

Clarification about the Akaroa Wastewater Scheme

- The Akaroa Wastewater Scheme is mentioned briefly in the draft Long Term Plan 2018-28 (LTP) consultation document. It has raised questions and this information is to clarify what funding is provided in the draft LTP.
- The draft LTP includes \$35 million for the Akaroa wastewater scheme over the first six years. This is enough to fund many of the proposed land based solutions, depending on their location and size.
- However we are looking at options and any variations to what's proposed at present may see the project's funding needs and timing change. Any changes can be included in future annual plans or long term plans.
- In 2015, Environment Canterbury declined our application for a consent to directly discharge treated wastewater into the harbour. As instructed by the Environment Court, the Council is considering land-based alternatives to a harbour outfall in partnership with Ngāi Tahu and the community.
- New wastewater flow meters, installed in Akaroa last year, show wastewater flows are about twice the original estimate. With this increased flow, we could not use 100 per cent of treated wastewater for irrigation without much larger irrigation and storage areas than those already identified.
- Deep bore injection could work alongside irrigation, with as much water as possible irrigated and the rest injected into a deep bore. Many people raised concerns about the need for a large storage pond during consultation and deep bore injection removes this need.
- We would need to drill test bores to assess the feasibility of deep bore injection. This is expensive, and should take place at the preferred site for a deep bore injection scheme. We are working with Ngāi Tahu and the Akaroa Treated Wastewater Reuse Options Working Party to select a preferred location. A hui in February 2018 and a working party meeting in March 2018 discussed possible sites for test drilling.
- Both the draft LTP consultation document and the Infrastructure Strategy also discuss the option of reusing treated wastewater. Funding in the draft LTP does not cover the full cost of this option. Pumping wastewater to an irrigation scheme in the Eastern Bays and/or setting up a scheme to reuse non-potable water (water not of drinking water quality) throughout Akaroa has a significant cost. Only a small proportion of wastewater can be reused so it would need to work alongside another solution.
- The funding currently included in the draft LTP will not slow progress and will let the Council continue to work to identify the best solution for Akaroa. Significant funding is earmarked for investigation, site purchase and construction of a land based system.
- The process of determining the best solution for Akaroa wastewater treatment and disposal is independent of the Long Term Plan Process and runs alongside it.
- Once we have a clearer picture based on consensus with the community and Ngai Tahu, we will consult with the public on short-listed options, including 30 days for written comments and a hearing.
- There was strong public interest in the Akaroa Wastewater Scheme when we consulted last year. We expect similar interest in 2018 and are committed to a robust decision-making process.