

STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Members, Engineering Services Committee

FROM: Jeff Cuthbertson

DATE: 22 September 2005

SUBJECT: Takaka and Motueka Firewells

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Engineering Services Committee of the status and obligations Council has with these firewells.

COMMENT

Council has two regions where firewells are the main source of water for extinguishing fires.

The Takaka Township solely depends upon these wells as Council does not have a reticulated water supply. Motueka however, does, in some parts of the township have a reticulated water supply. The remainder of Motueka (approximately 70%) relies solely on firewells. The areas of Motueka that are reticulated do suffer slightly, especially for the first five minutes of draw off from the water reticulation. This lag is due to the pumps ramping up to satisfy the increased demand and pressure drop. Once the pumping system has reached demand, all reticulated fire hydrants work well.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Attached is a Performance Review undertaken by MWH NZ Ltd on behalf of Council. The Performance Review highlights the limitation of the firewells in particular areas. The review also raises several questions of adequacy and the longevity of such a network.

FIRE SERVICE

There has not been time to provide this report to the Fire Service in the respective areas or to gain their comments.

Prior to proceeding any further with well upgrades or new wells, feedback from the Fire Service would be required.

Firewells

Firewells don't provide the degree of protection to property that is provided by a reticulated network with storage reservoirs.

It is accepted however, in areas where there are no reticulated networks, anything would be better than nothing and thus firewells can serve their purpose as long as people understand they have limitations.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1 the Performance Review be submitted to the Fire Service for their feedback and recommendations.**
- 2 a further report be presented to the Engineering Services Committee with the Fire Service's feedback, in conjunction with staff priorities as to the fire needs.**

Jeff Cuthbertson
Utilities Manager