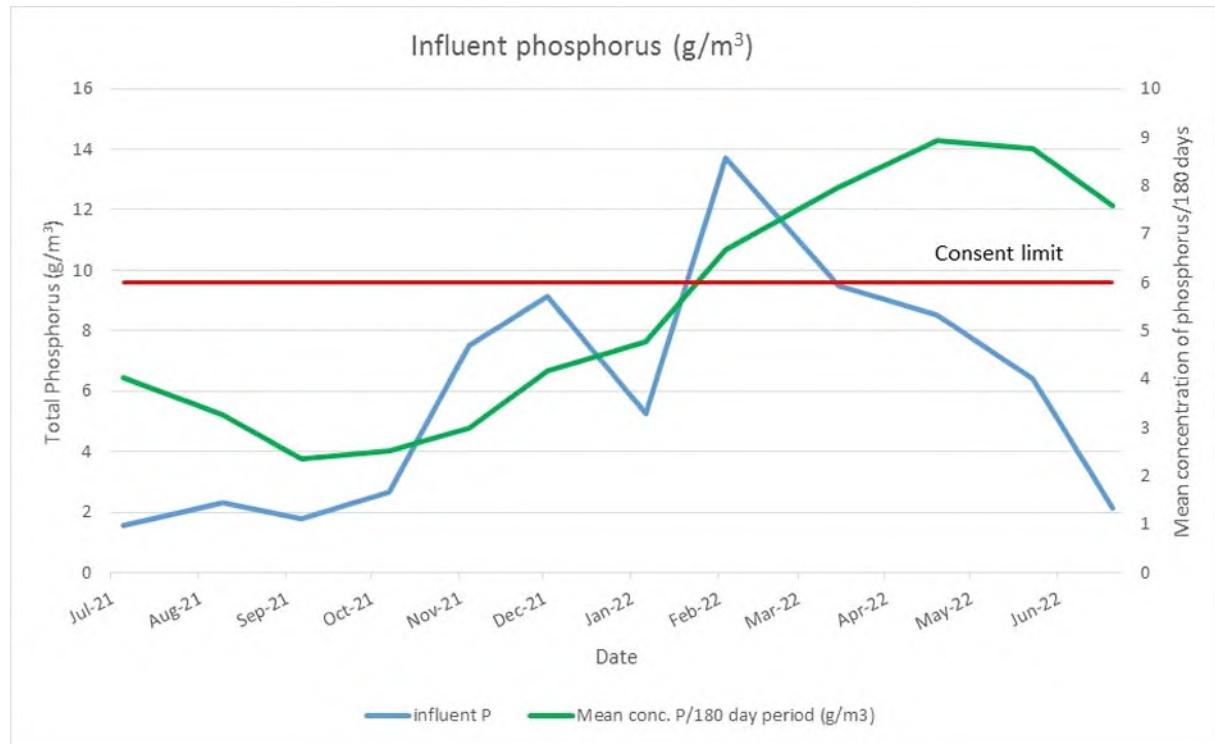
The results displayed a narrow range of DO concentrations (between 2% and 13% saturation) in the surface layer of the tertiary maturation cell near the outlet. This was typical of the results generally recorded at this point (i.e. supersaturation is seldom recorded), and indicates that DO was present at all times in the surface layer of the cell. The variation in saturation levels measured to date has been typical of a biological treatment system in which the photosynthetic contribution of the microfloral population often causes wide dissolved oxygen variations.

**Table 3** Dissolved oxygen measurements from the Stratford WWTP

Date	Time (NZST)	Temperature (°C)	Chloride (g/m <sup>3</sup> )	Dissolved Oxygen	
				Concentration (g/m <sup>3</sup> )	Saturation (%)
4 Aug 2021	09:45	10.5	14	0.56	5
23 Nov 2021	10:15	19.9	22	1.18	13
19 Jan 2022	09:10	23.1	24	0.18	2
28 Apr 2022	09:20	14.3	30	1.24	12

Condition 4 of consent 0196-5 requires that (from June 2022) the dissolved oxygen concentration in the oxidation pond adjacent to the outlet shall exceed 0 g/m<sup>3</sup> at all times, while condition 5 requires that the consent holder continuously measure the dissolved oxygen in Pond 1 and adjacent to the outlet. Review of the data provided showed that both of these conditions were complied with at all times.

## 2.2.3 Phosphorus



**Figure 1** Influent phosphorus and mean concentration over 180 days

Condition 7 of consent 0196-5 requires that from 1 June 2020, the mean concentration of phosphorus over any 180 day period (based on a least one sample each month), shall be no more than 6 g/m<sup>3</sup> at the inlet of Pond 1. Monthly sampling of phosphorus by SDC found that influent phosphorus results were higher than 6 g/m<sup>3</sup> from November 2021 to May 2022 (with the exception of January 2022), which then resulted in the

mean concentration over any 180 day period during 2021-2022 exceeding 6 g/m<sup>3</sup> from February to June 2022. SDC undertook extra sampling at five sites in the wider catchment during May, June, and July 2022 in an attempt to discover the source of the elevated phosphorus levels. All results were under 6 g/m<sup>3</sup> and there was no obvious source detected. The influent phosphorus dropped below 6 g/m<sup>3</sup> from June 2022 and as a result the mean concentration over any 180 day period has also since dropped to comply with the consent condition.

## 2.2.4 Nitrate

Condition 6 requires that SDC install a Diatomix system in the oxidation pond before June 2022, while condition 8 requires that the nitrate concentration in Pond 2 generally trend downwards over the following 12 months to reach a practical minimum, at which it is then maintained.

The Diatomix system had not been installed by the end of the 2021-2022 monitoring period, however SDC has been collecting monthly nitrate data since December 2019 to establish a baseline from which a downwards trend will hopefully emerge once the system is in place (Figure 2).

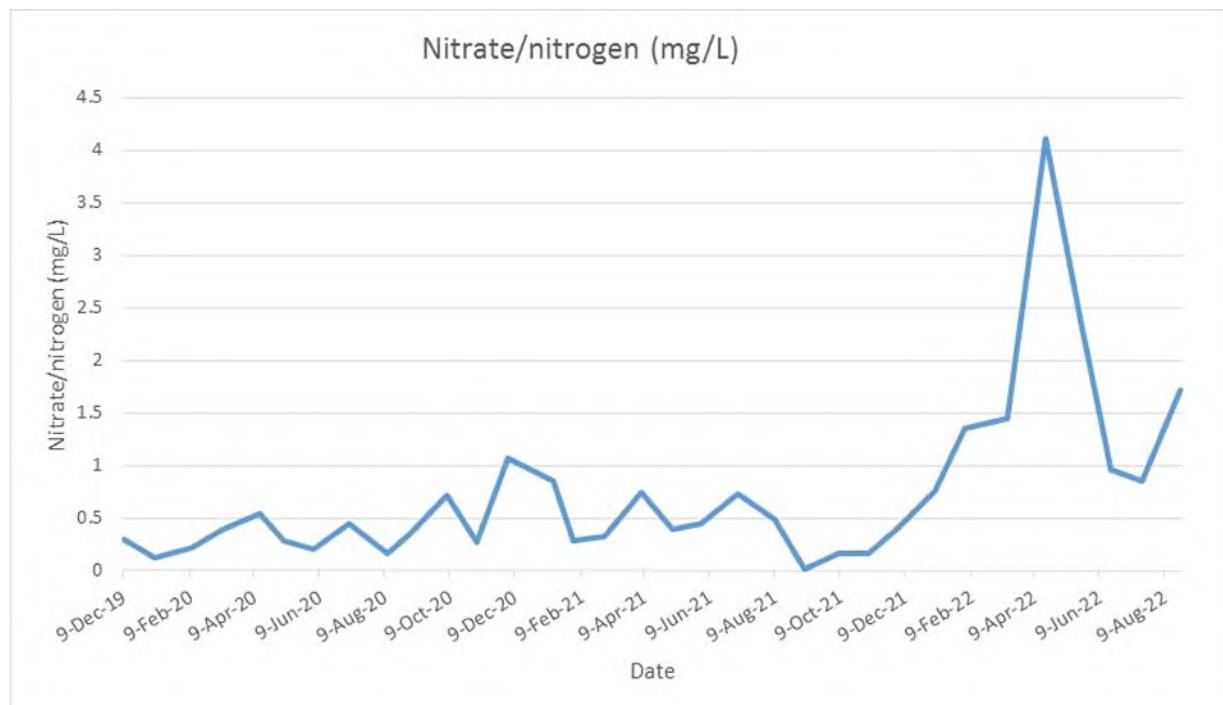


Figure 2 Effluent nitrate

## 2.2.5 Microfloral component

Pond microflora are very important for the stability of the symbiotic relation between aerobic bacteria in the pond. These phytoplankton may be used as a bio-indicator of pond conditions, for example cyanobacteria are often present in under-loaded conditions and chlorophyceae are present in over-loaded conditions. To maintain facultative conditions in a pond system, there must be an algal community present in the surface layer.

