

Sewage contamination in the streams flowing into Waitaramoa/Hobson Bay and Ōrākei Basin



November 2025

What's the issue?

Sewage (wastewater) is contaminating most of the streams flowing into Waitaramoa/Hobson Bay and Ōrākei Basin in all weather.

What are Auckland Council and Watercare doing about this?

- Auckland Council and Watercare are working to identify and fix the most urgent problems.
- Public health warning signs have been placed where it is not safe for swimming, other water activities or collection of and eating of kaimoana.
- Significant investment is being made to address the long-term problems but it will take over a decade to make the major improvements needed.

What do you need to know to keep safe?

- Te Tinana/Wilsons Beach and Ōrākei Basin are on Safeswim. We recommend only swimming at Safeswim sites and only when it is safe to do so. Check before you swim at www.safeswim.org.nz.
- Treat the streams flowing into Waitaramoa/Hobson Bay and Ōrākei Basin as potentially contaminated by sewage (wastewater) at all times. This includes Newmarket Stream, Hapua Stream, Portland Road Stream, Waiata Stream and Ōrākei Creek. Pourewa Creek requires further testing before contamination levels can be determined.
- Do not play in or around the affected streams. It is recommended you never swim in any urban stream. If you touch the water in the affected streams, it is strongly recommended that you sanitise your hands and anything that has come into contact with the water straight away.
- Keep children and dogs out of the streams, stormwater pipe outlets and channels at all times.
- Food gathering/kaimoana is not recommended near any urban location in Auckland due to various urban contaminants. Avoid collecting and eating shellfish or other seafood from Waitaramoa/Hobson Bay and Ōrākei Basin.
- Kayaking and other on-water activities within Waitaramoa/Hobson Bay are generally low-risk during dry weather but should be avoided within 48 hours of rainfall. Please take more caution near where streams enter the bay, including the kayak steps at Shore Road.

How can you help?

- If a wastewater overflow is currently occurring call Watercare on (09) 442 2222. For other significant pollution events call Auckland Council's Pollution Hotline on (09) 377 3107.
- Please observe all warning signs and contact Auckland Council Environmental Health on (09) 301 0101 if signs have been damaged or removed.

Find out more:

aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/safenetworks

 Low risk of illness for contact recreation for a high % of samples collected. Risk can sometimes be elevated in dry weather due to wastewater overflows

 High risk of illness for any level of contact

 Further testing required to determine risk

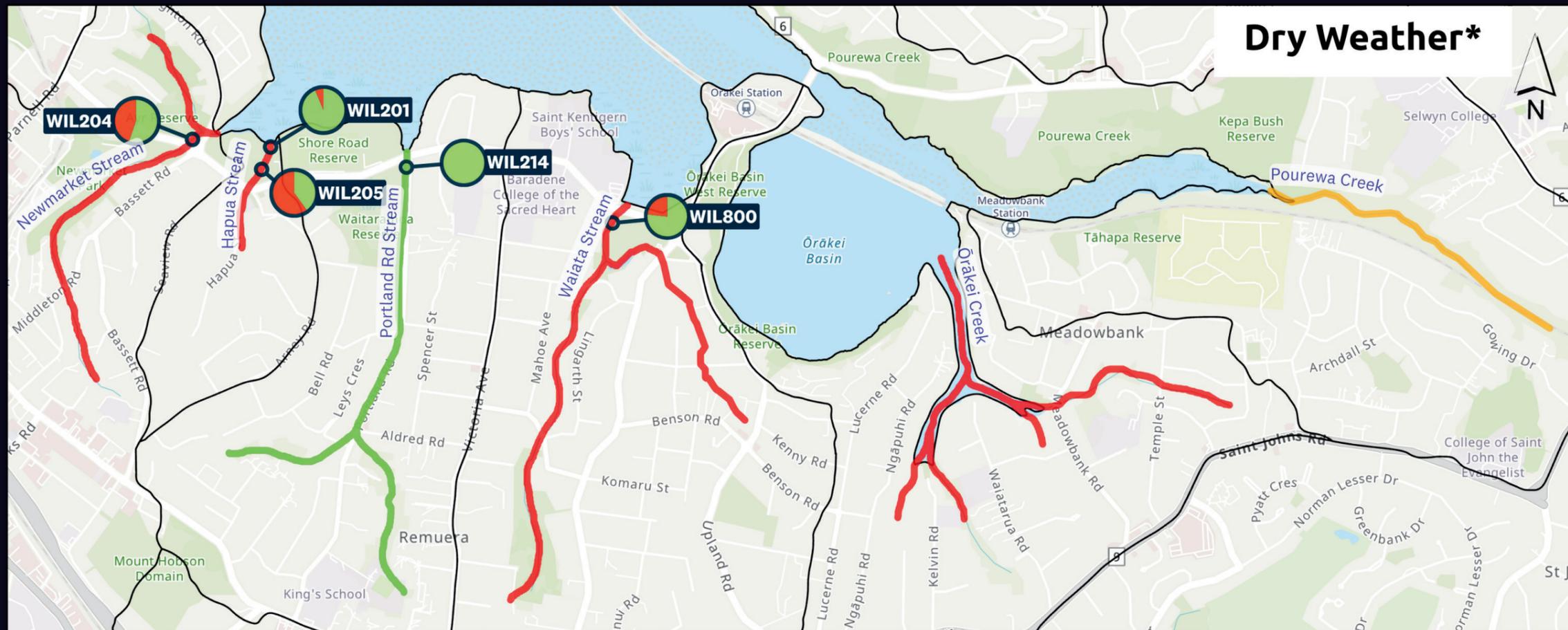
 Proportion of samples at location that fall into the low or high risk of illness categories, for any level of contact

