

Cook Islands NEWS

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He explained that the decision to confiscate keys was made by the officer if they considered the driver to be a "risk" on the roads.

"If you are over the 400mg limit you will immediately be arrested," said Pitt. "But even if you are under the limit the police have the authority to prevent you from driving. "It is down to their assessment."

Local lawyer Mark Short said he was surprised to hear that people who were not over the limit were being prevented from driving and said it would appear to "make a mockery of the law".

He acknowledged that police might be acting in good faith in an attempt to make the roads safer, but added: "I don't see where in the relevant Act it says that they can take the keys from people who are below the limit."

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Warning over water issues

around the island and not just in Muri.

The problems affecting the south-east of the island have been well documented, but seaweed and algae are becoming an issue in other parts of the lagoon, with Nikao experiencing an outbreak this week.

MTVKTIV says its masterplan must include measures to prevent more serious problems developing elsewhere in the future.

"While we acknowledge there is significant concern about the problems at Muri, it's important we plan infrastructure upgrades at a Rarotonga-wide level, as we expect these problems will not be limited to Muri," it said.

"Similar problems will begin to show up in other places around Rarotonga - seaweed growth is already evident elsewhere."

Although the issue remains pressing in the south-east of the island, there are particular concerns about the area from Avarua to Black Rock, including the popular social centre beach in Nikao, and the stretch from Muri through Titikaveka to The Rarotongan resort on the south of the island.

They have been identified as areas where "population density and environmental sensitivity" could lead to worsening problems in the future.

The project adds that its

programme of environmental monitoring at Muri and around the island will give a clearer picture of what needs to be done and where.

It also reported that a meeting with Kainuku Ariki, the Pu Tapere and the Aronga Mana of Muri and Avana was held last year to discuss the two possible disposal options for treated wastewater in the Muri area.

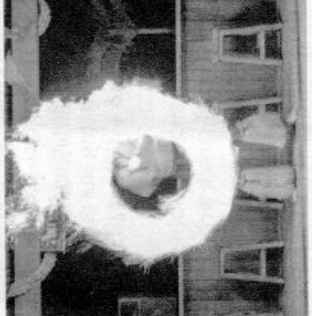
One option is a land disposal facility and the other involves an ocean outflow disposal plan.

Pumping wastewater into the ocean would prove controversial, but the project hinted at concerns over the land-based solution. It said it had approached traditional leaders to get their

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help "to find suitable land to ensure we can present land disposal as a viable option in our report to the government."

■ JH



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