The principal function of algae is the production of oxygen which maintains aerobic conditions while the main nutrients are reduced by biomass consumption. Elevated pH (due to algal photosynthetic activity) and solar radiation combine to reduce faecal bacteria numbers significantly.

Samples of the tertiary cell effluent were collected on all inspections for chlorophyll-a analyses. Chlorophyll-a concentration can be a useful indicator of the algal population present in the system. Pearson (1996) suggested that a minimum in-pond chlorophyll-a concentration of 300 mg/m<sup>3</sup> was necessary to maintain

stable facultative conditions. However, seasonal change in algal populations and also dilution by stormwater infiltration might be expected to occur in any WWTP which, together with fluctuations in waste loadings, would result in chlorophyll-a variability.

The results of the maturation cell effluent analyses are provided in Table 4 together with field observations of pond appearance.

Relatively poor microfloral populations were indicated by low chlorophyll-a concentrations, especially in the cooler months. These results have been attributed to wet weather conditions and stormwater dilution through the WWTP system. While the summer and autumn concentrations were higher, this still did not indicate a significant phytoplanktonic component.

**Table 4 Chlorophyll-a levels and tertiary cell appearance**

Date	Time (NZST)	Appearance	Chlorophyll-a (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Range for the period 2013-2021	
				Range	Median
4 Aug 2021	09:45	Slightly turbid, pale green	1.0	0.5 - 520	70
23 Nov 2021	10:15	Turbid, grey-brown	8.2		
19 Jan 2022	09:10	Turbid, dark green	128		
28 Apr 2022	09:20	Turbid, dark green	170		

## 2.3 Results of receiving environment monitoring

Monitoring of the impacts of the Stratford WWTP on the receiving waters was measured using both chemical analyses of the receiving waters of the Patea River beyond the boundary of the mixing zone, biological monitoring surveys and periphyton biomass surveys. Chemical sampling was carried out on four occasions during the 2021-2022 period (Section 2.3.1). Two macroinvertebrate biomonitoring surveys were conducted, one during spring 2021 and one in summer 2022 (Section 2.3.2). Eleven periphyton biomass surveys were also conducted (Section 2.3.3).

### 2.3.1 Receiving water surveys

The locations of receiving water sampling sites are listed in Table 5 and displayed in Figure 3 below.

**Table 5 Location of sampling sites**

Site no.	Location	Site code
1	At Swansea Road bridge (u/s of landfill and WWTP discharges)	PAT000315
2	Approx. 250 m d/s of the WWTP original discharge (and 350 m u/s of the new outfall)	PAT000345
(Discharge)	At discharge point from rock riprap outfall	OXP005002
3a	Approx. 130 m d/s of the WWTP new outfall	PAT000350
4	Approx. 1 km u/s of the Kahouri Stream confluence	PAT000356



Figure 3 Aerial location map of sampling sites in relation to Stratford WWTP

### 2.3.1.1 Receiving water surveys of August and November 2021, and April 2022

Receiving water samples were collected on 4 August and 23 November 2021, and 28 April 2022 at two sites in the Patea River, upstream and downstream of the Stratford WWTP discharge point. The results of these surveys are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6 Receiving water results August and November 2021, and April 2022

Site		PAT000345 (upstream)				PAT000350 (downstream)			
Date		4 Aug 2021	23 Nov 2021	28 Apr 2022	2009-2021 Range	4 Aug 2021	23 Nov 2021	28 Apr 2022	2009-2021 Range
Parameter	Unit	10:15	11:10	10:40	-	10:50	10:50	10:10	
CBOD	g/m³	<1.0	<1.0	<1.0	<0.5-<2	<1.0	<1.0	<1.0	<0.5-<2
Chloride	g/m³	8	8	8	7.5-11.8	8	9	9	7.6-10.0
pH	pH	7.0	7.4	7.6	7.3-9.5	6.7	7.4	7.6	7.4-10
Turbidity	FNU	1.4	1.2	0.77	0.54-1.8	1.9	1.6	1.1	0.74-4.8
Temperature	°C	8.6	14.9	10.8	7.7-17.0	8.7	15.1	10.8	7.8-17.5
NH <sub>3</sub>	g/m³ N	0.00015	0.0005	0.00021	0.00019-0.00187	0.00029	0.0049	0.00029	0.00013-0.01274
NH <sub>4</sub>	g/m³ N	0.069	0.079	0.030	0.019 - 0.148	0.28	0.72	0.039	0.038-1.07

Most parameters showed no significant effects in the Patea River below the WWTP discharge. Turbidity levels did not increase more than 50% on any occasion, complying with condition 14. Filtered carbonaceous BOD<sub>5</sub> concentration was below the 2.0 gm<sup>3</sup> limit, while unionised ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) was well below the 0.025 gm<sup>3</sup> limit. It is noted that although unionised ammonia was well below the consent limit, both this and ammoniacal nitrogen increased significantly downstream.

### 2.3.1.2 Low flow receiving water survey of January 2022

A summer low flow assessment of the impact of the WWTP's effluent discharge on the receiving waters of the Patea River was performed on 19 January 2022. River flow at the Skinner Road recorder was 0.932 m<sup>3</sup>/s during a low flow period, 22 days after a river fresh three times over the median flow. There was a moderate rate of discharge from the ponds system, estimated at approximately 8 L/s at the time of the survey. The results of the survey are displayed in Table 7.

A dilution ratio of approximately 26 parts river flow to one part effluent discharge at the time of the sampling survey was indicated by reference to selected analytical results assuming complete mixing at the sampling site (PAT000350).

There was a notable decrease in black disc clarity between the upstream site and the site immediately downstream of the discharge, and the clarity had not increased at the furthermost downstream site (PAT000356). This was a breach of condition 13(b) which states that there shall be no conspicuous change in colour or visual clarity downstream. The turbidity increase was 160% which is well above the 50% allowed by condition 14, but as both upstream and downstream results were relatively low at <1.5 FNU, it was not considered that there would be significant effects in the receiving water because of this. Suspended solid levels were low at all sites and did not increase significantly downstream (<3 g/m<sup>3</sup> to 4 gm<sup>3</sup>).

Nutrient concentrations increased compared with upstream at the site immediately downstream. Unionised ammonia remained well under the consent limit of 0.025 g/m<sup>3</sup>. No significant impacts on the river were recorded for the other parameters measured (Table 7) with minimal or no increases in measured levels of chloride, conductivity, bacteria, and filtered carbonaceous BOD<sub>5</sub>. These results were indicative of compliance with condition 15 of the consent. Of note but unexplained was pH, which was 7.8 at the upstream and immediately downstream sites, but was 8.8 at the site 1 km downstream. A similar pattern has also been noted in the results from the previous several years. Dissolved oxygen concentrations exceeded 100% saturation at all sites upstream and downstream of the discharge.

There was a notable change in the river appearance immediately downstream of the site, going from clear and uncoloured upstream, to slightly turbid and green-brown in colour downstream.

