

Hickeys Water Treatment Plant

Assessment of Environmental Effects to support a Notice of Requirement

Prepared for Watercare Services Ltd
Prepared by Beca Limited

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Revision History

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Executive Summary

Watercare Services Ltd (Watercare) owns Hickeys Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at 66 Dublin Street in Pukekohe (Site). The WTP site has been used for water treatment purposes for over 100 years. The plant was decommissioned in 2013, but Watercare are now looking to utilise all of their existing assets across Auckland as the region faces water shortages and population growth. As such, Watercare is seeking to designate the Hickeys WTP site, and parts of two parcels of adjacent Auckland Council land used for site access and on which an existing borehole (BH2) is located, for the following purpose: *Water supply purposes – abstraction infrastructure, water treatment plants, associated structures, maintenance and upgrades.*

Confirming the designation will align the administration of this site with other water treatment plants across Auckland. It will also provide Watercare with additional certainty and clarity about their ability to continue to use this site and parts of the adjacent reserve for water supply purposes.

This Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) accompanies Watercare's Notice of Requirement for a Designation considers the potential adverse effects of confirming the designation. Overall it is considered that adverse effects will be less than minor subject to management measures. All buildings and structures are already established on the site and operational noise and lighting will comply with the permitted baseline applying to the site.

Any future development of the site will require an Outline Plan to be submitted to Auckland Council, similar to a number of designated Watercare owned treatment plants around Auckland (such as Huia and Onehunga).

There are no affected parties except for Auckland Council (the partial landowners of the land to be designated, who have previously allowed the use of their reserve land for access to the treatment plant and one borehole). Correspondence between Auckland Council and Watercare is contained in Appendix A and demonstrates an in-principle agreement with the proposal. The discussions are ongoing with a view to obtaining affected party approval. Effects on neighbouring properties have been assessed as less than minor subject to management measures.

1 Introduction

This AEE has been prepared by Beca in support of a Notice of Requirement for Watercare Services Limited (Watercare) for its Water Treatment Plant at 66 Dublin Street in Pukekohe and parts of the adjacent Auckland Council reserve. Watercare is a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) and a requiring authority responsible for providing water and wastewater services to Auckland.

1.1 Purpose and Overview

The proposed purpose of the designation sought is for:

Water supply purposes – water treatment plants, associated structures, maintenance and upgrades

This designation purpose is consistent with other water treatment plant designations within the Auckland Unitary Plan and the proposed designation will align the management of the site with Watercare's other facilities. The designation will further provide Watercare, Council and the wider community with certainty in relation to the site's ongoing use and its purpose for water supply.

The WTP facilities (buildings and structures) associated with the water treatment plant, and abstraction infrastructure related to a spring and borehole (BH3) on the Watercare land and a further borehole (BH2) on the adjoining Council reserve, have already been developed as the site has a long history of water treatment and supply purposes^A. There are no immediate works proposed (or assessed) for the site. Any future upgrades to the site will require an Outline Plan to be submitted to Auckland Council under Section 176A of the RMA.

1.2 Context

With Auckland facing population growth, increased occurrences of drought and increased water demand, Watercare has identified the need to utilise all their existing water sources. For this reason, Watercare wish to re-establish the Pukekohe Water Treatment Plant which was decommissioned in 2013. Watercare seeks to designate the Water Treatment Plant site and the intake and treatment infrastructure located on that site, to enable foreseeable water supply works on the site. Alongside this notice of requirement, Watercare will be seeking resource consent for water take from the two boreholes (referred to as BH2 and BH3) and Hickeys Spring, to allow them to re-establish the use of the treatment plant.

