

Real time monitoring trial update

Wellington Water have completed the data collection for the Proteus Water Quality Sensor trial. The sensor was placed into the Ōwhiro Stream at three locations to measure a range of parameters including coliforms. The benefit of the sensor is its ability to provide trends which may have been previously misinformed by singular grab samples. It can be thought of as providing a video recording of the stream water quality instead of a snapshot.

Wellington Water and the members of the Ōwhiro Bay community will now analyse the data together to assess for trends. Results from the analysis will be shared with the community in the future.



The Proteus Probe installed at 204 Happy Valley Road.



Setting up the Environmental Water Quality Programme

Getting going on the development of an Ōwhiro Stream Plan, the “Knowing Your Pipes” initiative and getting an Environmental Water Quality Programme Manager on board are amongst Wellington Water’s recent highlights as it continues to work on how we jointly work on looking after our water quality.

Abby Jensen joined Wellington Water at the start of the year as the Environmental Water Quality Programme Manager. The health of the region’s waterways is increasingly important to customers and our communities. Improving water quality as one of Wellington Water’s five strategic priorities. Abby is accountable for the development and implementation of the programme.

Under the programme, Wellington Water is responding to recommendation 20 of the Mayoral Taskforce, by developing an Ōwhiro Stream Plan. This plan will identify the activities Wellington Water is committed to within the stream catchment, the time frames for activity and how it will be funded. One of these activities is the Knowing Your Pipes project which focuses on the private side of the network, but that is only half of the network. The plan will detail what we will do on the public side too.



Abby Jensen of Wellington Water.

Solving Water

Community perspective on the Multiparty Working Group on Ōwhiro

By Eugene Doyle, Ōwhiro Bay Residents Association

The Ōwhiro Pilot was recognised as an important project by the Mayoral Taskforce on Three Waters which was released in December 2020. Recommendation 20:

Task and fund Wellington Water to progress the Ōwhiro Catchment pilot programme as a high priority to inform the development of the road-map and to develop and implement a programme that strategically works through catchments to identify and repair cross-connections or asset failures in both public and private assets, where catchments with open streams and community connection are prioritised.

Disclaimer

WorkStream is a joint communication between the Ōwhiro Bay community and Wellington Water. Please note that views expressed in articles appearing in WorkStream do not necessarily represent those of either the community at large, or Wellington Water or its council owners.

That recommendation and others related to the catchment have now been accepted by Wellington City Council (WCC) at its Strategy and Policy meeting of 11 March 2021. It is therefore high time for the public organisations that participate in the working group – Wellington Water, Wellington City Council, and Greater Wellington, in particular – to move into a far higher gear. We note the recommendation is very clear that both public and private assets must be addressed as a high priority.

The community have been frustrated by the painfully slow rate of progress to date, the absence of planning, the failure to share planning documents such as the establishment document for the roving crews, and the stop-start monitoring and online reporting of contamination.

We recognise the effort made to bring the different parties together and the commitment to keep working together. WCC, GWRC and WWL are to be commended for their participation in this process. What needs to happen now is for all the public organisations to shoulder real challenges, allocate real dollars, and promptly lay out draft plans for a series of projects and then improve those plans over time.

1. Roving Crews | We are delighted that Ōwhiro was recognised as being the pilot catchment for this new initiative to investigate public and private water infrastructure and work progressively up the catchment identifying problems and set in train the necessary mechanisms to resolve them. The idea is that we use it as a template for the region - co-designing a process that has discipline, transparency and shows how a catchment's pipe network can be restored to good working order. It is now over a year since our community first asked to see the establishment documents for the roving crews. We are yet to see any plans for their deployment in the catchment. Wellington Water, however, has been willing to engage with us and we recognise the real efforts they have made to change their relationship with the community, and undertake investigations that have led to some significant improvements, particularly reducing the number of cross connections feeding into the Ōwhiro Stream.

2. Budget | There is still no clearly outlined budget for the projects from any party - or none that has been shared with the community. We have heard anecdotally that the Ōwhiro project will need additional funding but we haven't seen any details in writing.

3. Water That Counts | Our community, in papers tabled with both GWRC and the Mayoral Taskforce, led the push in 2020 that led to the creation of the excellent Water That Counts pilot. We were delighted to be the project's test case. What needs to happen now is GWRC and WCC to agree on a funding stream to make this important project a reality.

GWRC has committed to updating the community at our next meeting and ensuring the community is part of co-designing this important project for our city.

4. LAWA and the swimmability of Ōwhiro Bay | Recommendation of the Mayoral Taskforce Report states: "Review the effectiveness of receiving water quality monitoring processes, such as LAWA and Baywatch, and noting Auckland Council's 'Swim Safe' system, including a specific focus on whether the selected monitoring sites are consistent with the needs of communities and whether public health notices and signage are clear, unambiguous, and well located."

The community has been deeply unhappy for over a year with the performance of Regional Public Health and GW over their slowness to launch a review. The really good news is that as of late March, GWRC and Public Health have committed to both a review and a process that is co-designed with the community. Watch this space!