Table 7 Low flow receiving water results, January 2022

Site		PAT000315 (u/s)		PAT000345 (u/s)		PAT000350 (d/s)		PAT000356 (d/s)	
Date		19 Jan 2022	2009-2021 Range						
Parameter	Unit								
Black disc	m	2.61	1.94-3.13	2.62	1.27-3.92	1.61	1.10-3.02	1.65	1.21-2.65
BOD (total)	g/m <sup>3</sup>	0.5	<0.5-0.8	0.6	<0.5-1.2	1.5	0.9-3.6	1.1	1.1-2.7
BODCF	g/m <sup>3</sup>	<1.0	<0.5-<1.0	<1.0	<0.5-<1.0	<1.0	<0.5-<1.0	<1.0	<0.5-<1.0
Chloride	g/m <sup>3</sup>	9	7.5-10.1	10	7.5-9.5	9	7.6-10	10	8.6-9.6
Conductivity	mS/m @25°C	11.0	8.6-11.5	11.3	7.2-11.6	12.0	7.7-12.7	11.5	9.2-12.1

Site		PAT000315 (u/s)		PAT000345 (u/s)		PAT000350 (d/s)		PAT000356 (d/s)	
Date		19 Jan 2022	2009-2021 Range	19 Jan 2022	2009-2021 Range	19 Jan 2022	2009-2021 Range	19 Jan 2022	2009-2021 Range
DO (concentration)	g/m³	9.54	9.2-10.4	9.65	9.1-10.3	9.88	9.20-10.3	11.9	10.2-12.7
DO (saturation)	%	103	95-105	106	94-103	109	96-108	134	102-139
<i>E.coli</i>	/100ml	365	150-411	435	109-461	548	99-345	124	88-326
pH	pH	7.7	7.4-7.8	7.8	7.3-8.2	7.8	7.3-7.9	8.8	7.5-8.9
SS	g/m³	<3	2.0-9.0	<3	<2.0-4.0	4	<2-5	4	2.0-4.0
Turbidity	FNU	0.5	0.46-3.6	0.5	0.50-1.8	1.3	0.74-4.8	1.2	0.63-3.6
Temperature	°C	17.4	11.9-17.4	18.1	7.70-17.6	18.4	8.0-18.2	19.6	12.8-19.3
<b>Nutrient Analyses</b>									
NH₃	g/m³ N	0.00020	0.00009-0.00064	0.0012	0.00019-0.00187	0.0062	0.00055-0.01274	<0.003	<0.003-0.00484
NH₄	g/m³ N	0.013	0.006-0.035	0.062	0.037-0.148	0.31	0.038-1.07	<0.010	0.006-0.123
NNN	g/m³ N	0.58	0.42-0.78	0.62	0.4-0.8	0.73	0.48-0.91	0.79	0.55-1.1
DRP	g/m³ P	0.027	0.019-0.057	0.018	0.006-0.051	0.090	0.020-0.206	0.060	0.051-0.152
<b>Metal Analyses (dissolved)</b>									
Cadmium	g/m³	<0.00005	<0.00005-0.005	<0.00005	<0.00005-0.005	<0.00005	<0.00005-0.005	<0.00005	<0.00005-0.005
Chromium	g/m³	<0.0005	<0.0005-0.003	<0.0005	<0.0005-0.03	<0.0005	<0.0005-0.03	<0.0005	<0.0005-0.03
Zinc	g/m³	<0.0010	<0.005-0.005	<0.0010	0.0012-0.007	0.0124	<0.005-0.007	<0.0010	<0.0010-0.005
Appearance	Clear, uncoloured			Clear, uncoloured			Slightly turbid, green-brown		Turbid, brown

### 2.3.2 Macroinvertebrate monitoring surveys

Subsequent to the WWTP upgrade in 2009, spring and summer biological monitoring surveys were undertaken to in order to assess the effectiveness of the upgraded system. Summer biomonitoring surveys only have been conducted since 2011, but due to concerns about impacts on river health from the discharge, two biomonitoring surveys are now routinely undertaken.

The Council collected streambed macroinvertebrates from four sites (Table 8, Figure 4) in the Patea River in early summer (20 January 2022) and autumn (30 March 2022) to investigate the effects of the Stratford WWTP discharge on macroinvertebrate health. Macroinvertebrates were identified and the number of different types of taxa counted (taxa richness), and Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) and Semi-Quantitative Macroinvertebrate Community Index (SQMCI) scores were calculated for each site.

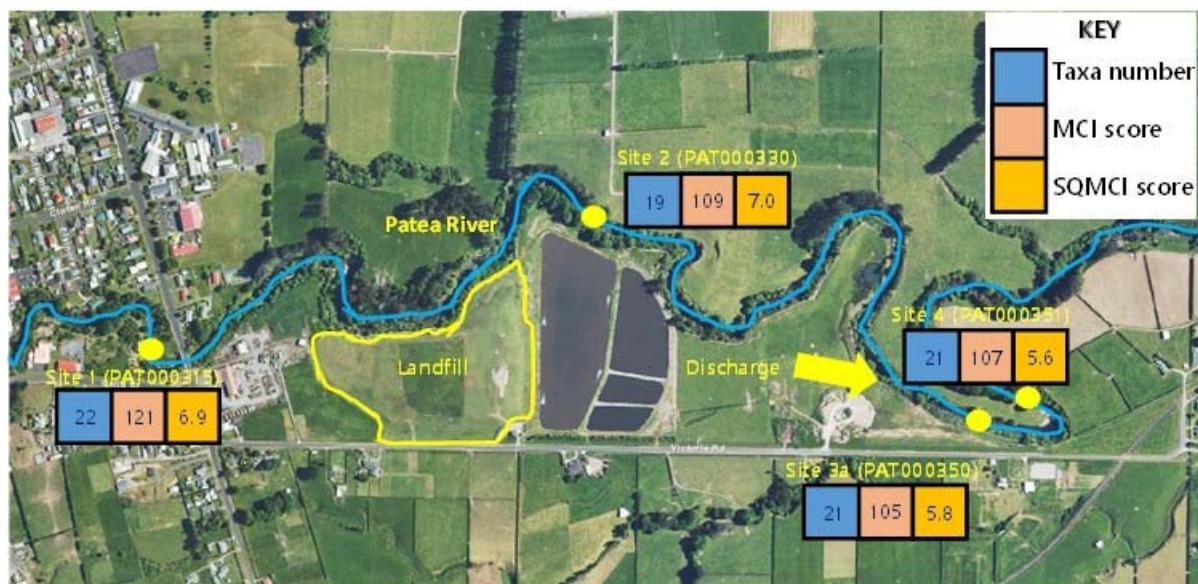
The MCI is a measure of the overall sensitivity of the macroinvertebrate community to the effects of nutrient pollution in streams. It is based on the presence/absence of taxa with varying degrees of sensitivity to pollution. The SQMCI takes into account taxa abundance as well as sensitivity to pollution, and may reveal more subtle changes in communities. Significant differences in either the MCI or the SQMCI between sites

indicate the degree of adverse effects (if any) of the discharges being monitored and enable the overall health of the macroinvertebrate communities to be determined.

**Table 8 Location of sampling sites in the Patea River**

Site No	Location	Site code
1	Swansea Road bridge (upstream of landfill and oxidation ponds' discharge)	PAT000315
2	150 m u/s Stratford oxidation ponds' discharge	PAT000330
3a	Approximately 130 m downstream of the WWTP new outfall	PAT000350
4	340 m downstream of new Stratford WWTP discharge	PAT000351

#### Summer survey - January 2022



**Figure 4 Taxa number, MCI scores and SQMCI scores for biomonitoring sites in the Patea River (summer)**

The January survey found macroinvertebrate taxa richness at all four sites were moderate with very little difference among sites (0-3 taxa). Taxa richness were only slightly lower than historic medians (1-4 taxa). It was unlikely that there had been any significant acute toxic discharges emanating from either the closed landfill or sewage discharge.

The MCI scores categorised site 1 as being in 'very good' health while the three downstream sites were in 'good' health. There were significant differences between site 1 and the three downstream sites. The lower three sites had scores 12-16 MCI units lower than site 1. This suggested a decline downstream of the closed landfill. There were no significant differences among the three downstream sites. The SQMCI categorised site 1 as being in 'very good health', site 2 as being in 'excellent' health, and sites 3a and 4 as being in 'good' health. Sites 1 and 2 had scores very similar to each other indicating that the closed landfill was not having a significant impact on macroinvertebrate communities while sites 3a and 4 had significantly lower SQMCI scores than both site 1 and site 2. This indicated that WWTP discharges were having an impact on downstream macroinvertebrate communities.

Overall, the results indicate there was a decline in macroinvertebrate health in the Patea River. This was indicative of chronic nutrient enrichment coincident with discharges from the Stratford WWTP and consistent with results from previous surveys.

