

Trade Waste Officers Report - July 2012

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Council:	Hutt City Council

Background:

Hutt City Council (HCC) manages the Trade Waste system and WWTP on behalf of both HCC and Upper Hutt City Council(UHCC). The plant, which is run under a DBO contract with Hutt Valley Water Services (HVWS), serves around 140,000 people. HCC is required to provide HVWS with an influent waste stream that meets an agreed specification and there is a cost liability created when individual consent holders are not compliant with their consents.

We licence 620 businesses of which around 100 would be considered moderate or significant dischargers and around 350 are food premises. Around 120 dischargers currently pay User Charges and they account for about 8% of the total flow, 7% of the solids and 15% of the COD into our plant.

Trade Waste (large wet Industries) Good stuff

Not too many large wet industries in our patch however we have a very wide range of dischargers and they have been behaving with few issues of concern presently, almost "tame". A number have completed site upgrades or pre-treatment plant upgrades including Dulux (\$26M), Imperil Tobacco (\$34M), Transpacific (\$2M plus) and our previously ever concerning corn-chip manufacturer has disappeared of the radar after several years of investment by the new owner – he now makes 3 times as many chips on only 25% more staff with discharge loadings 20% of their previous level.

We are close to gaining consent to begin regular shipments of WWTP biosolids for discharge to forestry land and farm land.

Challenging Issues

Site closures/changes: Exides have ceased production and discharges are much reduced, Goulds (one of our biggest dischargers) have just gone into liquidation, Feltex have changed processes reducing their loading, Our largest laundry is to close as soon as they get their Palmerston site working properly and resolve RM consent issues here, though we have picked up a new medium large laundry. The net effect is a significant drop in industrial loadings (and income !!!) at a time when we are seeking additional loading to assist the plant (1 -2 Tonnes of BOD a day over summer would be good) – so if anyone has a nice simple to degrade wastestream we might be interested.

Biosolids: We have had a range of minor issues with biosolids metals levels in the past few years though more recently the primary issue has been with Copper levels

and although we are mostly compliant it is borderline. A few sites are implicated but there is little margin for industry above the domestic base load at the current guideline limit of 300mg/Kg. Cadmium was historically an issue but improvements to Exide pre-treatment processes had taken care of that issue however since the last conference Exide have ceased processing batteries and the Cd levels have reduced even further. Now another company is investigating setting up a battery breaking plant (but not a smelter). We are attempting to ensure that the Cadmium issue can be better avoided.

We have experienced a few "blips" in Mercury levels but generally we are at levels below half of the Aa guideline limit. The recent blips rather than being from dentists are suspected to be related to second party clean-up of former Transpower equipment from Haywards substation however that suspicion is based on timing coincidences rather than evidence and further testing is underway. Most of the Mercury containing Pole One part of the substation has yet to be removed and while most will go overseas some is to be disposed of in NZ from August 2012 on.

Solutions/Ideas

Working with dischargers and designers early on to assist them to arrive at solutions continues to be an efficient process that results in good productive relationships and trust. However the most effective efficient motivator for change is still cost. Our User Charges system and its relatively immediate cost implication impact is immensely useful in focussing managerial attention on issues. We have also implemented additional late payment fees and fees for additional inspections required due to non-compliance (sites get billed an extra fee if more than one re-inspection is required).

The telemetry system for flow data continues to work well.

Grease Traps

A range of improvements to management of food premises have been instigated mostly around creating uniformity of approach to poor maintenance of traps and making best use of audit tools like wastetrack. We have also implemented additional late payment fees and fees for additional inspections required due to non-compliance

Grease converters are still banned. Whilst our existing 80 units can perform a function (reducing fat blockage risks) if properly dosed, they do not reduce loadings and consume considerable officer time on non-compliance or poor maintenance type follow-up. Virtually all have had fixed screening units fitted and these are of great value. We also require screening units on big dippers. For the existing grease converters we have raised the consent fee to \$170pa but provide a review option whereby upon presentation of adequate cleaning and dosing receipts along with installation of screens they could have the consent fee cut in half. Last year only 6 applied and 5 were accepted.