1.3 Section 171 Requirements

Section 171 of the RMA sets out matters that the territorial authority is required to have regard to when considering an NOR. These matters are addressed throughout this AEE as follows:

- As per 171 (2) c) [section 4](#) of this AEE outlines why the designation is reasonably necessary to achieve the objectives of the requiring authority
- As per 171(1B), positive and potential adverse effects are identified in [section 5](#), and measures to minimise these adverse effects are recommended.
- Because WSL does not have an interest in all of the land subject to the NoR, as per 171(2)(b) an alternatives assessment is provided in [section 6](#) of this AEE.
- As per 171(1)(b)(i), [section 8](#) of this AEE considers the NOR against the relevant provisions of the AUP(OP) Regional Policy Statement.

2 Existing Environment

2.1 Site description

The proposed land to be designated consists of three separate parts as is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Site layout and ownership of land parcels. Light blue = Watercare owned land, Yellow boundary = Auckland Council owned land, light green coloured parcels = AC owned land proposed to designate

The site is located at 66 Dublin St, Pukekohe and owned by Watercare. In addition, it is proposed to designate two parts of Auckland Council owned reserve land to secure access to the WTP and to BH2 (from Dublin Street and Crisp Avenue respectively). Table 1 below lists the legal descriptions for all parts of the site.

Table 1. Legal description of land parcels within the site.

Legal description	Owner of land parcel
PT ALLOT 1 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, PT ALLOT 41 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, ALLOT 146 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, PT ALLOT 1 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, PT ALLOT 41 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, PT ALLOT 40 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, PT ALLOT 2 1 Paris	Watercare Services Ltd
PT ALLOT 1 1 Parish PUKEKOHE DISTRICT, Lot 3 DP 40434, Pt Lot 1 Deeds Reg 871, Pt Lot 1 Deeds Reg 871, Pt Lot 1 Deeds Reg 872, Lot 2 DP 84735, Pt Lot 2 Deeds Reg 872	Auckland Council

Lot 6 DP 39558, Lot 52 DP 189987, Lot 53 DP 189987, Lot 54 DP 189987, Lot 3 DP 38028, Lot 8 DP 37553

Auckland Council

2.2 Physical characteristics of the site

The site is accessed from No. 148 Seddon Street through a shared access with the house located at 148 Seddon Street. The site is developed with WTP facilities that are centrally located within the natural depression of the site and shown in the photographs contained in Figures 2 and 3 below. The facilities and assets are described as follows:

- Four treatment plant buildings (effectively large sheds) and hard-stand areas
- Gated entry to the location of the treatment plant buildings
- Borehole 3 (BH3) and water tanks within a fenced off area (on Watercare-owned land)
- Borehole 2 (BH2) within a fenced off area on Auckland Council owned land (and can be accessed from Crisp Avenue)
- Hickeys Spring

The remainder of the site consists of established vegetation, a creek and grassed areas that is accessible to the public and used for informal recreation. Given the established vegetation and the natural depression of the land, the WTP is not visible from the surrounding properties or from the road. The underlying zone of the site is Open Space – Informal Recreation Zone.



Figure 2. Treatment plant buildings and carparking area.



Figure 3. Treatment buildings and carparking area.

2.3 Surrounding land use

The site is located within an established residential neighbourhood. The surrounding area is predominantly zoned Residential-Mixed Housing Suburban under the Auckland Unitary Plan, with pockets of Single House Zone to the north of the site. To the north-east and east of the site (along Paerata Road and Adams Drive) there is an area of Business-Light Industry zoned land. The existing reserve land and associated landscaping provide an effective buffer (both physically and visually) between the WTP facilities and the surrounding residential properties, as can be seen in Figure 4 below where the existing WTP buildings are marked with stars and are surrounded by vegetation.

