

28 February 2023

Caleb vdb

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Caleb

Request for Information pursuant to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA)

Thank you for your correspondence of 30 January 2023 in which you have requested the following official information:

How many takeaways in Hutt Valley have been allowed by the council to dump their waste as general waste?

Specifically: consent to discharge trade waste:

How many are currently issued?

Where does this allow the takeaways to discharge waste? Anywhere? Down the drain?

Has there been any research into their waste impacts on Hutt Valley /pipes/ sewers/ rivers?

The Hutt Valley Trade Wastes Bylaw (see [here](#)) is the over-arching document that describes the conditions that any non-domestic discharge to the public wastewater (sewer) system must meet. This includes the volume, flow and strength of the wastewater. The bylaw applies throughout the Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council districts.

A trade wastes discharge consent issued under the bylaw allows food premises to discharge into the Council's main public sewer. There are currently about 400 food businesses in the Hutt Valley that have been granted a consent. The Hutt City Council's records do not enable us to differentiate between takeaway outlets, dine-in outlets and mixed premises. Trade waste officers monitor and advise food business owners throughout the valley as part of the consenting process. There are a few outlets that are not consented and these are dealt with by way of a graduated enforcement model.

Fats, oils and grease (also known as FOGs) present the main challenge for the wastewater system. FOGs require a lot of energy and treatment to process at treatment plants and can cause fat blockages in the pipes and pump stations. To avoid this, each takeaway outlet that has a risk of greasy waste has a grease trap installed. FOGs float to the top and food scraps sink to the bottom of the trap. The discharge water is drawn-off between these two layers, and this pre-treated water is discharged to the public wastewater network. FOGs and food waste that remain in the traps are removed; they are dewatered further and processed to a solid mass at a specialized processing plant before being disposed of at a landfill.

Properly pre-treated waste from a takeaway outlet will have minimal effect on the sewer pipes and assets (manholes, pumpstations and treatment plants etc). After separation from the FOGs and food scraps, the wastewater itself is benign. It isn't highly acidic or alkaline so is not a great risk to public infrastructure, it doesn't hold any silts or large inorganic particles that might cause blockages and it isn't usually toxic so is considered safe for the treatment process and the health of workers.

The process should have no effect on natural waterways as discharge of wastewater to either the stormwater pipes or the environment directly is illegal. We therefore don't expect there to be any impact whatsoever to the local streams, river and harbour from the takeaway outlet's wastewater process. Further, the Resource Management Act forbids the dumping of any pollutant (including wastewater from a food process) to the ground, stormwater (rainwater) network or streams/rivers/harbour.

General research was undertaken prior to the Hutt Valley Trade Wastes Bylaw being introduced. This was to determine what effects the various discharges were having on the sewer system (pipes/sewers) and also the Hutt Wastewater Treatment Plant. Calculations were made to determine how much dischargers should pay for Council to 'treat' their wastewater. This research is unlikely to be documented.

I trust this information is useful to you. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this letter may be published on the Council's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Susan Sales
Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy