

Community Bulletin 1

27 August 2009

North Western Sewer Emergency Relief Structure

The Pipelines Alliance on behalf of Melbourne Water will begin construction of the North Western Sewer Emergency Relief Structure (ERS) in **early October 2009**.

The ERS is an essential service which helps prevent sewage spills occurring and protects the sewer system from serious damage during storm events. It will be constructed on the north bank of the Maribyrnong River in the Afton Street Reserve.

Construction is expected to take approximately four months to complete and during this time you may notice:

- **Additional vehicle and truck movements** – due to workers and materials entering and leaving the site
- **Construction noise and dust** – work hours will be restricted to 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday. You will be notified if work is required outside these hours.
- **Closure of some paths within the reserve** – some areas around the work site will also need to be fenced off for safety and security. At the end of construction, paths will be reinstated or realigned and security fencing will be removed.

We will work to minimise these impacts and apologise for any inconvenience that they may cause.

Construction vehicles and machinery will enter the reserve from Afton Street and access the work site using the existing bridge.

At the conclusion of the project, areas of the reserve which have been disturbed for construction will be reinstated to a condition as good as or better than they were prior to work commencing.

No disruption to water supply or sewerage services to surrounding homes and businesses is expected as a result of this project.

The Sewer System and ERSs

Melbourne Water is responsible for removing and treating most of Melbourne's sewage, which includes everything that goes down the kitchen, bathroom and laundry sink, and what is flushed down the toilet. Sewage is highly diluted and usually consists of 99% water.

Following a severe storm, rainwater seeps into the ground and can enter the sewerage system. When this occurs there is a risk that the combination of sewage and rainwater flow could exceed the capacity of the underground pipes and back up into local streets and even people's houses.

To prevent water building up to the point that it enters people's homes (often through the shower outlet) it is sometimes necessary to discharge sewage at locations other than treatment plants. For this reason ERSs are built in strategic locations to help ensure the system operates safely by diverting flows away from people into the stormwater system.

If this does occur it is most likely to follow a severe wet weather event or major storm. It means that on these very rare occasions some highly diluted sewage is directed into our waterways; however these waterways are often also in flood at the time, further diluting the sewage.

Melbourne Water operates the sewerage system according to State Environment Protection Policies (SEPP) which are set by the EPA. These policies require that the system must be able to cope with flows from a 1 in 5 year rainfall event, as determined by the Bureau of Meteorology. The North Western Sewer, which the ERS will be built on, is relatively new and has more than this minimum capacity. This means that the ERS is only likely to operate on average once every 20 years.

Monitoring

The operation of the sewer system is monitored around the clock by thousands of sensors situated at critical points throughout the system. In the unlikely event of a spill, electronic equipment or telemetry alerts Melbourne Water staff to the operation of the ERS and engineers are then able to manage and monitor its operation. This also allows early notice to be given to the public of the river's condition.

Background

In 2005 a major storm caused the North Western Sewer to become overloaded, resulting in a build up of pressure. This pressure caused a manhole cover within the Afton Street Reserve to lift and an uncontrolled spill occurred within the park. This spill was not detected for a number of days.

As part of a five-year program of works to improve Melbourne's sewerage and drainage system, Melbourne Water will construct an ERS within the reserve. The ERS will help prevent such a spill occurring again and protect the sewerage system from serious damage.

The Afton Street ERS

When the ERS in the Afton Street Reserve operates it will discharge into the Maribyrnong River. Importantly, operation of the ERS is most likely to occur during an extreme wet weather event and because of the volume of water entering the system at the time; therefore flows will be highly diluted. The level of the Maribyrnong River is also likely to be higher in such an event, allowing any discharge to be even further diluted and quickly washed away.

Importantly the floodplain of the river will not be changed or impacted by the construction or operation of the ERS and it will not impact on existing flood levels.

The Community

We are working closely with Moonee Valley Council and the Friends of Maribyrnong Valley in the design of this project. This close cooperation will ensure that the outlet is consistent with Council's Master Plan for the reserve and plans for a wetland area near the site of the ERS.

Call Wes Turnbull on 8417 7662 for information about this project or email pipelinesalliance@melbournewater.com.au

You can also call Melbourne Water on 131 722 or visit melbournewater.com.au for general information about other projects to secure a sustainable water future.



Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450

**Pipelines
Alliance**

An alliance between
Fulton Hogan, Jaydo, GHD
and Melbourne Water

