

Stormwater, wastewater and rural discharges

The proposed Water Plan changes include policies and rules to manage stormwater, wastewater and rural discharges. These discharges can degrade water quality in Otago so most of them will need a resource consent.

The proposed policies in the plan would be used by ORC to make decisions on resource consent applications, including the duration of consents and any conditions they should have. A number of policies have been strengthened so ORC has better direction on assessing resource consent applications for these discharges and supporting the implementation of better practices.

Stormwater – new reticulated systems

Reticulated systems are the means by which stormwater is collected and delivered prior to discharge – normally a piped network. Minor changes to Policy 7.C.5 have been made to clarify that operators of new stormwater systems need to minimise the adverse environmental effects of these discharges.

Stormwater – existing reticulated systems

Policy 7.C.6 has been amended to require existing stormwater systems to reduce the adverse environmental effects of discharges by:

- Requiring the progressive upgrade of systems to minimise the volume of sewage entering the stormwater system and the frequency and volume of sewage overflows.

- Promoting the improvement of water quality discharged from existing systems.

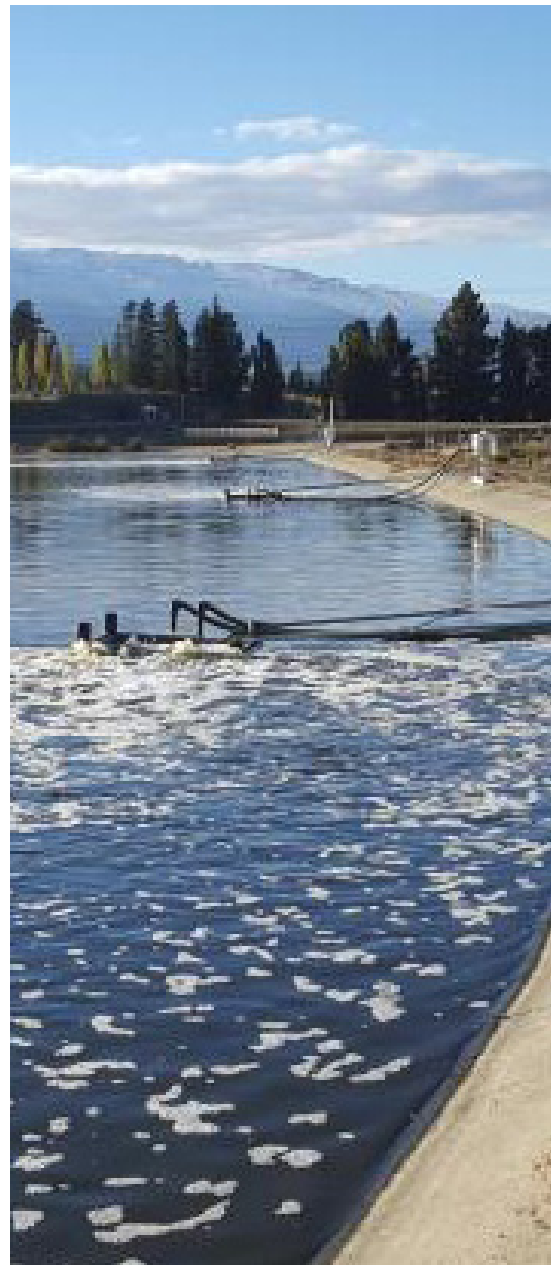
Discharges of human sewage can degrade water quality.

These policy changes would allow ORC to require improvements that reduce sewage contamination of stormwater.

Wastewater

Policy 7.C.12 is new, and requires reticulated wastewater systems to reduce the adverse effects of discharges of human sewage by:

- Requiring systems to be designed, operated, maintained and monitored in accordance with recognised industry standards.
- Requiring measures to progressively reduce the frequency and volume of wet weather overflows and minimise the likelihood of dry weather overflows.
- Preferring discharges to land over discharges to water.
- Having particular regard to any adverse effects on cultural values.



FAQ

Why are rural discharge consents limited to ten years?

ORC will release a new proposed Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) in 2023 that has freshwater objectives and limits for Otago's freshwater management units (FMUs). An FMU is a water body or multiple water bodies that ORC deems as the appropriate scale for setting freshwater objectives and limits. This can be a river catchment, part of a catchment, or a group of catchments.

A ten-year period for consents gives certainty to consent holders while recognising that Otago's freshwater planning system will change considerably in the coming years. If consents are granted for longer than ten years, it may be difficult to make meaningful progress towards achieving the new objectives until those consents expire.

Rural discharges

Policy 7.D.5 sets out what ORC would consider when making decisions on resource consent applications for rural discharges. A number of changes have been made to clarify some of those matters, including clarifying:

- the term "Kāi Tahu values".
- that regard needs to be given to the sensitivity of the receiving water when considering resource consent applications for rural discharges.
- that regard needs to be given to monitoring the performance of the discharge management system.

Policy 7.D.6 is new and gives direction to restrict the duration of resource consents granted for rural discharges

to ten years. It also sets out specific matters to be considered in decision-making, including:

- The water quality of the receiving water body.
- The effect on the natural or human-use values of the receiving water body and Kāi Tahu cultural and spiritual beliefs, values and uses.
- The expected reduction in nitrogen discharged over the term of the resource consent.
- The benefits of aligning the expiry date with other resource consents for the same activity in the surrounding area or catchment.

