

What's up with the water in our rivers?

Public Forum on Urban River Water Quality

24 May 2014

Workshop Notes

[Notes are colour-coded according to group]

Session 1: Issues

Eating

- Clean enough so we can safely eat from it (whether we do or not).
- Whitebaiting – water should be clear & clean enough to do this and eat but need to do so sustainably: set aside for ?10years for ecological regeneration before harvesting?
- People still fish when polluted (even with signage)
- Important for dogs
- We value: whitebait caught in the river -> supplied to the local café
- We value: mahinga kai
- We value: Fishing - Trout, eels, whitebait; take a kid fishing days; shellfish gathering from the estuary
- Issues: in current state we cant do these things but we want this!

Drinking

- Should we be able to?
- My dog should be safe drinking it

Eating or Drinking

- Monitoring issues
- Barriers: mixing of stormwater and sewage – happening but fixable; Not knowing what is going to stormwater now, untreated now; use wetlands
- Dislike notices about water being contaminated
- Notices are being ignored and are undated.
- Need pristine water for swimming and food gathering.

Sport

- Should be no risk of infections & swimmable
- Contaminated water causes infection (cuts etc)
- Precautions needed eg protective clothing, showering
- Mike Theelan – operations/strategy & planning “Avon River – swimsafe”.
- We value: ability to kayak (especially with kids)
- Clean for contact
- Risk of disease/infection should be low
- Should be safe for ingestion (secondary contact)

Amenity

- Should be safe for walking with dog or children – safe for paddling
- Accessible (except for 4WDs), near transport routes
- Rubbish – get rid of it, better at moment seems to be in too hard basket
- Seating
- Education – help people behave better / interpretation panels / film taggers
- Well designed cycle tracks – not multi-use if possible. Parks along it
- Health & Safety hazards such as fall hazards
- Kids being able to fish safely
- Boardwalk along estuary & jetty should be repaired to allow walking amenity
- We need permanent place for South Brighton Yacht Club
- Issues: Rubbish currently in area (Heathcote in particular)
- Issues: No access to the river for paddling etc
- We value being able to walk the Avon through the red zone.
- River needs dredging to increase flow

Health Impacts

- See above
- Also include psych health, wellbeing. Look good, feel good.
- Canada Geese are an issue
- Share river with all appropriate species
- Dog Faeces: lots of bins please for dog walkers
- Public unaware of potential contaminants & health impacts
- Need more public info & education
- Faecal? Phosphates? What are the pollutants?
- Mosquitoes
- Sewage discharges & contaminated water are unacceptable
- Control of noxious water birdlife ie Canada Geese needed
- Contaminated water run-off – heavy metals and dust and oils from roads – restrict car washing on roadsides
- Lead paint from old houses.
- Restriction / reduction of raw sewage discharge

Environmental Impacts

- Riparian planting for: bank stabilisation + water quality
- Wetlands for stormwater treatment
- Fish habitat
- Testing/monitoring programmes eg invertebrate surveys
- Aim for high diversity of invertebrates and fish with koura present
- Health of fish, plants, ecology in river – Ecosystem
- Birds
- Trees
- Drainage
- Dog excrement allowed along river – assume red zone can be trashed – provide facilities to encourage dog-owners to pick up excrement.
- Dog owners need to take responsibility
- Native fish – need clean river
- Biodiversity

- Culling of Canada Geese and other exotic bird species to reduce faecal contamination in water
- Around Woolston more strict controls on factory discharges to river eg brown/ochre coloured river, floating foam waste
- Water Quality? How clean is it? – Measure and publish more.

Summary Session 1:

- Eating/Drinking: people are still fishing despite pollution; need pristine water; important to do
- Sport: ability to kayak with kids; need pristine water; safe from long term infection; clean for contact; safe to ingest accidentally
- Health: public awareness of risk; birdlife poo-ing (geese – native poo ok!); psychological wellbeing
- Environmental: Dog poo – owner training; Green the red zone; CCC sewage discharges; rubbish; mosquitoes.

Session 2: Key Messages

- CLEAN WATER
- Clear & concise information
- Legacy we can leave
- Environmentally sound management strategies
- Attractive Leisure Facilities
- National Standards
- Water use and reuse
- Aquatic ecosystems
- Treatment
- Education on Pollution
- Responsibility by individuals
- CCC Urgently allocate \$100M (fix the old stadium don't upgrade) to wastewater treatment
- Embrace our natural heritage!! (we are a wetland)
- We want improvements not return to past substandard system
- Celebrate the springs and manage runoff at source
- Opportunities to use red zone land as stormwater treatment areas
- Water festival not garden festival
- Change our streetscapes (include stormwater cleansing) into dry basins, rain gardens, etc
- Can we actually use the springwater as if greywater? – toilets/ponds?
- We want household grey water tanks and zero run off policy for commercial developments -> Get it in the District Plan & Central City Plan!!
- Separate systems for springwater and stormwater
- Cleanse at source
- Compliance & Enforcement of Rules & Regulations
- Betterment of Waste & Stormwater systems, even if it takes longer
- Incentives for reducing stormwater run-off
- Education to individuals on how to reduce run-off
- Encourage rain-water collection & grey water for watering (subsidies)

- Prioritise health & safety of water systems \$\$
- High-level publicity
- Education – public – huge amount of ignorance re Stormwater. No idea where it goes
- Take responsibility – clean up the drains; clean up river bridges etc: civic and community response as well as individual – change the mindset of people. CCC Facilitating, empowering, communicating: give guidance too, then let community take ownership
- Educate people to don't litter!!
- Better processes within CCC to take rubbish. Stop turning people away with tyres, TVs, electronics
- COSTS – issue
- Springs – why not promoting? Need more awareness of the special characteristics of Chch
- Insurance company pressure to go back to pre-WW2 construction & design. 20th century world being reproduced instead of 21st century
- Excuses from regulators “too hard, too expensive”. Rebate – incentives -> education (people find out why incentives there and what values): example rainwater collection tanks. Review building Act to focus on and encourage 21st century design and methods. BEST PRACTICE – GET CREATIVE!!! Innovate
- Love WETLANDS!! Make Ricc Stream idea happen. Retro fit older areas as much as possible (east at least) eg wetland Porritt Park? Horseshoe Lake?
- Support people to create zero run off properties site by site.

Summary Session 2:

- Change streetscapes, green gardens etc
- 21st Century designs not replacing what was
- Celebrate / embrace our natural heritage
- More education on pollution
- Education to individuals what you can do