### Autumn survey - March 2022

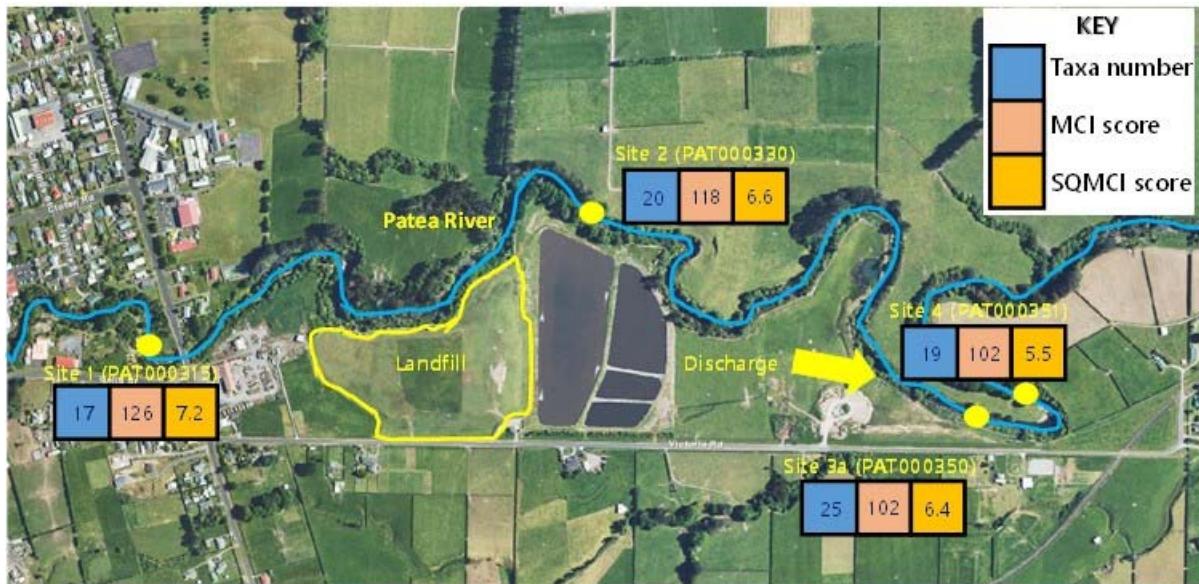


Figure 5 Taxa number, MCI scores and SQMCI scores for biomonitoring sites in the Patea River (autumn)

During the autumn survey macroinvertebrate taxa richness at all four sites were moderate to moderately high with little difference among sites 1, 2 and 4 (one to three taxa), while site 3a (25 taxa) had a taxa richness five to eight taxa higher than the other three sites. Taxa richness were slightly lower to moderately lower than historic medians (two to eight taxa) at sites 1, 2 and 4, and three taxa higher at site 3a. It was unlikely that there had been any significant acute toxic discharges emanating from either the closed landfill or sewage discharge.

The MCI scores categorised site 1 as being in 'very good' health while the three downstream sites were in 'good' health. There were no significant differences between the two upstream sites or between the two downstream sites, however, the two upstream sites recorded significantly higher scores than the two downstream sites, by between 16-24 MCI units. This indicated that there was a significant decline downstream of the Stratford WWTP discharge. Sites 1 and 2 had scores that were significantly higher than historical medians indicating healthier than usual macroinvertebrate communities, while sites 3 and 4 were in typical health. Site 2 had a score significantly higher than the previous survey, while the other three sites had scores similar to the previous survey.

The SQMCI categorised site 1 as being in 'excellent' health, site 2 and 3a as being in 'very good' health, and site 4 as being in 'good' health. Congruent with MCI scores, SQMCI scores declined in a downstream direction. However, in contrast to MCI scores, there were no significant difference between sites 1 and 2 and site 3, though site 1 was close to be significantly higher than site 3. Sites 2 and 3 had very similar scores (0.2 unit difference). There were significant differences between sites 1, 2 and 3a and site 4 of 1.7, 1.1 and 0.9 units respectively. Sites 1, 3a and 4 were also significantly higher than historical medians, while site 2 was not significantly different to its historical median. There were no significant differences between current scores and the previous survey for any sites.

Overall, there was some evidence of nutrient enrichment but this was not sufficient enough to conclude that WWTP discharges were having a significant effect on macroinvertebrate communities in the Patea River.

Copies of the biomonitoring reports are available from Council upon request.

### 2.3.3 Periphyton biomass

Periphyton is the layer of slime that can form on stream beds and on submerged objects. It consists of a mixture of algae and cyanobacteria that naturally occurs in rivers and streams. It plays a fundamental role in stream ecosystem functioning by utilising sunlight via photosynthesis to absorb nutrients and organic compounds for growth, and subsequently becoming a food source for invertebrates which in turn provide food for other organisms such as fish and birds. Nuisance periphyton in the form of prolific thick mats, pervasive long filaments or cyanobacteria can cause a range of issues such as streams becoming un-inviting for recreational users, anglers having difficulty fishing, streams closures due to cyanobacteria toxins and adverse impacts on stream ecology.

Condition 12 of consent 0196-5 requires that ecological monitoring in relation to periphyton biomass is undertaken. Sampling was carried out at four sites, one site upstream of the discharge and three sites downstream (Table 9, Figure 6). Monthly sampling is scheduled where possible, however where flow conditions prevented safe monitoring, neither periphyton biomass or periphyton cover were assessed.

**Table 9 Location of periphyton sampling sites in the Patea River**

Site No	Location	Site code
1	Above Stratford WWTP outfall	PAT000347
2	Below discharge (approximately 130 m downstream of the discharge)	PAT000350
3	Upstream of Kahouri confluence (approximately 3km downstream of discharge)	PAT000356
4	Skinner Road bridge (approximately 5km downstream of discharge)	PAT000360

Periphyton biomass samples were collected at all sites using a modified version of quantitative method 1b of the Stream Periphyton Monitoring Manual (Biggs & Kilroy 2000). These samples were processed for chlorophyll-a. Visual estimates of periphyton cover were made concurrently using Rapid assessment method 2 of the Stream Periphyton Monitoring Manual.

Eight samples were collected during the 2021-2022 monitoring period. The results are presented in Table 10 and Figure 7.

Figure 7 shows that periphyton biomass generally increased immediately downstream of the discharge, and then generally decreased in a downstream direction, although remained higher than the upstream site.

Site PAT000350 (immediately downstream of the discharge) recorded the maximum level of Chlorophyll-a recorded during the monitoring period, likely due to the high levels of nutrients discharged from the Stratford WWTP. There appeared to be a seasonal pattern, with the highest values recorded at all sites in January and March. This could be attributed to a higher dilution of the WWTP discharge (i.e. increased stormwater in the system dilutes nutrients prior to discharge), cold water, high overall flows, and more frequent fresh flows. The highest values of Chlorophyll-a were recorded in the summer/autumn period which would coincide with warm water, low overall flows, and less freshes. The exception to this was the low levels in February which were likely due to flooding in mid-February.

Guidelines in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM 2020) set out a grading system for periphyton in rivers (Table 11). As this is the second year that periphyton monitoring has been undertaken, this information is included as a reference only as these grades are based on a monthly monitoring regime and the minimum record length for grading a site based on periphyton (chlorophyll-a) is three years. No single chlorophyll-a result exceeded the National bottom line of 200 mg/m<sup>2</sup>, while 19% of samples fell into 'Band C'. The majority of samples were in 'Band A' at 46%, with 42% of sample results in 'Band B'.



Figure 6 Periphyton sampling sites in the Patea River

Table 10 Periphyton biomass

Site	PAT000347		PAT000350		PAT000356		PAT000360	
Date	Chl-a mg/m <sup>2</sup>	Temp °C						
29-Oct-21	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-
2-Nov-21	12	11.4	78	11.4	46	11.7	*	*
14-Jan-22	86	15.5	5	16.5	131	18.4	128	18.5
23-Feb-22	9	15.0	27	15.2	52	15.6	20	16.0
17-Mar-22	84	12.9	191	13.0	132	14.0	126	13.7
27-Apr-22	17	10.9	43	11.1	46	12.8	61	11.7
26-May-22	21	10.4	73	10.3	74	10.5	54	11.0
23-Jun-22	24	7.8	^	^	119	7.6	*	*

- Rest of run called off due to thunderstorm

\* Unable to access site

^ Flow too swift and deep

Table 11 Grading system for periphyton in rivers (modified from NPS-FM 2020)

Band	Description	Chl-a mg/m <sup>2</sup> *
A	Rare blooms reflecting negligible nutrient enrichment and/or alteration of the natural flow regime or habitat	≤50
B	Occasional blooms reflecting low nutrient enrichment and/or alteration of the natural flow regime or habitat	>50 and ≤120
C	Periodic short-duration nuisance blooms reflecting moderate nutrient enrichment and/or moderate alteration of the natural flow regime or habitat	>120 and ≤200
<b>National bottom line</b>		200
D	Regular and/or extended-duration nuisance blooms reflecting high nutrient enrichment and/or significant alteration of the natural flow regime or habitat	>200

\* exceeded in no more than 8% of samples

NOTE: Based on a monthly monitoring regime with three years data required for grading.