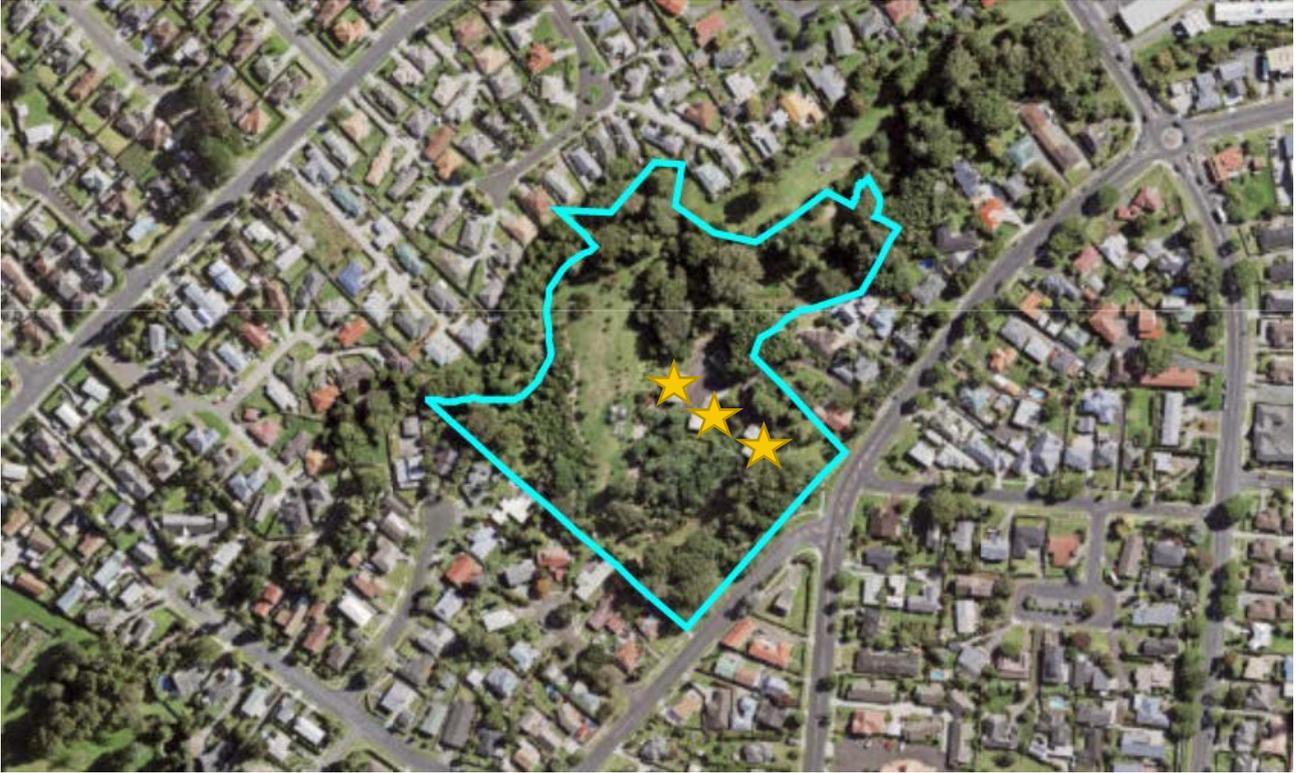


Figure 4. Location of existing WTP buildings on the site, marked with stars.

3 Project Overview and Nature of Proposed Works

3.1 Site history

The site at 66 Dublin Street has been used as a water treatment plant for over 100 years but has never been designated. The WTP has been used to partially supply Pukekohe with water services. Two boreholes and Hickeys Spring have been used as water sources, and buildings have been erected on the site to service the plant.

While the plant was decommissioned by Watercare in July 2013, the water treatment facilities have remained and been maintained on site since. Auckland Council granted two separate consents for water takes from BH2 and BH3 in May 2013 before the plant was decommissioned. Watercare applied for replacement resource consents for these permits in 2014 as they were due to expire; however processing of these applications has currently been suspended under s91A of the RMA.. Under section 124 of the RMA, these bore permits are protected and can be used until the replacement application is determined.

A permit for water take from Hickeys Spring was also granted in February 2014. This permit lapsed in February 2019, as no water had been taken since the permit was granted.

