



Report 04.504
Date 16 August 2004
File WAR 000333
WP/03/06/06
Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
Author Paula Pickford, Section Leader, Consents & Compliance

Remission of Consent Processing Costs - Masterton District Council Sewage Rapid Infiltration Trial

1. Purpose

For the Committee to consider and decide on remission of charges in relation to consent processing costs.

2. Background

On the 17 July 2000 Masterton District Council lodged an application to undertake rapid infiltration trials of sewage adjacent to the Homebush oxidation ponds. Further information on groundwater issues was requested and received. Another further information request was issued seeking confirmation of a monitoring plan. Masterton District Council then requested that the application be placed on hold indefinitely given the access difficulties with the land some of the trials were to be undertaken on.

After approximately three years, notice was received from Masterton District Council that access issues had been dealt with. Staff then proceeded to complete processing of the application and a consent was issued with the effective date of 3 March 2004.

The total cost to Masterton District Council of processing the application was \$10,564.60 (176 hours of officer time). An initial application fee of \$210.00 was paid and a subsequent interim charge of \$6,784.60 was paid in July 2001.

Once the consent had been issued, a further account for \$3,570.00 + GST was sent to Masterton District Council for the balance of the processing costs. Masterton District Council has asked that consideration be given to remission of the additional account of \$3,570.00. (Attachment 1.)

Remission of resource management charges above \$1,000.00 is delegated to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee.

(All costs exclude GST)

3. Discussion

Staff have examined the processing costs. This was a protracted, “on–off” application with several changes in scope and location made at various times that added to the time involved. Staff feel that the costs charged to Masterton District Council fairly reflect the time and effort put into processing this application.

However Council also has to consider if the charges are reasonable. In doing so looking at whether the charges are reasonable, consideration needs to be given to the scale and potential effects of the activity, and the benefit gained by the applicant over and above that of the general populace.

This was a difficult consent to deal with due to several issues, not all of which were under the control of the applicant. The end outcome of discharging relatively small quantities of treated sewage to land using rapid infiltration in this particular location, would have had only a minor effect on the environment.

The current consent for the discharge of wastewater to water by Masterton District Council was processed in 2002, at a net cost to Masterton District of \$42,191. The proposed rapid infiltration trial did not represent 25% of the same scale, scope or effects, yet the costs of processing were 25% of the current wastewater discharge consent.

Masterton District Council have requested a remission of approximately one third of the costs, which would reduce the final account to \$6,574.50. Staff supports this approach. By remitting the final account of \$3,570.00, a fair and reasonable cost for the processing of the sewage rapid infiltration consent will be achieved.

4. Communication

Apart from advising the applicant of the decision, no additional publicity is required.

5. Recommendation

That the Committee remit \$3,570.00 plus GST of the costs of processing WAR 000333.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Paula Pickford
Section Leader, Consents & Compliance

Steve Blakemore
Manager, Planning & Resources