

Mangawhai EcoCare Wastewater Scheme

Kaipara District Council in Partnership with Earth Tech

Frequently Asked Questions

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1 Do I have to connect to EcoCare?

Yes, if EcoCare services are available to your property then you will be required to connect regardless of the type of existing wastewater treatment and disposal system currently on your property. The Local Government Act enables the Council to require householders to connect.

The timing for commencement of construction of EcoCare was uncertain and subject to achieving the required consents and resolving any appeals. This meant that with the pressure placed on the environment by development, Council had the decision to either stop all building work until EcoCare was available, or to allow building to continue as long as secondary treatment and on-site or communal disposal was provided pending commencement of EcoCare.

Council has decided to allow building to continue, however some people have decided to wait until EcoCare has commenced before developing their property.

Properties in some less developed areas within the Drainage District are not likely to be required to connect for some time because our priority is sewerage the more densely populated areas. These properties will be monitored to ensure that their existing on-site systems are not impacting the environment until the sewerage reaches them.

2 When will my property connection be available?

The broad outline programme is that the 1200 properties that are in the original sewerage scope (those in the older, more built-up areas of Mangawhai Heads and Village) will be connected to a working treatment plant within 2 years. Some will have a connection available as soon as early 2009. As we progress these works we plan to be able to connect newer properties and recent subdivisions also, but that is all dependent on programme and costs. Properties in less built up areas such as Jack Boyd Drive, Moir Point Road and Old Waipu Road are less of a priority and may not have a connection available for a few more years yet.

We will update members of the community liaison group with programme and progress for the immediate future and this information will also be provided in fortnightly updates in local publications and to those who have asked to be added to the EcoCare Project email database.

Please note that any programme information is indicative only and subject to change due to inclement weather, archaeological and cultural finds during construction, or other circumstances that can not be easily allowed for in the programme.

Owners and occupiers of properties within the areas where sewers will be constructed will receive letter notification at least 7 days in advance and to call the project office with any queries and concerns and also to meet with the contractors at street corner meetings.

3 *I am about to build on my property. Am I allowed to use a holding tank until the EcoCare connection is available?*

In order to assist you we have recently started permitting on a case by case basis the use of holding tanks instead of on-site treatment and disposal systems. This has only been possible since we have been granted resource consent and the appeals have been resolved.

However any application for use of a holding tank must be reviewed by Council's Building team in conjunction with the EcoCare team and requires a building consent application.

The following guidelines may be of use.

- In all instances we recommend you seek advice from registered drainlayers who will be able to advise on various systems that may be suitable for you property and costs of installation of various systems compared to regular pump-out of a holding tank.
- if you are within a recent subdivision where resource consent conditions and/or consent notices are registered on your title requiring certain types of fixtures, fittings and septic tanks, these can not be overruled and you will not be permitted to use a holding tank.
- If your property is not within the contracted scope of sewer reticulation you will not be permitted to use a holding tank.
- All building consent applications for use of a holding tank in lieu of a secondary on-site treatment and disposal system must be supported with; a site plan, calculations by a certified professional engineer for tank storage size, alarm and pump-out frequency, tank design, evidence of intent to enter into a contract with a registered drainlayer for regular maintenance and pump-out of the tank (which must be completed before the tank is permitted to be used).

4 *My property has been affected by construction of the public sewers. How and when will it be reinstated?*

The reinstatement crew follows behind the sewer construction crew. This will be done as quickly as possible but there may be a 1 or 2 week delay. We appreciate your patience and tolerance during this time while we work to put everything back how it was. The condition of private property is recorded prior to commencing work and once the Contractor believes reinstatement is complete we will contact you. If this work includes reinstatement of a vehicle crossing on the road reserve, Earth Tech and Council representatives will agree the work to be done to reinstate as best as practicable to the original condition.

5 My property is to be serviced by a low pressure system with a grinder pump, rather than by conventional gravity? Why is this?

EcoCare is a community based scheme that is designed to achieve the overall outcome (servicing of the community) in the most effective manner. Council has endeavored to provide equality across the community in how the scheme is funded.

Some properties are able to be serviced more cheaply than others due to, for example, land features and topography, location of sections, location of houses and location of plumbing fixtures. The actual cost of property connections could vary from \$1,000 to \$10,000 depending on these factors.

Generally, the cheapest way to connect the majority of properties is by gravity sewers, however in some cases this is not possible or would be very expensive. Examples of some of these locations are the village (flat with high ground water table and hard pan), Lincoln Street (low lying) and coastal areas of Wintle Street and Eveline Street (difficult to install gravity sewers without impacting the environment).

The solution in these difficult areas is to install low pressure systems with a grinder pump. In some other community schemes, the obligation to supply and install the grinder pump unit rests with the landowner (total cost approximately \$5000 per unit). For the initial reticulation areas of EcoCare, Council has decided to include the capital cost and the first 15 years of maintenance to make this more equitable.

There are also other benefits as the pipes connecting the grinder pump to the public sewer are of small diameter (50mm) and do not need to be laid to grade. This means there is a considerable reduction in construction impacts as the pipes are much easier to install. In addition, future maintenance costs (should blockages or breakages occur after 15 years) will be much lower than with a gravity system.

However as with any part of the sewerage scheme gravity or low pressure, if a blockage or fault is found to be caused by misuse of the system (flushing inappropriate objects or chemicals down) during the first 15 year period, the cost of repair will be passed back to the appropriate ratepayer.

The present cost of a grinder unit (pump, motor and cables) is approximately \$800. The units may last longer than 15 years depending on usage, and repairs may be possible instead of full replacement.