3.2 Nature of proposed works

Water abstraction and treatment structures and facilities already exist on the site (as is detailed and shown in the photographs in Section 2 of this report). No immediate changes are proposed to the buildings and structures on the site as part of this NoR process. Any upgrades and enhancements to the facility in future will require an Outline Plan of Works (OPW) to be submitted to Council (under Section 176A of the RMA). Detail of any proposed works and how adverse effects on the environment will be avoided, remedied or mitigated will be required to be shown through the Outline Plan process. This is consistent with the management of other existing water treatment plants across Auckland under the AUP, including Onehunga (Designation No. 9441) and Huia (Designation No. 9320). Separate resource consents will be applied for to allow for water take and discharges from the WTP.

4 The need for a designation

Section 171 (1)(c) of the RMA requires territorial authorities to have regard to whether the work and designation are reasonably necessary for achieving the objectives of the requiring authority for which the designation is sought.

Auckland is currently facing water shortages and it is likely that this issue will continue as the region's population grows and the occurrence of drought increases with climate change. Watercare therefore needs to ensure that it is able to access all of its water assets across Auckland in order to enable them to provide adequate water supply to Auckland. As a requiring authority, designations provide an effective means through which Watercare can provide these public works to Auckland.

The Hickeys Spring WTP was used for water supply and treatment until decommissioning in 2013. The site has already been developed with all of the buildings and facilities needed for water take and treatment purposes, and the designation sought will not only allow for the reestablishment of water treatment services at the site, but will also regularise activities that have been occurring on site for a century.

Watercare is now looking to gain additional certainty and clarity around their ability to re-establish, use and potentially upgrade the site moving forwards and a designation is a suitable mechanism for doing so. Obtaining a designation will also align the administration of the site (from a resource management and AUP perspective) with other water treatment plants around Auckland which have designations with the same purpose: *Water supply purposes – water treatment plants, associated structures, maintenance and upgrades.*

5 Assessment of Effects on the Environment

Given that the WTP and intake infrastructure have already been established, this assessment has been carried out on the basis of the infrastructure that currently exists as opposed to a hypothetical potential future upgrade. Positive and potential adverse effects of the designation have therefore been considered in the context of the WTPs existing character and typical operational requirements.

5.1 Positive effects

Designating this site for water treatment purposes will provide Watercare with a consistent way to manage their assets and provides additional certainty around the current and future use of the land. This will generate positive benefits for both Watercare (in meeting its responsibilities as Auckland's water provider) and for the Auckland region. In addition, the designation will provide Council and surrounding residents with clarity around the ongoing purpose and use of the land and avoid the potential for any future reverse sensitivity effects.

Designating the adjacent Council land will also provide an additional layer of planning protection for Watercare's abstraction infrastructure at BH2 and protect it from incompatible land uses on the reserve.

5.2 Landscape and visual effects

The site has long been established for water treatment purposes and as such, is an integrated part of the existing environment. Although the plant was decommissioned in 2013, all buildings and structures have remained on site and so the re-establishment of the plant will not bring about a change in the visual appearance of the site. Watercare is not proposing to make any external upgrades to the plant as part of this designation process. In the event that any existing buildings are removed in future, the physical characteristics of the site (namely its slope and location of the creek) would likely require any new buildings be located within the vicinity of the existing/removed buildings.

The site is located in a natural gully and is heavily vegetated; most structures on the site are currently not visible from the surrounding streets and it is expected that any future development on the site would be similarly screened by vegetation and the natural lay of the land.

Overall it is not expected that visual and character amenity will be adversely affected beyond the permitted baseline by the re-establishment of water treatment plant at this site.

5.3 Traffic and access effects

Traffic effects arising from the re-establishment of the plant are expected to be negligible. The plant is mechanical and requires limited human involvement; Watercare anticipate that the plant will have 1-2 operators on site on an average day. As such, there will be a negligible impact on traffic movements in the surrounding streets and a similarly negligible impact on on-street parking availability, as parking is available on the site.

