

Joint Statement between Horticulture NZ and Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) and Horticulture NZ (HortNZ) are working together to move forward on the regulation of the region's orchard toilets to protect public health and improve water quality outcomes.

Orchardists must provide toilets for workers that are safe to use, don't pose a risk to human health and don't pollute the environment. Some existing orchard toilets do not meet these objectives. BOPRC is compelled to ensure wastewater treatment and disposal systems in the region comply with the operative On-Site Effluent Treatment Regional (OSET) Plan.

BOPRC and HortNZ accept that they have differing interpretations of the permitted rule in the OSET plan for pit latrines, which are common on Bay of Plenty orchards. BOPRC refer to pit latrines and flush-to-ground systems separately, whereas HortNZ consider these to be dry and flush-to-ground pit latrines (or dry and flush long drops) respectively.

Both parties acknowledge that they disagree on certain matters but remain open to working through these as part of the Plan Change 14 process.

The OSET Plan states that pit latrines are only permitted in remote locations where other viable disposal systems are not possible. BOPRC also see risks with flush to ground toilet systems which discharge untreated waste direct into a deep hole. Non-complying pit latrines and flush to ground toilet systems must be consented or replaced with a permitted system.

- Flush-to-ground systems must be consented or replaced by 1 December 2020 and
- Pit latrines by 1 December 2022.

Port-a-loos and properly configured existing wastewater treatment systems can continue to be used on orchards. To assist orchardists who wish to install complying toilets, BOPRC have prepared a technical guideline that outlines the options that are 'deemed permitted' under the Resource Management Act and regional rules. The rules ensure wastewater is treated and discharged safely. You can read more about pit latrines in the current OSET Plan [here](#).

Approved designers are listed on the BOPRC website [here](#).

The approved designer can visit the orchard and work with the orchardist to develop the best solution. The orchardist, manager or the designer can then make an application for the orchard toilet to be deemed a permitted activity. The BOPRC consents team will quickly assess the application and provided all information is complete will be able to issue a notice at no cost to the applicant. Building consent may be required for the permitted orchard toilets. Growers should check with their local authority.

If orchardists want to install a system that is not covered in the guidelines they will need to apply for a resource consent and may also require building consent.

Discussions will continue between BOPRC and the horticulture industry on how we can work together through PC14, targeting these situations where adverse effects could arise.

Please contact Michelle Sands at Horticulture New Zealand on 04 472 3795 if you have questions regarding Horticulture NZ's work on PC14.

For information on PC14 or the Operative OSET Plan, please contact Jill Owen (Planner) at BOPRC on jill.owen@boprc.govt.nz or 0800 884 881.