6 **How much will I have to pay for EcoCare, and when?**

The uniform annual charge and uniform targeted rate will be levied on your rates bill in the rating year when service is expected to be available. Please refer to the attached table.

	Uniform Annual Charge*	Uniform Targeted Rate (one-off) **
<i>Allotment or household unit created on and prior to 23 March 2002</i>	\$692.90	\$2,654.10 [#] (levied over 2 years)
<i>Allotment or household unit created from 24 March 2002 onwards</i>	\$692.90	\$7,516.60 (levied over 1 year, or \$517.60 each year for 25 years)

All rates and charges given above will be annually adjusted for inflation.

* *Allotments used for non-residential purpose will be levied the Uniform Annual Charge per pan. Vacant sections will be levied 50% of the Uniform Annual Charge.*

** *The Uniform Targeted Rate will be levied in the year when service is expected to become available. The Uniform Targeted Rate will not be levied on vacant sections until application for building consent.*

This reduced Uniform Targeted Rate includes the application of the fixed SWSS subsidy of \$4862.50 per property.

If your property is developed (not vacant) the targeted rate will be levied on your rates within the rating year that sewer service is expected to become available. If your property is vacant, the targeted rate will be levied when you apply for building consent.

Some properties will have a connection to the EcoCare Scheme by April 2009 which is within the 2008/09 rating year. Therefore these properties, if developed, will be levied the targeted rate in July 2008.

The annual charge will also be levied for these initial properties, but will be pro-rated for partial service to be provided towards the end of the 2008 – 2009 rating year and then spread over the 6 instalments throughout the year.

7 **My property is in a subdivision that already has sewer pipes. Do I still have to pay the one-off targeted rate?**

Yes you do. The uniform targeted rate and uniform annual rate will be levied to all property owners that will have connection to the EcoCare Scheme.

The targeted rate covers a share of the capital cost of building the scheme which includes the sewer pipes, but also the pump stations, treatment plant and reclaimed water re-use scheme.

That is, the infrastructure needs to be built for the number of people/properties it services, not the number of physical connections made.

Please check to see if there is a consent notice registered against your property title. In most cases for subdivisions consented after 2002 there will be a consent notice that requires that when the EcoCare sewer connection is available, you must decommission your communal or individual wastewater system, connect to EcoCare and pay all required connection charges.

Properties that were created before 23 March 2002 will be levied a lower one-off targeted rate because Council applied for and were granted a funding subsidy under the Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme. However that subsidy is only permitted to be used for properties created before 23 March 2002, therefore Council resolved to use this to lower this charge to the 1200 properties within the initial scope of sewer construction that meet this criteria.

8 My property was created after 23 March 2002. How can I nominate the 25 year option for paying the one-off targeted rate?

Before the start of the rating year in which the targeted rate will be applied, you will be sent a letter asking to nominate either the 1-year or 25-year payment option. Note that if the 25 year payment option is selected, the annual amount becomes a rate that stays with the property even if you sell.

The targeted rate will be levied either

- on your rates in the year the connection will be available, if your property has already been developed, or
- if your property is still vacant and the sewer connection is available, the targeted rate will be levied in the next rating year when you apply for building consent.

9 Who will make the final connection to EcoCare?

Generally for properties within the initial scope of sewer reticulation created pre-March 2002, the private drain connection to the sewer will be carried out as part of the EcoCare Project at no additional cost. However if your existing private drainage upstream of the existing septic tank is old and cracked and/or there is risk of stormwater entering the EcoCare system then we will not allow connection. Instead we will issue a notice to fix, in which case the private drainage works including connection to the sewer will need be arranged and paid for by you. Therefore, to gain the most benefit from the works we are carrying out now, we highly recommend that you seek advice from a registered drainlayer as soon as possible.

10 I want to subdivide my property, are there any EcoCare related costs associated with this?

Yes there is. If your property is located within the EcoCare Drainage District (refer to the map in the LTCCP2006-2016) then you will be required to pay a Development Contribution of \$12,183.80 for each new lot created.

11 Can I arrange to have my power supply buried at the same time as the contractor installs public sewers and private property drains on my property?

Unfortunately no. It is not good practice to have these services buried in the same trench because maintenance access to one service may damage the other.

12 Why doesn't Council provide a reticulated water supply at the same time as installing the sewers?

Council is concerned with minimising harmful effects on the environment and contributing to a healthy community all within the boundaries of the community's ability to pay. The commencement of EcoCare has involved complex consultation with the community who agree that immediate environmental issues require urgent attention. Water investigations for Mangawhai are included in Council's 10 year plan (Kaipara's Future – Working together). This long term plan is available on the Council website below and also in Council offices.

http://www.kaipara.govt.nz/ltccp_2006-2016.htm

13 Is the system designed to cope with the lower water flows that will be generated because Mangawhai does not have a reticulated water supply? And likewise the increased flows over summer peak period and if/when reticulated water is provided?

Yes, the design and operation of the system has taken this into consideration.

14 From March 2008 there have been new rates and charges published. Why have these changed since the February 2006 Statement of Proposal?

The rates and charges have been updated to allow for assessment of growth, final construction pricing and inflation. The new rates and charges are within 1% of applying inflation alone except for the subsidised targeted rate for properties created before 24 March 2002. This is because the government subsidy that can be used to assist these properties can not be inflated, therefore a fixed value of \$4862.50 for each of these properties. Since the non-subsidised targeted rate has increased by \$654.10, the non-subsidised targeted rate needs to increase by the same amount.