It is proposed to designate the accessway to the site (148 Seddon Street) to provide ongoing access to the WTP. This accessway is already used to access the plant, but this use will be formalised through the designation process. The accessway will not be fenced; as such access to the private dwelling at 148 Seddon Street will not be inhibited by the designation.

5.4 Noise effects

It is not considered that the operation of the water treatment plant will give rise to objectionable noise levels beyond the site boundary. It is understood that permitted activity standards for noise in residential areas can be complied with. These standards are set out in section E25.6.2.1 of the AUP(OP) and are included below :

Time	Noise level
Monday to Saturday 7am-10pm	50dB L _{Aeq}
Sunday 9am-6pm	
All other times	40dB L _{Aeq} 75dB L _{AFmax}

5.5 Lighting effects

It is understood that residential permitted lighting standards (as set out in section E24.6.1 of the AUP(OP)) will not be exceeded in the day to day operation of the plant. As previously mentioned, the WTP is mechanical and requires limited human operation and will require minimal lighting. Vehicles are unlikely to access the site during the night, except for in the unlikely event of a system failure requiring urgent attention.

The effects of lighting from the plant will be further minimised by vegetation screening and the separation distance between the plant's buildings and nearby residential properties. Currently, the closest distance between the existing WTP buildings and the nearest residential dwelling (148 Seddon Street) is approximately 25 metres, with large vegetation between these two buildings. The next closest property on Seddon Street is 56m from the existing buildings, and properties on other adjacent streets (Cardiff and Ranch Streets) are at least 80m from the closest WTP building. In addition to the separation distance between the plant and adjacent residential dwellings, the thick vegetation surrounding the site will screen any lighting from the site.

As previously mentioned, detail of any proposed future works and how adverse effects on the environment will be avoided, remedied or mitigated will be required to be shown through the Outline Plan process.

5.6 Effects of Future Developments

While no upgrades to the site are proposed by Watercare as part of this designation process, future upgrades or improvements to the plant could be reasonably expected as is the case for any established WTP in Auckland. As mentioned in Section 5.2, the location of any new/replacement buildings on the site would likely be limited to the existing hard stand/developed area as a result of the natural site constraints (topography, vegetation and stream). Any proposed future works that are in accordance with the purpose of the designation would require an Outline Plan of Works in accordance with Section 176A of the RMA to be submitted to Council which would address in detail the proposed works and identify measures for avoiding/remediating/mitigating any adverse effects.

6 Alternatives Assessment

Under section 171(1)(b) a territorial authority must have particular regard to whether adequate consideration has been given to alternative sites, routes, or methods of undertaking the work if the requiring authority does not have an interest in the land sufficient for undertaking the work; or it is likely that the work will have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

It is considered that Watercare as the requiring authority has sufficient interest in the land, as Watercare owns the bulk of the site, has established water treatment facilities on this site and has a long history of

operating water treatment services from the site. Additionally, Section 5 of this AEE does not identify any significant adverse effects on the environment. Given that Watercare have sufficient interest in the land, already own the majority of the site, and are looking to enhance their access to water supplies across the region, no alternative sites have been considered.

This alternatives assessment is therefore focused on the alternative methods that Watercare could use to authorise the use of the site for water treatment purposes.

With regard to various other planning tools that could be used to authorise the use of the site, Watercare considers a designation to be the most suitable course of action for the following reasons:

- Pursuant to Part 8 of the RMA, Watercare is empowered as a network utility operator to designate land for the safe and efficient operating of a public work.
- The designation will allow Watercare greater certainty and clarity around their ability to use the site for water treatment purposes.
- The designation will allow Watercare to undertake works on the site and adjacent Council land in an efficient, integrated manner.
- The designation will allow for the site to be identified as a designated site in the AUP(OP), which will provide greater certainty and clarity to other land users around the current and future use of the site. This will also protect the designated land from other development or plan changes, which could otherwise adversely affect Watercare's ability to continue using the site and adjacent Council land for water supply purposes.