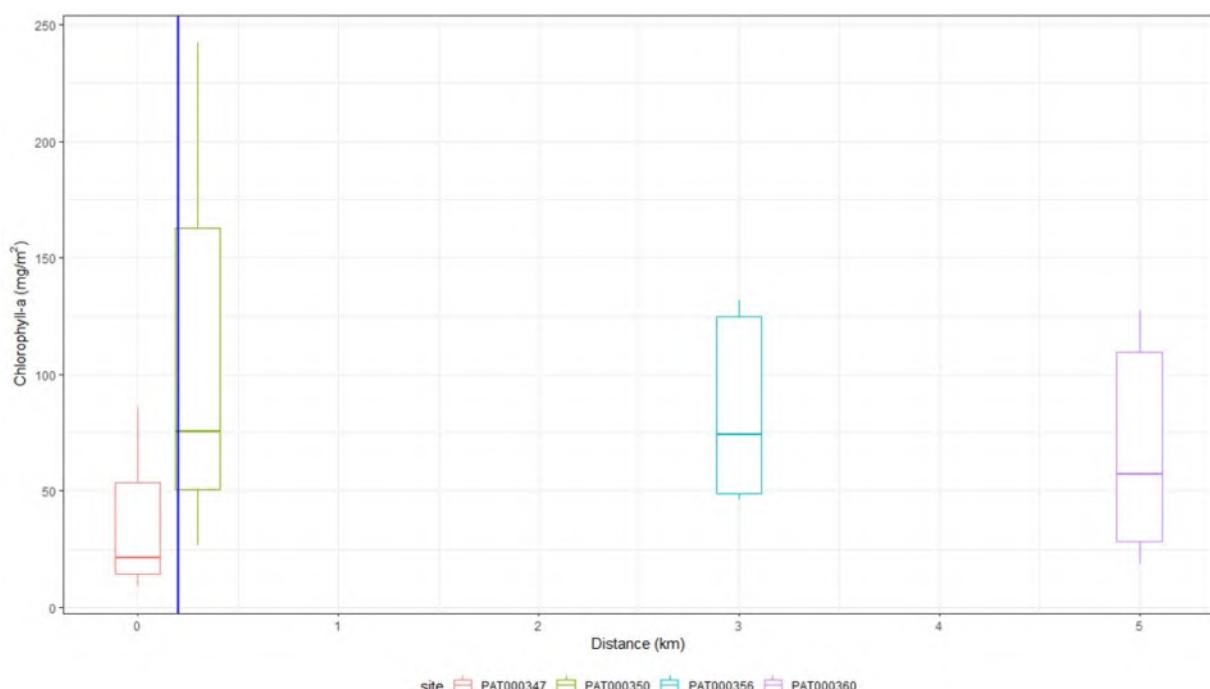


Figure 7 Periphyton biomass 2021-2022 shown in relation to distance from the discharge (blue line)

## 2.4 Inflow and infiltration reduction

SDC continue to report on progress with the implementation of the inflow and infiltration reduction programme to minimise stormwater inflow as per condition 9 of consent 0196-5. This programme includes visual infiltration surveys in winter and summer, followed by CCTV surveys within the reticulation to determine sections requiring repairs or replacement.

During the 2019-2020 year, 406 m of earthenware sewer pipe were replaced with PVC pipe. In conjunction with this work, fiberglass inserts were installed to ensure proper seals were achieved. Three manholes were sealed to prevent groundwater entering the system and three new manholes were installed to aid in future cleaning, inspection and relining.

During the 2020-2021 year, a total of 320 m of wastewater pipes were relined.

No pipe-lining work occurred in the 2021-2022 monitoring period due to COVID restrictions, contractor availability and material supply chain issues. Storm water infiltration assessments were made of properties within the Stratford township to restrict roof water and other hard stand areas discharging into the wastewater network. Ten properties were found to have storm water ingress into the wastewater network through downpipes and hard stand areas; the inflow from these properties was stopped.

Works proposed in order to meet the target set for the 2022-2023 year are focused on three inflow and infiltration factors:

- Relining of pipework;
- Manhole replacement;
- Storm water discharges into residential gully traps.

#### Pipe-lining

As no relining works were able to occur during 2021-2022 the unspent funds have been carried into the 2022-2023 financial year, amounting to \$300,000. It is expected that camera investigations of the network will be programmed for spring, when ground water levels are lower. Lining of the areas identified as infiltration prone is expected to commence in early 2023, with approximately 600 metres of pipelining to occur.

#### Manhole replacement

Every manhole in SDC's wastewater network receives an evaluative inspection every three years; defective manholes which require replacement or repair will be confirmed during the programmed inspection regime.

#### Residential gully traps

SDC has directed resources to undertake a programme of inspections of gully traps at all residential properties connected to SDC's wastewater reticulation network. The programme of inspections and any remedial works required are expected to be completed by 30 June 2023.

## 2.5 Incidents, investigations, and interventions

The monitoring programme for the year was based on what was considered to be an appropriate level of monitoring, review of data, and liaison with SDC. During the year matters may arise which require additional activity by the Council, for example provision of advice and information, or investigation of potential or actual causes of non-compliance or failure to maintain good practices. A pro-active approach, that in the first instance avoids issues occurring, is favoured.

For all significant compliance issues, as well as complaints from the public, the Council maintains a database record. The record includes events where the individual/organisation concerned has itself notified the Council. Details of any investigation and corrective action taken are recorded for non-compliant events.

Complaints may be alleged to be associated with a particular site. If there is potentially an issue of legal liability, the Council must be able to prove by investigation that the identified individual/organisation is indeed the source of the incident (or that the allegation cannot be proven).

Table 12 below sets out details of any incidents recorded, additional investigations, or interventions required by the Council in relation to the SDC's activities during the 2021-2022 period. This table presents details of all events that required further investigation or intervention regardless of whether these were found to be compliant or not.

**Table 12 Incidents, investigations, and interventions summary table**

Date	Details	Compliant (Y/N)	Enforcement Action Taken?	Outcome
28 July 2021	During unrelated monitoring it was found that there was evidence that an overflow of raw sewage had occurred to land in the vicinity of the Stratford WWTP.	N	No	Investigation found that the overflow had occurred due to a manhole lid lifting during heavy rain. Works were undertaken to prevent reoccurrence. A letter of explanation was received and accepted.

## 3 Discussion

### 3.1 Discussion of site performance

The Stratford WWTP system has continued to perform satisfactorily, with aerobic conditions maintained and a generally high standard of treated wastewater discharged throughout the monitoring period. Effluent quality was of a good standard. Monitoring of the microfloral component of the tertiary cell of the secondary pond (using chlorophyll-a measurements) indicated that the system had a low algal content, particularly following heavy rainfall events. Microfloral populations have not indicated poor performance of the treatment system to date and generally indicate an improvement in conditions in the tertiary cell since the last WWTP upgrade.

There was one overflow to land recorded during the monitoring period. This occurred during heavy rain when a manhole lid lifted. Works were undertaken to prevent this reoccurring.

During the consent renewal process, SDC investigated a number of options to improve the performance of the WWTP system and hence decrease the amount of nutrients discharging to the river. Chemical dosing to reduce phosphorus was initially proposed, however this does not remove the phosphorus, merely locking it up and then requiring mechanical removal and disposal. Also investigated were land disposal options and nitrogen reduction using in-pond media. SDC now proposes to reduce the phosphorus in the influent via a new Trade Waste Policy and Trade Waste Bylaw, along with implementing a Diatomix process in Pond 2. This will hopefully reduce phosphorus, nitrogen and algae levels. Conditions on the renewed consent include a timeline for these measures to be in place.

During 2021-2022 SDC has been trialling a number of bird scaring methods and devices around the ponds to attempt to reduce the significant bird population.

Condition 1 of consent 0196-5 requires that the volume of wastewater discharged over any 24-hour period ending at midnight shall not exceed 4,800 m<sup>3</sup>, unless there has been a total of more than 10 mm of rain over the previous three days. The discharge exceeded the 4,800 m<sup>3</sup> discharge limit regularly, however this was usually a result of high rainfall and therefore the condition was complied with for the majority of the 2021-2022 year that data was available.

