

Wastewater system



Users: Homes, businesses and rural properties connected to the sewers main

General Benefit: Public health

Rationale for assigning benefits

Direct benefit from the removal and treatment of wastewater is received by each customer connected to the sewerage system. Residential properties currently pay for this service from rates; small businesses pay a fixed annual fee; and larger institutions pay charges based on the amount of waste they produce. The general benefit of an efficient wastewater system to the whole City arises from the contribution to public health — without the system the City would rapidly suffer serious problems from disease and environmental degradation. The costs for these general benefits are mainly allocated to residential and commercial ratepayers, weighted towards the former because they produce more wastes — although residential users do provide some subsidy for industry.

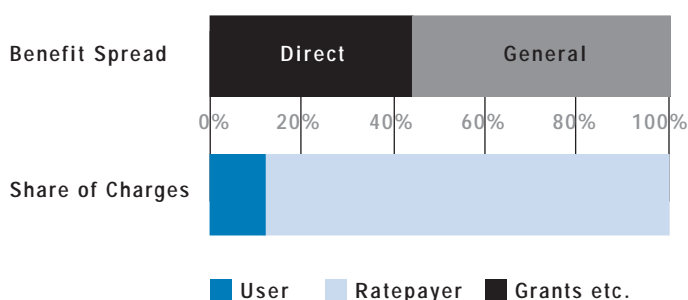
Other considerations

Introducing more widespread user charges poses practical problems due to the technical difficulty of metering waste water flows. Compulsory participation in the service is necessary to ensure high standards of public health. User charges for wastewater could lead to economic hardship, which would work against community interest as those less able to afford the service risk deteriorating health and environmental effects for themselves and the whole community. To ensure the system covers the whole of Christchurch, the high cost of sewer extensions are spread through a City-wide sewerage rate, representing the general benefit all residents receive from the service.

Wastewater is removed from Christchurch residential and commercial properties at a rate of 150,000,000 litres each day for treatment at the City Council's Treatment Plant. Individuals flushing the toilet, pulling the plug; or homes or businesses otherwise disposing of liquid waste are the users of this system, gaining direct benefit from its existence.

The removal and treatment of wastewater costs \$19.3 million each year.

Who should pay?



Who benefits?