7 Consultation

Watercare has consulted with Auckland Council prior to lodging this NOR, as the site access and BH2 are both located on Council owned land. Written affected party approval has not yet been provided by Auckland Council, however these conversations are underway and Auckland Council have indicated that they are supportive of the designation in principle. Email correspondence on this matter is attached as Appendix A.

No changes are proposed to the facilities and structures that currently exist on the site, and as section 4 concludes, there are not considered to be any adverse effects beyond the site boundary. This NOR and the proposed designation are effectively administrative and as such, there is no need to consult with any other parties.

7.1 Mana Whenua

An established process is in place for mana whenua engagement on projects initiated by Watercare. This process includes early notification of projects to be undertaken by Watercare which do or are likely to require resource consent.

A “Kaitiaki Managers Projects List” is provided on a monthly basis to nominated representatives of all 19 mana whenua in the Auckland Council area. A brief summary of each project is included in the list by which mana whenua are invited to indicate which projects they have an interest in. Further information on the identified project is then provided to those parties, followed by further engagement depending on the responses received.

The Hickeys Water Treatment Plant Designation project was included on the Kaitiaki Managers List provided to Mana Whenua in May 2020. Three mana whenua entities indicated that they have an interest in this project:

- Ngāti Te Ata
- Te Akitai Waiohua; and
- Ngāti Tamaoho

Information on the project was provided to the above mana whenua entities on 25th and 26th May 2020.

No response was received from Ngāti Te Ata.

Te Akitai Waiohua requested a site visit to the Pukekohe WTP, prior to providing a response.

Ngāti Tamaoho requested further information in regards to other projects relating to Hickeys Water Treatment Plant and not particularly the Designation application. However, information has been provided to them and we are still awaiting a response.

Email correspondence is attached as Appendix B.

7.2 Franklin Local Board

Watercare engaged with the Franklin Local Board in relation to the proposed designation and no issues were raised. Correspondence is enclosed in Appendix C of this report.

8 Statutory Assessment

8.1 Auckland Unitary Plan: Operative in Part (AUP:OP)

8.1.1 Regional Policy Statement

Chapter B of the AUP sets out the Regional Policy Statement. Relevant policies from this Chapter include:

B3.2.4.1(5) Non residential activities are provided in residential areas to support the needs of people and communities.

Hickeys WTP has long been used to supply water to the surrounding community of Pukekohe. The designation will provide Watercare with additional certainty around their ability to continue to provide water to the public to support their needs.

B3.2.2(1) Enable the efficient development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure.

The designation would provide Watercare with greater certainty and clarity around their ability to operate and maintain the water treatment plant. An outline plan will be required for any future upgrades and improvements to the existing facility.

B3.2.2(2) Recognise the value of investment in existing infrastructure.

The designation will allow Watercare to re-establish the existing infrastructure on the site and continue to operate water treatment services from the existing facilities. This is an efficient use of existing infrastructure which will contribute to Watercare's aim of utilising all existing assets to address Auckland's current water shortages.

8.1.2 Auckland Wide Provisions

Chapter E26 Infrastructure

This Chapter provides a framework for the development, operation and maintenance of infrastructure across Auckland. Relevant objectives and policies include E26.2.1 (1,3, 4, 5, 6 and 9) and E26.2.2 (1,2,3,4 and 5) respectively. The crux of these objectives and policies is to:

- Recognise the importance of infrastructure to society as a whole
- Enable the development and protection of infrastructure
- Acknowledge and manage the potential adverse effects associated with infrastructure development and operation

The proposed designation aligns well with the framework for infrastructure established in Chapter E26. The designation will provide for the long-term protection of an existing water asset and will facilitate the continued use of the facility in an efficient manner. In addition, and as established in section 5 of this report, the adverse effects identified as a result of the continued operation of the WTP or by designating the site are less than minor.