Condition 6 required that the Diatomix system was installed in the oxidation pond before 1 June 2022. Both dosing units were installed and commissioned in June/July 2022.

Condition 9 of consent 0196-5 requires that SDC provides an annual report on inflow and infiltration. This report is to include progress made towards reducing this, targets for reduction for the coming year, details of work undertaken to date, and the estimated amount of work remaining. During the 2021-2022 year no relining of wastewater pipes occurred due to various including COVID restrictions, contractor availability and material supply chain issues. Stormwater ingress from ten properties within the Stratford township was identified and prevented. Work planned to be undertaken in 2022-2023 includes further relining of pipes, manhole replacement and the inspection of stormwater discharges to gully traps at residential properties.

Condition 11 of consent 0196-5 requires that SDC convene an annual meeting with Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui and Fish & Game New Zealand. The second of these meetings was held during 2021-2022.

### 3.2 Environmental effects of exercise of consents

No significant impacts of the discharge were recorded on the physical and chemical quality of the Patea River during the late summer low flow survey. Localised and moderate increases in nutrients were recorded downstream of the rock riprap outfall, mitigated to a certain extent by the effluent quality which was of a good standard at the time of the survey. Turbidity increased by 160% below the discharge (consent condition 14 of 0196-5 allows for <50%), however both upstream and downstream results were relatively

low at <1.5 FNU. It was not considered that there would be significant effects in the receiving water because of this. Suspended solid levels were low at all sites and did not increase significantly downstream (<3 g/m<sup>3</sup> to 4 gm/<sup>3</sup>).

Three additional seasonal receiving water monitoring surveys found no significant effects in the Patea River below the WWTP discharge with levels of filtered carbonaceous BOD<sub>5</sub>, turbidity, and unionised ammonia complied with consent conditions.

The late summer macroinvertebrate survey found a decline in macroinvertebrate health in the Patea River. This was indicative of chronic nutrient enrichment coincident with discharges from the Stratford WWTP and consistent with results from previous surveys. There was some evidence of nutrient enrichment in the autumn survey, but this was not sufficient enough to conclude that the WWTP discharges were having a significant effect on macroinvertebrate communities in the Patea River. Renewed consent 0196-5 requires that SDC reduce levels of phosphorus and nitrate in the WWTP. This should result in improved macroinvertebrate health in the Patea River below the discharge.

Periphyton monitoring found that biomass increased immediately downstream of the discharge, this was likely due to the high levels of nutrients discharged from the Stratford WWTP. There also appeared to be a seasonal pattern. This could be attributed to a higher dilution of the WWTP discharge (i.e. increased stormwater in the system dilutes wastewater, and therefore nutrients, prior to discharge), cold water, high overall flows, and more frequent fresh flows in wet/colder months. The highest values of Chlorophyll-a were recorded in the summer/autumn period which would coincide with warm water temperatures allowing for faster growth, longer daylight hours which promotes photosynthesis, low overall flows, and longer periods without freshes or floods to scour away periphyton. Although three years' of monitoring is required prior to grading a site, no single chlorophyll-a result exceeded the National bottom line of 200 mg/m<sup>2</sup> and the majority of result fell within 'Band A' and 'Band B' indicating low nutrient enrichment.

### 3.3 Evaluation of performance

A tabular summary of the consent holder's compliance record for the year under review is set out in Table 13.

**Table 13 Summary of performance for consent 0196-5**

<b>Purpose: To discharge treated wastewater from the Stratford Wastewater Treatment Plant into the Patea River</b>		
<b>Condition requirement</b>	<b>Means of monitoring during period under review</b>	<b>Compliance achieved?</b>
1. Limits on the discharge volume	Review of data provided by consent holder	Mostly – a few days exceeded without rain. Data not available after 12 December 2021
2. Consent holder to measure and record rate and volume of discharge	Review of data provided by consent holder	Mostly – issues with obtaining parts for broken meter. Data not available after 12 December 2021
3. Best practicable option to prevent or minimise adverse environmental effects	Inspection, liaison with consent holder	Yes

<b>Purpose: To discharge treated wastewater from the Stratford Wastewater Treatment Plant into the Patea River</b>		
<b>Condition requirement</b>	<b>Means of monitoring during period under review</b>	<b>Compliance achieved?</b>
4. Dissolved oxygen to exceed 0 g/m <sup>3</sup> at all times	Review of telemetered data	Yes
5. Consent holder to continuously measure concentration of dissolved oxygen and provide data	Data provided	Yes
6. Diatomix system to be installed before June 2022	Dosing units have been installed and commissioned	Yes
7. Mean concentration of phosphorus over any 180 day period < 6 g/m <sup>3</sup>	Review of data received from consent holder	No. Exceeded February to June 2022
8. Nitrate concentration in Pond 2 to trend downwards following installation of Diatomix system	Not due during period under review	N/A
9. Reporting on inflow and infiltration due 31 July annually	Report received	Yes
10. Maintenance of Contingency plan	Plan up to date as of July 2021	Yes
11. Annual meeting with Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui and Fish & Game annually until at least 2025	Meeting held	Yes
12. Chemical, bacteriological and ecological monitoring of the oxidation pond system and Patea River to be carried out	SDC and Council monitoring	Yes
13. Limits on receiving water effects	Inspections, sampling, biological monitoring	No. Change in colour and clarity. Potential effects on macroinvertebrates. Increase in periphyton
14. Limits on turbidity downstream	Sampling	No. Turbidity exceeded in low flow sample
15. Limits on unionised ammonia and filtered carbonaceous BOD <sub>5</sub> downstream	Sampling	Yes
16. Consent holder to notify Council if trade wastes are accepted into the system that may change the general nature of the discharge	Liaison with consent holder	Yes
17. Review of consent	Optional review in June 2023, recommendation attached in section 3.6	N/A

<b>Purpose: To discharge treated wastewater from the Stratford Wastewater Treatment Plant into the Patea River</b>		
<b>Condition requirement</b>	<b>Means of monitoring during period under review</b>	<b>Compliance achieved?</b>
Overall assessment of consent compliance and environmental performance in respect of this consent		<b>Improvement Required</b>
Overall assessment of administrative performance in respect of this consent		<b>Good</b>

N/A = not applicable

Table 14 Evaluation of environmental performance over time

<b>Year</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Improvement req</b>	<b>Poor</b>
2010	-	1	-	-
2011	-	1	-	-
2012	-	1	-	-
2013	-	1	-	-
2014	-	1	-	-
2015	-	1	-	-
2016	-	1	-	-
2017	-	1	-	-
2018	-	1	-	-
2019	-	1	-	-
2020	-	1	-	-
2021	-	-	1	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

During the year, SDC demonstrated a level of environmental performance that required improvement, and a good level of administrative performance, with the resource consents as defined in Appendix II. As noted above, SDC are actively pursuing options for reducing the effects of the discharge from the WWTP upon the Patea River.

### 3.4 Recommendations from the 2020-2021 Annual Report

In the 2020-2021 Annual Report, it was recommended:

1. THAT in the first instance, monitoring of consented activities at Stratford WWTP in the 2021-2022 year continue at the same level as in 2020-2021.
2. THAT should there be issues with environmental or administrative performance in 2021-2022, monitoring may be adjusted to reflect any additional investigation or intervention as found necessary.
3. THAT the option for a review of resource consent 0196-5 in June 2022, as set out in condition 17 of the consent, not be exercised, on the grounds that the current conditions are adequate.

These recommendations were implemented as appropriate.

### 3.5 Alterations to monitoring programmes for 2022-2023

In designing and implementing the monitoring programmes for air/water discharges in the region, the Council has taken into account:

- the extent of information already made available through monitoring or other means to date;
- its relevance under the RMA;
- the Council's obligations to monitor consented activities and their effects under the RMA;
- the record of administrative and environmental performances of the consent holder; and
- reporting to the regional community.

The Council also takes into account the scope of assessments required at the time of renewal of permits, and the need to maintain a sound understanding of industrial processes within Taranaki exercising resource consents.

No planned changes have been made to the 2022-2023 monitoring programme.

It should be noted that the proposed programme represents a reasonable and risk-based level of monitoring for the site in question. The Council reserves the right to subsequently adjust the programme from that initially prepared, should the need arise if potential or actual non-compliance is determined at any time during 2022-2023.