We have since 1st May 2011 applied a 500L minimum to new installations and replacements. This has been generally well received.

Challenging Issues

Getting food premises to actually clean traps regularly. We have standardised our approach to these sites and attempt to educate (noting costs of drainlayers to clear drains versus much cheaper regular cleans etc) and then moving into formal notifications (triplicate non-compliance books) and then charging for revisits and raising consent fees. The only method that works reliably in terms of improving behaviour is actually visiting food premises and physically checking the traps.

Solutions/Ideas

IT systems:

As a consequence of the on-going shortcomings of the Ci system (a Technology One system) we have been pushing for better ways to do things and to cut down on the admin load created. Whilst the Ci system offers centralised data integrity it is neither complete, nor user friendly and we still need to operate the old Access database to cover activities the new system can't yet do. My standard statement to its proponents is that thanks to our IT systems we now have four people doing the work of three. After further motivation our IT people and Tech One experts are presently determining whether the deficiencies in the Trade waste module can be improved to the degree we believe is needed and at what cost and in what time. If improvement seems impractical we will relegate its usage to just invoicing and consent issue and fully resurrect our stand alone old Access system for all other functions.

One solution was to look for smarter data entry methods and to allow data entry in the field to try and eliminate double handing. We now have an ever increasing number of Motion Computing FV5 tablet PC's running Windows 7, character recognition and Ci Mobility software. We can now carry out inspections rapidly recording the details including photo's against applications. There is still some development to do but enormous promise is shown already and they save time.

The F5V is a \$4.5K water resistant tablet with a handle and a very good screen compared to most of the other ones we have tried (the Panasonic "Toughbook" was also good, the Motion CL900 though cheap was not potent enough and too frustrating).

A range of other uses have also been identified for them including making use of their ability to carry our GIS layers, to allow improvements to the way we undertake rural wastewater visits and inflow reduction visits. The inflow usage of them, thanks to the efforts and MS Access skills of Pakau, has proved to be a huge success with the field work and data handling now being done in 2/3rds of the time and able to be carried out during wet weather.

Compliance

In terms of enforcing requirements or payments under the TW Bylaw we have found that 20 day notification of consent cancellation letters continue to be quite useful. The letters note that any discharges after that date would leave them liable to prosecution. It has also been pointed out to them that this method removes wastewater quality as an issue of debate in a prosecution simplifying the whole process. Whilst we have had Crown Law recommended to us by Greater Wellington for prosecutions, we have not needed to use them yet.

Interceptors

Solutions/Ideas

We focus on getting the designs right and on discussions with applicants to ensure designs actually suit their needs – i.e. for earthmoving sites we have them consider adding in trench type interceptors to capture bulk silts/sand etc before it enters traps. We require backflow and metering on them as well.

Storm Water

We continue to run Council's storm-water inflow reduction programmes from within our section. We carry out the field work component ourselves. About 25000 properties have been surveyed to date, 800 of Upper Hutts 15000 properties and around 24000 of Hutts 36000 properties.

Similarly, we also undertake investigation and follow-up regarding private storm water issues, such as boundary migration ("Overland Flow"). The intention is to try and prevent small problems resulting in major problems and resolve stubborn long-term issues. Presently we are reactive to complaints (there is no shortage of them).

We are Council's primary responder in pollution events and have enforcement warrants from the regional council.

Our rural wastewater and water supply visits are ongoing again and thanks to Richard's (Capacity) efforts we have completed around 85% of the visits.

Much of the time since the last conference has been spent in the following ways:

- Coming to grips with multiple computer systems work in progress !!.
- Premises inspection and maintaining pressure on errant businesses.
- Bi-monthly User Charges runs.
- Managing inflow reduction efforts.
- Private property storm-water investigations and rural visits
- Response to after-hours callouts, Haz Subs and pollution incidents.

The team consists of the four of us below (though Wayne is doing 15 hrs per week for IT) plus two seconded Building Officers (Markham-p/t and Brian-f/t but short term) along with the assistance of Richard (Capacity). We have plenty of work on !

