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## Concreteer Pollutes Creek in Titirangi



### MEDIA RELEASE

#### Concreteer Pollutes Creek in Titirangi

27 August 2003

Following several calls from concerned residents in Titirangi, the ARC Pollution Control Team caught a contractor discharging concrete slurry from a newly laid driveway into a creek just below Old Titirangi Road.

The contractor was laying an exposed aggregate driveway for a local resident, and discharged the concrete slurry to a stormwater cesspit right beside a stream.

Pollution Control Officer Michael Lindgreen was called out early Sunday morning (24 August) and found that the stream was a heavy grey colour and had a pH of 12 — like caustic soda, way above levels in which eels and fish and other organisms can survive. By late Monday dead eels were surfacing. The stream eventually flows into the Whau River.

Wastewater from concrete activities is highly alkaline and extremely toxic to stream life. It attacks sensitive membranes such as gills and skin. Eels and fish are essentially burned to death by concrete wastewater.

Mr Lindgreen spent Sunday organising for the stream to be cleaned out, and spoke to the contractor who confirmed that he had discharged the concrete wastewater and that he knew he wasn't legally allowed to do this.

"We are very disappointed in the contractors actions," said Mr Lindgreen. "He is an experienced concreting contractor who has been dealt with before over a similar incident and we will be considering taking enforcement action against him."

"We advise all homeowners: if you employ a contractor, ask them where they are going to discharge their wastes such as paint washings, waterblasting wastewater or concrete slurry. It is acceptable to let these wastes drain into grass or garden areas. It is not acceptable to allow any to enter the stormwater system via outside drains as these drains flow straight into the local stream," said Mr Lindgreen.

"We also encourage people using other services such as vehicle mechanics, panel beaters and car cleaners to ask these professionals how they deal with their wastes such as oils, anti-freeze, paints and wash water. They should be able to demonstrate to you that these wastes are being stored and disposed of properly and not being discharged to the environment," said Mr Lindgreen.

Under the Resource Management Act, both the home owner or employer, and the contractor are potentially liable for clean-up and disposal costs, such as for pumping out the creek, and they can also be fined.

Titirangis streams, and Aucklands streams in general, are small and it takes only a small amount of pollution, from concreting or other activities like painting or waterblasting, to affect stream life.

"We thank the residents for calling our pollution hotline, which enabled our officers to stop the pollution spreading right down the stream," said ARC Waitakere representative Councillor Paul Walbran. "In the last year the ARC has responded to more than 1400 water pollution calls around the region, thanks to people phoning in. This is a 50% increase in reported incidents compared to the year before."

If people see pollution of the stormwater system, in any stream or river, or at the beach

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please call our 24-hour Water Pollution Hotline immediately on 377 3107.