



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## 1.0 ECONOMIC

### **What is the impact of the Mataura Valley Milk industrial hub on the Gore Wastewater Treatment Plant and what financial contribution does the company pay to the Council?**

Pre-treated effluent from the Mataura Valley Milk (MVM) is treated separately to domestic wastewater at the purpose built industrial hub at the Gore WWTP. The treated trade waste is then discharged into the Council's secondary oxidation pond for final polishing before it is discharged to the river. MVM funded the construction of the industrial hub in 2018.

MVM pays trade waste charges to the Council. These charges are based on the costs incurred to operate and maintain the industrial hub plant, and a proportion of the total cost (operation, maintenance, and capital costs) for treating MVM effluent at the Gore WWTP.

### **Will the proposed upgrades impact on Gore and Mataura rates?**

It is inevitable there will be some impact on rates, but at this stage there are too many variables to be able to quantify exactly what the impact will be. Financially, this project is not one we can do without considerable funding assistance. We will be exploring government, external and industry funding partnerships as the project progresses.

Costs will be spread over the next 30 years.

At present Gore and Mataura residential ratepayers pay \$439.38 per connection per year for wastewater and stormwater services. The charge for trade waste varies, depending on quantity and quality.

### **Does Silver Fern Farms also discharge to the industrial hub?**

No, trade waste from the Waitane meat processing plant is combined with domestic wastewater and treated via the oxidation ponds. The company pays fees based on the quantity and quality of trade waste it discharges. The company's agreement with the Council is due for renewal in 2022.

Treating Silver Fern Farm's trade waste separately to domestic wastewater and to a higher standard, either at the company's plant, or at our wastewater treatment plant will be explored as the project progresses.

## 2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL

### **What monitoring does the Council conduct at the treatment plant and the effects of discharged wastewater on the environment?**

We monitor both the quality of treated water leaving the plant and the water quality within the Mataura River. Effluent and river water quality are currently monitored a minimum of four times per year to ensure the discharge limits set in the Council's resource consent are being met. We do additional monitoring of water quality in the Mataura River when the flow is low, i.e. less than 25 cumecs. Monitoring data and results are reported to Environment Southland.

The locations of the river monitoring sites are upstream and downstream of the Gore and Mataura wastewater treatment plants. We monitor discharge volume (flow), suspended sediments, phosphorus, nitrogen and E.coli.

**How does the Council respond to operational issues with the Gore and Mataura WWTPs, including complaints to Environment Southland?**

We respond to any complaints received from the community regarding either plant. We work closely with Environment Southland to respond to complaints and act quickly to avoid any adverse effects on the environment.

**Is there risk of algal blooms developing and being released to the environment?**

Algal blooms commonly occur when using oxidation pond treatment systems. Following the incidents at both the Gore and Mataura WWTP in 2019, we've made improvements to the discharge structure to minimise the risk of algal blooms being released to the river. We have also introduced sodium percarbonate dosing into the treatment process to manage algal growth.

Further improvements to manage the risk of algal bloom discharges to the river will be considered as part of the planned upgrades.

**Is leakage from the oxidation ponds a concern?**

Given the oxidation ponds do not have a watertight plastic liner, there is potential for leakage through the base of the pond. This is one of the contributing factors for our plans to repurpose the Gore oxidation ponds.

We are often asked why our ponds do not have an impermeable liner, given dairy effluent ponds are required to have one. It's important to realise that dairy ponds are solely for the storage of wastewater, whereas our oxidation ponds treat wastewater.

Wastewater entering the Gore ponds takes about 38 days to make its way through the treatment process and to the discharge point. At the Mataura pond it's about 52 days. This long retention time, combined with the fact any leakage has to slowly seep through the sludge and pond base, then pass through gravels before reaching the river, means the quality of any leakage is comparable to the treated wastewater discharged to the river from the treatment plant.

### **3.0 PROPERTY**

**Will the proposed upgrades impact on neighbouring properties? i.e noise, amenity, visual?**

Construction work is expected to generate noise, but we will ensure every effort is made to minimise it. We will specify in the tender that there should be no noise after 5.00pm and at weekends.

Where possible landscaping and planting will be developed to visually screen the treatment plant from roads and neighbouring areas.

**What are the expected disruptions to the existing wastewater network during construction?**

There will be minimal disruption to the wastewater network. If required, temporary arrangements will be made within the plant, but that's unlikely to affect the network.

**Is there a risk of odour from the upgraded treatment plant?**

The treatment plant will be designed to contain and/or treat odours associated with the process.

In addition, our air discharge resource consent will set-out specific requirements we need to meet, including investigating and resolving any ongoing offensive odour issues.

### **4.0 SOCIAL**

**Will the proposed upgrades disrupt recreational use of the Mataura River?**

The proposed upgrades will result in improved water quality in the Mataura River and therefore are expected to improve water quality for recreational users.