8.1.3 Zone Provisions

The underlying zoning of the site is Open Space Zone – Informal Recreation Zone. The following objectives and policies of this zone are of relevance to the NOR:

Objective H7.2(1) The adverse effects of use and development of open space areas on residents, communities and the environment are avoided, remedied and mitigated.

There will be no change in the current use of the open space zone around the treatment plant; facilities and boreholes will remain fenced off while the remainder of the site will continue to be available for informal

recreation. As such, any adverse effects relating to the use of the area for water treatment purposes will be avoided.

Policy H7.3(1)(a) Design, develop, manage and maintain open spaces to provide for the needs of the wider community as well as the needs of the community in which they are located.

The designation will allow for the immediate community to continue using the site for informal recreation and will also serve the wider community by allowing Watercare to re-establish this site as a water treatment plant.

Policy H7.3(4) Enable the construction, operation, maintenance, repair and minor upgrading of infrastructure located on open spaces.

The designation would provide Watercare with greater certainty and clarity around their ability to operate and maintain the water treatment plant.

8.2 Resource Management Act

8.2.1 Part 2 Assessment

Part 2 of the RMA (sections 5-8) sets out the purpose and principles of the RMA. The following aspects of Part 2 are of particular relevance to this NOR:

The designation is in accordance with Section 5 (Purpose) as confirming this designation will allow Watercare to continue efficiently using the natural water resources at the site to provide water treatment services to the Auckland region, thus contributing towards the wellbeing and health of communities. As this AEE has demonstrated, there are negligible adverse effects arising from this designation as all facilities and structures are already present on the site and no changes to the site are proposed. An Outline Plan will be required to be submitted to Auckland Council for any future works and will need to detail how adverse effects on the environment will be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

The matters of national importance in Section 6 are not relevant to this NOR as the site does not contain any coastal areas, outstanding natural features, cultural or heritage sites. In regard to relevant aspects of Section 7 (Other Matters), the designation enables the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources by giving Watercare greater certainty around the use of the site for water treatment purposes into the future. The amenity values of the site are not affected by the NOR and the public will still be able to access the reserve areas of the site; and the quality of the environment will be maintained as no changes to the buildings and structures on site are proposed.

As such, it is considered that the NOR is in accordance with the purpose and principles of the RMA.

8.3 Reserves Act

Borehole 2 is located on Auckland Council owned land and is managed under the Reserves Act. No changes are proposed to this area of reserve land (water take from Borehole 2 is being dealt with through a separate resource consent) and as such, no requirements under the Reserves Act or any underlying management plan are triggered as part of this designation process.

9 Conclusion

In summary, Watercare is seeking to designate the Hickeys Water Treatment Plant and associated assets (the access strip and borehole) for water treatment purposes. A designation will allow for certainty and clarity around the continued use of the site and is considered the most appropriate method for authorising water treatment services at the site.

The site has been used as a water treatment plant for the past 100 years and although it was decommissioned in 2013, all buildings, boreholes and facilities have remained on the site.

No changes are currently proposed to the existing buildings and structures. Any future upgrades to the site will require an Outline Plan of Works to be submitted to Council, as is the case currently for other designated water treatment facilities around Auckland such as the Huia and Onehunga plants. This process would address in detail any measures that may be required to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects arising from any upgrade.

Residential permitted standards for noise, setbacks and lighting are not expected to be exceeded as a result of the plant's operation. As such, it is considered that there the effect on the surrounding environment will be less than minor.

A

Appendix A - Email correspondence with Auckland Council

B

Appendix B - Email correspondence with mana whenua

C

Appendix C – Email correspondence with Franklin Local Board

D

Appendix D – Site layout / Designation Plan

E

Appendix E – Certificate of Title