The Multiparty Working Group

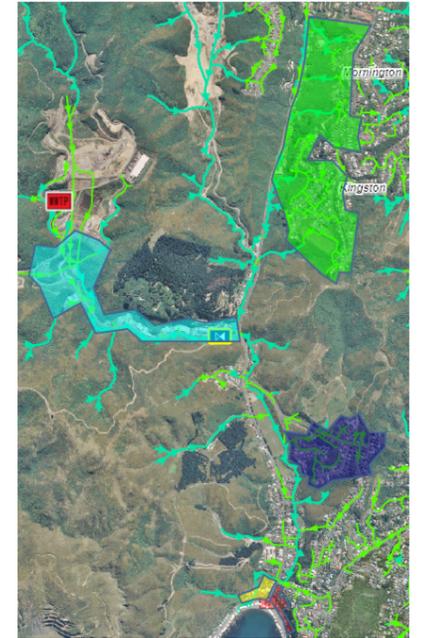
Finally, I want to emphasise how much we appreciate the commitment of Wellington Water, Greater Wellington, Wellington City Council and the other parties to the working group. We want to use it as a catalyst for change and we really want to be part of building greater respect and support in the community for all the organisations – which will require all of us to work harder, faster and smarter to improve all life in the catchment

Knowing your pipes

The knowing your pipes team commenced work in the Ōwhiro Bay catchment on 22 February. Their first task is to complete initial grab sampling. This sampling will take place for 2 weeks before selecting the first sub-catchment for inspection. The team has highlighted five target areas. This is building on the work that was completed in 2020.

After completing the grab sampling, the team reviewed the results to assist with targeting where to start the inspections of the private side of the network. The techniques the team will use include visual inspection, smoke testing, dye tracing and CCTV inspection.

More information is available on the Wellington Water website: <https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/knowning-your-pipes/>



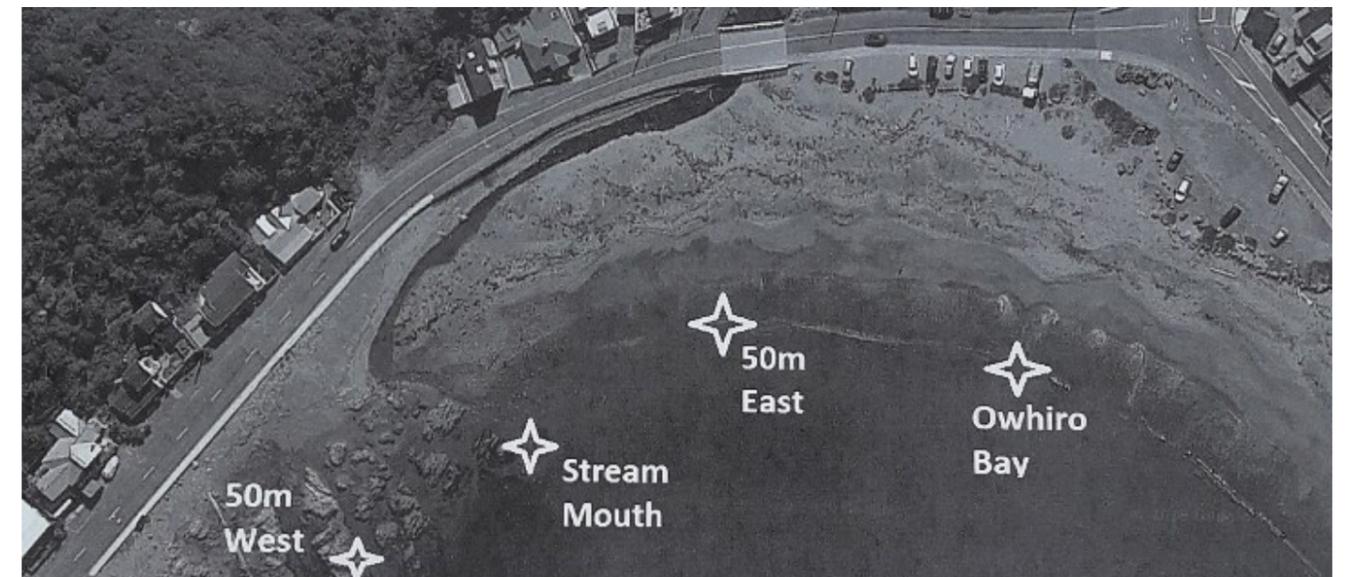
Water testing results

Wellington Water and Greater Wellington Regional Council are committed to working with each other to provide a single source for the public to access water quality data. While we work through the details on how this is achieved, Wellington Water has reinstated the Ōwhiro Bay water sampling webpage to provide transparency to the community. You can find it here: <https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/faqs/water-quality/owhiro-bay-water-sampling-2021/>

Wellington Water will update the site fortnightly as the latest sample results become available. If you would like to find out more about our testing programmes, please visit the following page: <https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/faqs/water-quality/more-about-our-water-quality-testing-owhiro-bay/>

Is there something else you would like to know or like us to include on the site? Please let us know.

Additionally, we have increased the monitoring around the Bay. Our Global Stormwater Consent requires that we sample from the Ōwhiro Bay testing site as shown below for the Baywatch Programme. Three additional sites were added to the monthly testing programme starting in March 2021 (50m West, Stream Mouth and 50m East). These additional sites will be useful to inform the review of the effectiveness of the current Baywatch monitoring site.



This image shows the existing Ōwhiro Bay recreational bathing sampling location. Wellington Water will commence sampling from three additional sites as identified in this image from March 2021.