

Marae wastewater project



Kaupapa

To ensure safe wastewater disposal by tangata whenua to protect and maintain the health and wellbeing of the marae and surrounding taiao.

The goal is to support hapū and iwi to protect the health of their marae, and surrounding whenua. This kaupapa is not being driven with a regulatory focus, rather it will take into account the health and wellbeing aspirations of tangata whenua. The assessment phase of the project will take into account the future use of the marae and surrounding whenua. This is important as it will allow for hapū aspirations to be factored into the potential design solutions.

What does the mahi involve?

A **free** assessment of the existing water and wastewater systems at the marae will be carried out using an external technical assessor. In some cases, an additional cultural advisor will assist with engagement with iwi, hapū and marae trustees.

The assessors will have a kōrero to understand the future aspirations for the marae. That way, any marae developments can be taken into account when assessing the existing on-site systems against any future requirements.

A written report will be provided to the marae trustees following the assessment. The report will be a 'state of the system' snapshot and will detail what steps and/or upgrades are needed to have a safe and compliant wastewater system.

Definitions

Waikino (Wastewater): This is used water from kitchens, laundries, bathrooms and toilets in houses, institutions or commercial facilities.

Waimāori (Freshwater/Drinking water): Unless the marae is connected to a district council supply, drinking water is generally taken from a spring, stream, river or groundwater. It is important that this water is safe to drink to protect tangata whenua health.

Why is managing waikino important?

Waikino contains pathogens (bacteria and viruses), nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and other compounds that can contaminate waimāori, the whenua and/or tangata whenua. Therefore, it is important to safely treat it and then dispose of it appropriately into land.

The rules

Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council has policies and rules that manage effects on the environment caused by treated domestic wastewater discharged to land. Marae wastewater produced through the wharekai and wharepaku do not meet the definition of domestic wastewater. Therefore, a resource consent is needed which contains conditions that help manage any bad effects that the discharge might have on the environment.

For this project, **Toi Moana has agreed to waive all of the resource consent fees** and the associated compliance fees for the term of the first consent period. Resource consents are for a fixed term, and after that time will need to be renewed. There may be monitoring requirements for your consent.



Things you can do to improve the performance of your treatment and disposal system

By doing these simple things, the septic tank system will be easier to clean and will help avoid blockages:

- Minimise water use - scrape dishes before washing and install water saving devices, such as dual flush toilets, low flow shower heads, front loading washing machines, etc
- Remove any food disposal units (e.g. garbage grinders)
- Put food scraps, including oils and fats, into the food waste bin (to feed to pigs or to landfill) – don't tip fats, oil or grease down the kitchen drain
- Use biodegradable and low phosphate soaps and washing powders
- Don't over-use powerful bleaches and disinfectants, or put chemicals or paint down the drain, as these can damage or destroy the treatment system
- Only flush toilet paper and human waste down the toilet
- Sanitary items, wet wipes, plastic, cotton, nappies, nappy liners, tissues, paper towels, rags and cigarettes should not be flushed – place in domestic rubbish for disposal to landfill
- Make sure your septic tank lid is easily accessible and don't cover the mushroom vent
- Divert stormwater away from your land soakage area
- Fence off the land soakage area to avoid damage to it
- Don't build anything (including driveways, carparks, etc) over your septic tank or soakage area
- Don't build on your reserve land application area

What are the signs of a failed system?

A failed marae wastewater system is a serious health and environmental hazard. The warning signs are obvious:

- Particularly lush growth in an area
- A particularly dry area in the disposal field
- Wastewater ponding on the ground surface
- The smell of sewage near the tank or land treatment area, or in the bathrooms
- Blocked or slow running drains and/or toilets
- Toilets that fill up when flushed and drain slowly
- Gully traps or drains that bubble up

Treatment options other than septic tanks

In some cases, septic tanks are not suitable for marae. This could be due to the size and usage of the marae, or due to site limitations at the marae e.g. lack of whenua to discharge to land, proximity to waterways, etc.

There are many alternate treatment and disposal options available. Selecting the best system for the marae, taking into account future aspirations of hapū and marae trustees, is really important when considering a new system.

Any new system must be designed by an appropriately qualified expert.



Useful links

Toi Moana marae water and wastewater page:
www.boprc.govt.nz/marae-wastewater

Drinking water:
www.taumataarowai.govt.nz

Funding agency:
www.tpk.govt.nz/en/whakamahia/oranga-marae