### 3.6 Exercise of optional review of consent

Resource consent 0196-5 provides for an optional review of the consent in June 2023. Condition 17 allows the Council to review the consent, for the purpose of ensuring that the conditions are adequate to deal with any adverse effects on the environment.

Based on the results of monitoring in the year under review, and in previous years as set out in earlier annual compliance monitoring reports, it is considered that there are no grounds that require a review to be pursued.

## 4 Recommendations

1. That in the first instance, monitoring of consented activities at Stratford WWTP in the 2022-2023 year continue at the same level as in 2021-2022.
2. That should there be issues with environmental or administrative performance in 2022-2023, monitoring may be adjusted to reflect any additional investigation or intervention as found necessary.
3. That the option for a review of resource consent 0196-5 in June 2023, as set out in condition 17 of the consent, not be exercised, on the grounds that the current conditions are adequate.

## Glossary of common terms and abbreviations

The following abbreviations and terms may be used within this report:

Biomonitoring	Assessing the health of the environment using aquatic organisms.
BOD	Biochemical oxygen demand. A measure of the presence of degradable organic matter, taking into account the biological conversion of ammonia to nitrate.
BODCF	Carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand of a filtered sample.
cfu	Colony forming units. A measure of the concentration of bacteria usually expressed as per 100 millilitre sample.
COD	Chemical oxygen demand. A measure of the oxygen required to oxidise all matter in a sample by chemical reaction.
Conductivity	Conductivity, an indication of the level of dissolved salts in a sample, usually measured at 25°C and expressed in mS/m.
DO	Dissolved oxygen.
DRP	Dissolved reactive phosphorus.
E.coli	<i>Escherichia coli</i> , an indicator of the presence of pathological micro-organisms,
FC	Faecal coliforms, an indicator of the possible presence of faecal material and pathological micro-organisms. Usually expressed as colony forming units per 100 millilitre sample.
Fresh	Elevated flow in a stream, such as after heavy rainfall.
g/m <sup>3</sup>	Grams per cubic metre, and equivalent to milligrams per litre (mg/L). In water, this is also equivalent to parts per million (ppm), but the same does not apply to gaseous mixtures.
Incident	An event that is alleged or is found to have occurred that may have actual or potential environmental consequences or may involve non-compliance with a consent or rule in a regional plan. Registration of an incident by the Council does not automatically mean such an outcome had actually occurred.
Intervention	Action/s taken by Council to instruct or direct actions be taken to avoid or reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring.
Investigation	Action taken by Council to establish what were the circumstances/events surrounding an incident including any allegations of an incident.
Incident Register	The Incident Register contains a list of events recorded by the Council on the basis that they may have the potential or actual environmental consequences that may represent a breach of a consent or provision in a Regional Plan.
L/s	Litres per second.
m <sup>2</sup>	Square Metres.
MCI	Macroinvertebrate community index; a numerical indication of the state of biological life in a stream that takes into account the sensitivity of the taxa present to organic pollution in stony habitats.
mS/m	Millisiemens per metre.
Mixing zone	The zone below a discharge point where the discharge is not fully mixed with the receiving environment. For a stream, conventionally taken as a length equivalent to 7 times the width of the stream at the discharge point.
NH <sub>4</sub>	Ammonium, normally expressed in terms of the mass of nitrogen (N).

NH <sub>3</sub>	Unionised ammonia, normally expressed in terms of the mass of nitrogen (N).
NNN	Nitrate-Nitrite nitrogen.
NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup>	Nitrate, normally expressed in terms of the mass of nitrogen (N).
NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	Nitrite, normally expressed in terms of the mass of nitrogen (N).
NTU	Nephelometric Turbidity Unit, a measure of the turbidity of water.
pH	A numerical system for measuring acidity in solutions, with 7 as neutral. Numbers lower than 7 are increasingly acidic and higher than 7 are increasingly alkaline. The scale is logarithmic i.e. a change of 1 represents a ten-fold change in strength. For example, a pH of 4 is ten times more acidic than a pH of 5.
Physicochemical	Measurement of both physical properties (e.g. temperature, clarity, density) and chemical determinants (e.g. metals and nutrients) to characterise the state of an environment.
Resource consent	Refer Section 87 of the RMA. Resource consents include land use consents (refer Sections 9 and 13 of the RMA), coastal permits (Sections 12, 14 and 15), water permits (Section 14) and discharge permits (Section 15).
RMA	<i>Resource Management Act 1991</i> and including all subsequent amendments.
SS	Suspended solids.
SQMCI	Semi quantitative macroinvertebrate community index.
Temp	Temperature, measured in °C (degrees Celsius).
Turb	Turbidity, expressed in NTU.
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant.
Zn*	Zinc.

\*an abbreviation for a metal or other analyte may be followed by the letters 'As', to denote the amount of metal recoverable in acidic conditions. This is taken as indicating the total amount of metal that might be solubilised under extreme environmental conditions. The abbreviation may alternatively be followed by the letter 'D', denoting the amount of the metal present in dissolved form rather than in particulate or solid form.

For further information on analytical methods, contact an Environment Quality Manager.

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## Appendix I

### Resource consents held by Stratford District Council

(For a copy of the signed resource consent  
please contact the TRC Consents department)

### **Water abstraction permits**

Section 14 of the RMA stipulates that no person may take, use, dam or divert any water, unless the activity is expressly allowed for by a resource consent or a rule in a regional plan, or it falls within some particular categories set out in Section 14. Permits authorising the abstraction of water are issued by the Council under Section 87(d) of the RMA.

### **Water discharge permits**

Section 15(1)(a) of the RMA stipulates that no person may discharge any contaminant into water, unless the activity is expressly allowed for by a resource consent or a rule in a regional plan, or by national regulations. Permits authorising discharges to water are issued by the Council under Section 87(e) of the RMA.

### **Air discharge permits**

Section 15(1)(c) of the RMA stipulates that no person may discharge any contaminant from any industrial or trade premises into air, unless the activity is expressly allowed for by a resource consent, a rule in a regional plan, or by national regulations. Permits authorising discharges to air are issued by the Council under Section 87(e) of the RMA.

### **Discharges of wastes to land**

Sections 15(1)(b) and (d) of the RMA stipulate that no person may discharge any contaminant onto land if it may then enter water, or from any industrial or trade premises onto land under any circumstances, unless the activity is expressly allowed for by a resource consent, a rule in a regional plan, or by national regulations. Permits authorising the discharge of wastes to land are issued by the Council under Section 87(e) of the RMA.

### **Land use permits**

Section 13(1)(a) of the RMA stipulates that no person may in relation to the bed of any lake or river use, erect, reconstruct, place, alter, extend, remove, or demolish any structure or part of any structure in, on, under, or over the bed, unless the activity is expressly allowed for by a resource consent, a rule in a regional plan, or by national regulations. Land use permits are issued by the Council under Section 87(a) of the RMA.

### **Coastal permits**

Section 12(1)(b) of the RMA stipulates that no person may erect, reconstruct, place, alter, extend, remove, or demolish any structure that is fixed in, on, under, or over any foreshore or seabed, unless the activity is expressly allowed for by a resource consent, a rule in a regional plan, or by national regulations. Coastal permits are issued by the Council under Section 87(c) of the RMA.

**Discharge Permit**  
**Pursuant to the Resource Management Act 1991**  
**a resource consent is hereby granted by the**  
**Taranaki Regional Council**

Name of  
Consent Holder: Stratford District Council  
PO Box 320  
Stratford 4352

Decision Date 7 April 2020

Commencement Date 1 May 2020

### Conditions of Consent

Consent Granted: To discharge treated wastewater from the Stratford Wastewater Treatment Plant into the Patea River

Expiry Date: 1 June 2034

Review Date(s): June 2021, then annually until 2025, and 3-yearly thereafter and in accordance with special condition 17

Site Location: Stratford Wastewater Treatment Plant,  
Victoria Road, Stratford

Grid Reference (NZTM) 1712836E-5644349N (approximate discharge point)

Catchment: Patea

*For General, Standard and Special conditions  
pertaining to this consent please see reverse side of this document*

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### **General condition**

- a. The consent holder shall pay to the Taranaki Regional Council all the administration, monitoring and supervision costs of this consent, fixed in accordance with section 36 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

### **Special conditions**

- 1) The volume of treated wastewater discharged over any 24-hour period ending at midnight shall not exceed 4,800 cubic metres, unless there has been a total of more than 10 mm of rain over the previous three days (as measured by the Taranaki Regional Council rain gauge at Stratford).
- 2) The consent holder shall install and maintain equipment that measures and records the rate and volume of the discharge to an accuracy of  $\pm 5\%$ , at intervals not exceeding 15 minutes. Records of the date, the time and the rate and volume of the discharge shall be transmitted to the Taranaki Regional Council's computer system within 2 hours of being recorded.
- 3) The consent holder shall at all times adopt the best practicable option, as defined in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991, to prevent or minimise any adverse effects of the discharge on the environment.
- 4) From 1 June 2022, the dissolved oxygen concentration in the oxidation pond adjacent to the outlet shall exceed  $0 \text{ gm}^{-3}$  at all times.
- 5) The consent holder shall continuously measure the concentration of dissolved oxygen in:
  - (a) Pond 1; and
  - (b) the oxidation pond adjacent to the outlet.The data shall be made available to the Taranaki Regional Council within 2 hours of being recorded.

