

Action sought on Taipā sewage

Doubtless Bay catchment group Clean Waters to the Sea (CWTS) was pleased to hear Mayor John Carter and Far North District Council infrastructure manager Andy Finch express support last week for locally-developed technology that it says will improve the performance of Taipā's waste water treatment system, but now they want to see action.

CWTS chairman Wayne Parsonson said Mr Carter had shown enthusiasm for the electro-coagulation technology, when it was shown to have achieved outstanding results at Mangonui last year, but there had been no further contact from the council since then.

Mr Parsonson, Andreas Kurmann and Tiger Tukariri had initiated a meeting with Messrs Carter and Finch last week, where they detailed concerns about Taipā's waste water plant, which Mr Parsonson said had been operating without consent for more than a decade. Independent commissioners for the Northland Regional Council would begin a consent hearing at Taipā on Monday.

Mr Parsonson said CWTS had sought the meeting to offer its active support to the council to help with the difficult management decisions it faced at Taipā, and in waste



Electro-coagulation was trialled at Mangonui Haulage, where it proved very effective at removing pollutants from waste water.

water management across the district.

"We are confident our proven results from the Mangonui Haulage agricultural effluent waste water trial of the electro-coagulation (EC) machine show that we have the best solution to current waste water treatment pollution problems," he said.

"With the estimated cost of a commercial-scale EC water cleaning machine being roughly one-fifth of the alternatives, together with relatively low operational costs, why wouldn't you look seriously at this technology? Especially since it is already being used successfully on

human effluent in Singapore and places in the United States."

Mr Kurmann said CWTS was interested in best environmental outcomes, and believed EC made international water standards achievable, putting an end to pollution of the Parapara River and Aurere outfall.

"I've been working closely with local hapū on this issue," he said.

"Together we have initiated a second EC trial, this time on human waste at the Taipā waste water plant. The trial is still in progress, but initial results look as good as those we achieved on

agricultural effluent in Mangonui; 95 per cent of phosphorus, 99.9 per cent of E. coli bacteria and algae, 85 per cent of nitrates, and importantly, hard to deal with ammonia is being removed by an average of 50-60 per cent.

"With a centrifuge unit added to follow EC treatment, separated nutrients could be delivered to convert sludge into fertiliser products, which would claw back costs."

Mr Parsonson said CWTS was pleased that both Messrs Carter and Finch had expressed interest in the EC proposal, but were yet to be convinced that their words would translate into actions.

Mr Kurmann said CWTS would present its submission to the consent hearing next week, with an overview of the current plant and its "unacceptable" pollution levels.

"We will also explain how EC technology works and how it could be used in Taipā to comply with the expected consent conditions," he said.

"With all parties working together on this, a successful outcome here will offer leadership for a way to make significant progress towards cleaner water throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

"We have iwi backing, we have community backing, we just need FNDC backing," Mr Kurmann