

Q & As on the Resource Consent for disposal of soil at Watercare's existing Parau Disposal Site



Background

Watercare has been granted resource consent to build a new water treatment plant on land at the corner of Woodlands Park Road and Manuka Road, Waima. The new plant will replace the adjacent aging Huia Water Treatment Plant which treats 20 per cent of Auckland's water and at over 100 years old is near the end of its operational life.

Construction of the new treatment plant requires removal of earth to form the foundations. The resource consent limits the area of vegetation that can be removed to the footprint of the new plant. This means that there is little room to deposit any excavated material and an off-site disposal location is required.

After extensive investigations, the Parau Deposit Site was selected as the preferred option. A resource consent advice note stated: *"Watercare shall undertake best endeavours to seek the necessary statutory approvals to authorise the Parau site as an approved facility in collaboration with Te Kawerau ā Maki."*

The following questions and answers relate to the application for resource consent to dispose of soil at the Parau Deposit Site.

- **Does Watercare currently have a resource consent to deposit material at the Parau site?**

Watercare has a current resource consent to deposit 120m³ of inert water treatment sludge from the Huia Water Treatment Plant per week as well as an additional 300m³ of earth collected from slips within the Waitākere catchment per year. This is equivalent to about 12 truck movements per week.

This existing consent expires December 2030. This allows Watercare to deposit approximately 50,000m³ of material through to this date.

Watercare is now seeking consent to deposit approximately 50,000m³ to 80,000m³ of soil on this site over 2026 and 2027.

- **When will work on soil disposal start and how long will it last for?**

It is anticipated that material from the construction site will start to be deposited in the spring of 2026 and will be completed by the winter of 2027.

- **Traffic movements**

- **Has the impact of traffic movements been considered?**

Yes. The commissioners for the Huia Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project considered expert traffic analysis and impact assessments. They considered that subject to the implementation of a Traffic Management Plan, the effects on the roading network and the community in terms of safety and efficiency would be less than minor.

- **What truck movements are expected?**

Single trucks (without trailers) will be used to transport the material from the construction site to the landfill. A distance of 3.5 kilometres.

The number of trucks is estimated to be between 30 to 40 per day, which means 60 to 80 total trucks past a location per day.

Current traffic volumes near the Woodlands Park School are approximately 2,500 per day and on Huia Road (near the Parau site access) about 5,180 per day.

On this basis, the predicted maximum truck movements past a specific site are at peak 90 per day, which represents approximately a 1 per cent increase in vehicle numbers.

Both roads have a capacity for about 1,400 vehicles per hour.

On this basis, it is considered that the roads have adequate capacity to accommodate the increase in vehicle movements.

- **What about traffic movements around the school?**

Watercare is cognisant of safety around Woodlands Park School.

One of the conditions of the resource consent for the Huia Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project states that a Construction Traffic Management Plan must be in place. Where practicable this will limit heavy vehicle movements on the Woodlands Park Road / Huia Road route associated with any use of the Parau landfill site during morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up periods for schools.

A site-specific transport management plan will also be prepared to ensure safe two-way movement of trucks in and out of the Parau disposal site.

- **Will Watercare monitor the condition of local roads affected by truck movements?**

Under the current consent Watercare is required to monitor the surface of the main transport routes. When monitoring indicates that damage has occurred as a result of construction traffic, Auckland Council will be notified within 24 hours of discovery (or immediately where the damage presents a safety hazard).

The costs of rectifying such damage and restoring the asset to its original condition will be met by Watercare.

- **Is the disposal site land stable?**

Watercare has conducted geotechnical investigations of the site to ensure the stability of the current sludge pre and post filling. The results indicate that the sludge material has sufficient strength to accommodate the proposed fill material.

- **Kauri Dieback**
How will you reduce the risk of *Phytophthora agathidicida* (kauri dieback) spreading?

Watercare has undertaken extensive sampling for kauri dieback within the Waima, Woodlands Park and Parau catchments. The sampling indicates that kauri dieback is widespread.

The pathogen was found in all the watercourses along the proposed route. However, to minimise any transfer of the pathogen along the route, trucks will be fitted with lined trays that are sealed and fully covered. The trucks will also only be allowed on hard surfaces therefore will not track any loose material on the roads.

To ensure this occurs, wheel washes will be installed at both the construction site and the sludge site.

To ensure that the methodology outlined is working, properties along the route will be sampled for kauri dieback prior to truck movements commencing, during and after the operation.

Stormwater runoff from the sludge disposal site will be collected in purpose-built detention ponds before passing through UV filters which will kill any kauri dieback pathogen in the water.

- **Completion of works**
What will happen when the filling is completed?

The finished fill will be capped to minimise any potential for kauri dieback to be leached from the created mound. The site will then be planted out. The planting will be maintained for a sufficient period to allow vegetation to establish following the closure of the site.

- **How high will the mound be once the filling is completed?**

The finished contours are envisaged to be slightly higher than the current metalled vehicle track that traverses the rear of the current fill. This track will be reinstated once the filling has been completed.

- **Will public access be available during the filling period?**

No, the public will not be able to access the Parau site during the filling period to ensure everyone stays safe.

- **Other questions**

- **Are you working with mana whenua?**

Yes, Watercare has a close working relationship with Te Kawerau ā Maki as the recognised tāngata whenua of the Waitākere Ranges. Te Kawerau ā Maki has given their approval to the proposal and requested that the material be retained within the rohe.

- **What other sites were considered?**

Watercare undertook extensive investigations into possible alternatives sites.

The sites are limited due to the lack of suitable cleared areas that are in the ownership of Watercare or available for Watercare to use. No other viable options were available within the surrounding area.

As the material has the potential to be contaminated with kauri dieback, the only alternative locations that can legally accept the material is Redvale Landfill (50 kilometres) or Hampton Downs (80 kilometres).

These sites have been approved to accept kauri dieback contaminated soils under the Biosecurity Act and National kauri dieback Pest Management Plan. However, the distance, cost and carbon required for transport and disposal cannot be justified.

- **When will the resource consent be lodged?**

Watercare will lodge the Parau disposal site resource consent prior to June 2024. Auckland Council's planning team will then decide on the resource consent requirements and Watercare will follow their advice.