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Sewerage subsidy bodes good news for ratepayers

The news that the government has committed a provisional sum of \$7.82 million from the Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme is all good for Westport.

West Coast-Tasman MP and Associate Health Minister Damien O'Connor confirmed the funding commitment last week.

The subsidy will assist in off-setting the expected final costs of \$15 million for construction of the Westport treatment plant and reticulation of the Orowaiti.

"It is great news to hear that a provisional sum has been confirmed," says Chief Executive, Gary Murphy. "As the actual final costs for the sewerage projects are not yet known, it is a little early to be predicting savings for ratepayers. But based on the provisional subsidy that has been approved and the expected final costs, we anticipate that ratepayers who contribute to the targeted rate for Westport sewerage could expect future savings of around \$160 per annum, but this sum will be dependant on final costs and the timing of the subsidy being received. "

The Council has not yet received advice on when the subsidy funds are likely to be released, but say the news is all good for the future.

"Although the timing of the roll out of funds has not yet been advised, we are extremely grateful for the confirmation from the Minister," Mayor Pat McManus says. "We can now proceed with strategic planning in the knowledge that we will be able to pay back the internal loan that is funding the current shortfall. This will give us flexibility to restructure funding for some smaller projects, providing additional savings for ratepayers."

This is the second sanitary works subsidy for Buller. The district received just over \$1.1 million from the government to assist with the construction of the Reefton sewage treatment facility in 2006.

ENDS

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