- 6) Before 1 June 2022, the consent holder shall install the Diatomix system in the oxidation pond (as described in the addendum received by the Taranaki Regional Council on 30 September 2019), and advise the Taranaki Regional Council of the date of installation.
- 7) From 1 June 2020, the mean concentration of phosphorus over any 180 day period (based on at least one sample each month), shall be no more than  $6 \text{ g/m}^3$  at the inlet of Pond 1.
- 8) Following installation of the Diatomix system the nitrate concentration in Pond 2 shall generally trend downwards. Within 12 months this nitrate concentration shall reach a practical minimum and then be maintained at a practical minimum.

- 9) Before 31 July each year, the consent holder shall provide to the Chief Executive, Taranaki Regional Council a report covering:
- details of the progress made towards reducing inflow and infiltration reduction over the previous year ending 30 June;
  - the consent holder's target for reduction of inflow and infiltration in the coming year and details of the works proposed in order to meet that target; and
  - details of the total amount of work that has been undertaken to date, and the estimated amount of work remaining.

Copies of the report shall be provided to Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui and Fish & Game NZ for information purposes.

- 10) The consent holder shall maintain and annually update a 'Contingency Plan' that details measures and procedures to be undertaken to prevent, and to avoid environmental effects from any discharge of contaminants not authorised by this consent. The Plan and any amended version(s) shall be provided to the Chief Executive of the Taranaki Regional Council.
- 11) The consent holder shall convene an annual meeting with Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui and Fish & Game New Zealand for the first 5 years following granting of this consent, and in subsequent years if requested by either party, to discuss the progress and effectiveness of the treatment system.
- 12) The consent holder shall, in conjunction with the Taranaki Regional Council, undertake chemical, bacteriological and ecological monitoring of the oxidation pond system and the Patea River as deemed reasonably necessary by the Chief Executive, Taranaki Regional Council subject to Section 36 of the Resource Management Act 1991. The monitoring shall specifically include dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP), nitrogen-species, and periphyton biomass.
- 13) At a point 130 metres downstream of the discharge point the discharge shall not give rise to any of the following effects in the receiving waters of the Patea River:
- the production of any conspicuous oil or grease films, scums or foams, or floatable or suspended materials;
  - any conspicuous change in the colour or visual clarity;
  - any emission of objectionable odour;
  - any significant adverse effect on aquatic ecosystems.
- 14) At a point 130 metres downstream of the discharge point the discharge shall not give rise to an increase in turbidity of more than 50% (as determined using FNU ((Formazin Nephelometric Units)) in the Patea River.
- 15) At a point 130 metres downstream of the discharge point the discharge shall not cause the receiving waters of the Patea River to exceed the following concentrations:

Contaminant	Concentration
Unionised ammonia	0.025 gm <sup>-3</sup>
Filtered carbonaceous BOD <sub>5</sub>	2.0 gm <sup>-3</sup>

- 16) The consent holder shall notify and advise the Chief Executive, Taranaki Regional Council if trade wastes are accepted from any trade premises into the consent holder's wastewater system, that may change the general nature of the discharge from that described in the consent application. Copies of the notification shall be provided to Te Runanga o Ngati Ruanui and Fish & Game NZ for information purposes.
- 17) In accordance with section 128 and section 129 of the Resource Management Act 1991, the Taranaki Regional Council may serve notice of its intention to review, amend, delete or add to the conditions of this resource consent by giving notice of review:
  - (a) during the month of June 2021, then annually until 2025, and then 3-yearly thereafter;
  - (b) within 3 months of receiving a notification under special condition 16 above; for the purposes of:
    - (a) reviewing or setting new discharge or receiving water standards following the implementation of the Diatomix system; and
    - (b) ensuring that the conditions are adequate to deal with any adverse effects on the environment arising from the exercise of this resource consent, which were either not foreseen at the time the application was considered or which it was not appropriate to deal with at the time.
    - (c) within 12 months of a Regional Plan becoming operative that includes objectives, policies or rules relating to the setting of receiving water standards for dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) and dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN), for the purpose of ensuring that the conditions of consent are consistent with those objectives, policies and rules.

Signed at Stratford on 7 April 2020

For and on behalf of  
Taranaki Regional Council



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A D McLay  
Director - Resource Management

## Appendix II

Categories used to evaluate environmental and administrative performance

# Categories used to evaluate environmental and administrative performance

Environmental performance is concerned with actual or likely effects on the receiving environment from the activities during the monitoring year. Administrative performance is concerned with the Company's approach to demonstrating consent compliance in site operations and management including the timely provision of information to Council (such as contingency plans and water take data) in accordance with consent conditions.

Events that were beyond the control of the consent holder and unforeseeable (that is a defence under the provisions of the RMA can be established) may be excluded with regard to the performance rating applied. For example loss of data due to a flood destroying deployed field equipment.

The categories used by the Council for this monitoring period, and their interpretation, are as follows:

## Environmental Performance

**High:** No or inconsequential (short-term duration, less than minor in severity) breaches of consent or regional plan parameters resulting from the activity; no adverse effects of significance noted or likely in the receiving environment. The Council did not record any verified unauthorised incidents involving environmental impacts and was not obliged to issue any abatement notices or infringement notices in relation to such impacts.

**Good:** Likely or actual adverse effects of activities on the receiving environment were negligible or minor at most. There were some such issues noted during monitoring, from self-reports, or during investigations of incidents reported to the Council by a third party but these items were not critical, and follow-up inspections showed they have been dealt with. These minor issues were resolved positively, co-operatively, and quickly. The Council was not obliged to issue any abatement notices or infringement notices in relation to the minor non-compliant effects; however abatement notices may have been issued to mitigate an identified potential for an environmental effect to occur.

For example:

- High suspended solid values recorded in discharge samples, however the discharge was to land or to receiving waters that were in high flow at the time;
- Strong odour beyond boundary but no residential properties or other recipient nearby.

**Improvement required:** Likely or actual adverse effects of activities on the receiving environment were more than minor, but not substantial. There were some issues noted during monitoring, from self-reports, or during investigations of incidents reported to the Council by a third party. Cumulative adverse effects of a persistent minor non-compliant activity could elevate a minor issue to this level. Abatement notices and infringement notices may have been issued in respect of effects.

**Poor:** Likely or actual adverse effects of activities on the receiving environment were significant. There were some items noted during monitoring, from self-reports, or during investigations of incidents reported to the Council by a third party. Cumulative adverse effects of a persistent moderate non-compliant activity could elevate an 'improvement required' issue to this level. Typically there were grounds for either a prosecution or an infringement notice in respect of effects.

## Administrative performance

**High:** The administrative requirements of the resource consents were met, or any failure to do this had trivial consequences and were addressed promptly and co-operatively.

**Good:** Perhaps some administrative requirements of the resource consents were not met at a particular time, however this was addressed without repeated interventions from the Council staff. Alternatively

adequate reason was provided for matters such as the no or late provision of information, interpretation of 'best practical option' for avoiding potential effects, etc.

**Improvement required:** Repeated interventions to meet the administrative requirements of the resource consents were made by Council staff. These matters took some time to resolve, or remained unresolved at the end of the period under review. The Council may have issued an abatement notice to attain compliance.

**Poor:** Material failings to meet the administrative requirements of the resource consents. Significant intervention by the Council was required. Typically there were grounds for an infringement notice.