 Stormwater sub-catchment

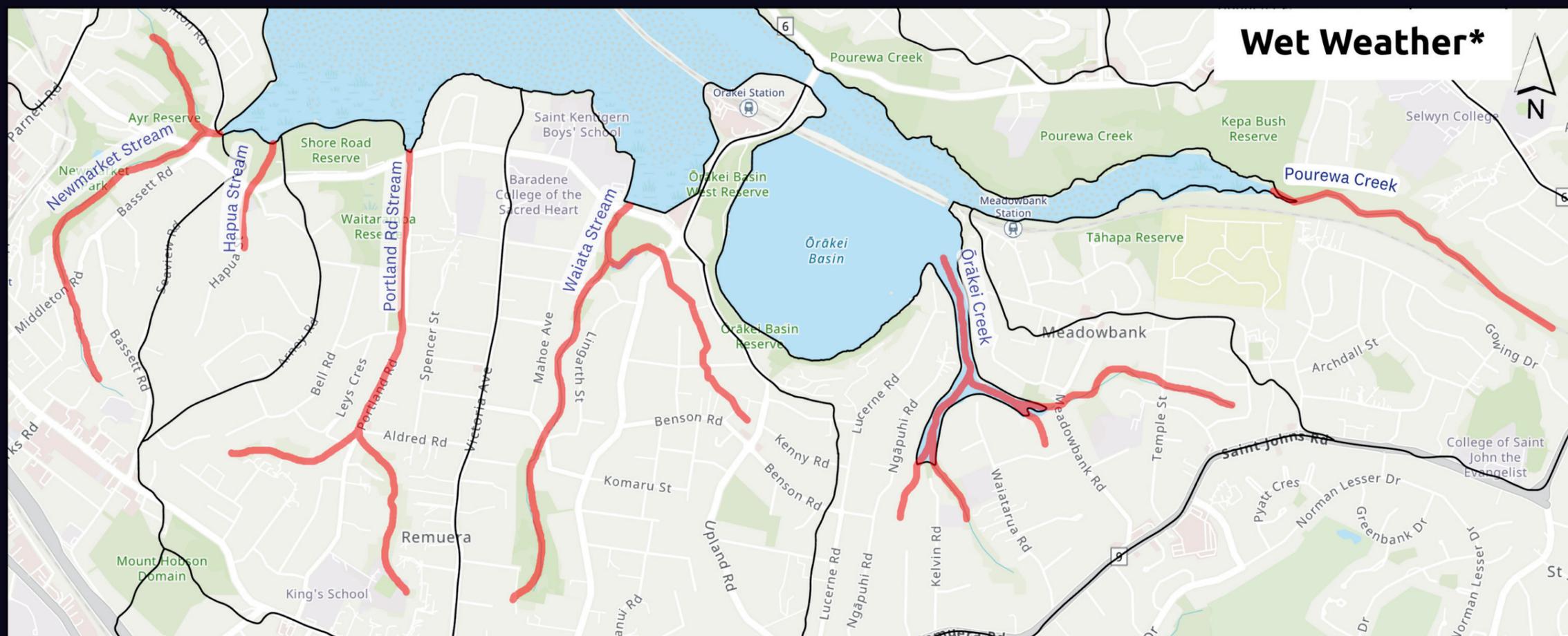
***Dry weather:** 0.5mm or less rainfall in the past 48 hours

***Wet weather:** More than 0.5mm of rainfall in the past 24 hours

Note: Parnell stormwater catchments also contribute to Waitaramoa water quality but has no ongoing sampling as there are no streams.



This map represents faecal indicator bacteria data collected by Safe Networks between Jan 2024 and Oct 2025 for stream locations. Locations WIL201, WIL204, WIL214 AND WIL800 are tested for Enterococci as they are saline due to tidal influence. WIL205 is tested for *E. coli* as it is freshwater. The level of risk indication is based on the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management guideline of 550 MPN of bacteria per 100 mL of water. Testing occurs approximately once a month.



Scale @ A3
= 1:18,000

Date Printed:
13/11/2025



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Safeswim tracks the percentage of time that Auckland beaches are suitable for swimming or 'swimmable' each summer season. This is defined as the percentage of time that water quality alerts are not in effect.

When a water quality alert is in effect, a red or black pin is shown on Safeswim, and swimming is not advised.

Overall, the Auckland beaches on Safeswim were estimated to be suitable for swimming on average 86% of the time over the 2024/2025 summer.

The Safeswim system uses a combination of water quality models, real time network monitoring, water quality sampling, and manual reporting of water quality issues to provide information about the suitability of water for recreation at each beach.

 Safeswim site. Always check safeswim.org.nz before you swim

 Real-time data from monitored overflow points- which overrides Safeswim model outputs (black pins)*

*Black pins can also be put in place manually from reports of other overflows not linked to Safeswim.

Scale @ A3
= 1:17,000

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13/11/2025



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safeswim.org.nz

Scan to get up to the minute information on water quality and swimming conditions at your favourite swimming spots