

# Water Treatment Upgrade Comes in Under Budget



Above: Oamaru Water Treatment Plant Operator Brian Donnelly.



Left: Key players behind Oamaru's Water Treatment Plant upgrade: (from left) process project manager Peter Hogan (United Group Ltd), Council assets manager water and wastewater Martin Pacey, project manager Anthony Steel (Duffill Watts King) and site supervisor Lindsay Roundhill (Duffill Watts King) at the new treatment plant building.

The operations and maintenance contract has been let to United Group Ltd, the firm responsible for the plant's capital contract, who have subcontracted some tasks to local firms Plunket Electrical Ltd and Whitestone Contracting Ltd.

While in the past the water was simply pumped from the Waitaki River to the Ardgowan Reservoir and chlorinated before being piped to households, the same water now goes through an advanced filtering and disinfecting process ensuring an end to murky, and sometimes foul smelling water, endured by residents in the past.

"The treatment upgrade and resulting investment in infrastructure means we are well placed to meet any future increase in quality standards. We've also built in the capacity to cater for future growth," Mr Pacey said.

A year's worth of data is needed before the water quality can be officially re-graded, but the new treatment process will fully comply with the new drinking water standards.

After researching water treatment options both in New Zealand and overseas, and holding public trials of options, the Council decided on a system that combines membrane filtration and ozone treatment of water. Membrane filtration systems are also found in Auckland, Dunedin, Nelson and Napier.

Earthworks Oamaru began preparing the Reservoir Road site at the end of 2005. Later in the year, construction began on a new reservoir 40m in diameter and 9m high, capable of storing enough water for a day's average supply to the businesses and 5,470 households serviced by the scheme. By the middle of 2006 construction began on the new treatment building, with the installation of state of the art equipment from around the globe underway by the end of 2006.

"The plant currently has the capacity to supply 19 million litres per day of water but the addition of extra filters could easily see that amount upgraded to 24 million litres per day," Mr Pacey said.

Council will officially celebrate the plant's commissioning at an open day on September 2. Members of the community are welcome to attend with tours of the plant available.

In a quirky twist of history, Oamaru's newly upgraded water treatment plant will be officially opened 127 years to the day after the town's original water scheme opened.

September 2 will go down in history as a special date for Oamaru's water supply with the town's first water supply officially opened on September 2, 1880 and its vastly upgraded successor due to be officially opened on September 2 this year.

After several years planning, millions of dollars investment and thousands of construction hours, Oamaru now has one of the country's most modern water treatment plants.

And the good news for residents is that

the project came in under budget - an achievement attributed to good planning, the commitment of Council staff and expertise of contractors. Council expects that the final cost of the upgrade will be around \$250,000 under the \$12.9M budget.

The upgrade was prompted by residents' ongoing concerns about water quality. It involved building a new treatment plant, reservoir and ancillary works.

Council's asset manager for water and wastewater Martin Pacey said commissioning began in May with performance tests completed in early July. The plant was then monitored for a month before Council officially took over responsibility for running it.

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## Arbor Day 2007 - Waipouri Beach Reserve Planting

Arbor Day, celebrated on June 5 each year, marks the beginning of the planting season. It's also a chance to appreciate and enhance New Zealand's unique biodiversity.

This year Council funded more than 400 native trees for an Arbor Day planting at Waipouri Beach Reserve in Moeraki (left). Between 30 and 40 members of the local community turned up to help out.