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Interflow's team worked through the night to complete the critical wastewater project.

Virus can't stop Interflow

At Moa Point, Interflow has completed one of the largest diameter wastewater rehabilitation projects New Zealand has ever seen, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

During COVID-19, some infrastructure projects – like the critical wastewater project at Moa Point in Wellington – were deemed so critical to the health and wellbeing of the local community that they could not wait. To complete the difficult project during the pandemic and against all odds, Interflow had to challenge the status quo and push the limits of traditional water infrastructure methods.

NZ's largest water infrastructure project

Beneath the coastal streets of Moa Point lies one of Wellington's most critical sewer pipelines that manages wastewater for more than 200,000 residents. Recently, the pipeline was experiencing severe corrosion and was at risk of collapse, with the deterioration having reached the steel reinforcement of the pipeline

– even penetrating the pipeline in places – posing a threat to the network, community and environment.

As an operator, Wellington Water understood the health and longevity of the sewer was a top priority and it publicly tendered the rehabilitation works. The tender sought an innovative yet cost-effective solution that would prioritise the needs of the community and minimise disruption to residents.

Being renowned in the industry for its appetite for innovation and commitment to solving its customers' problems, Interflow was awarded the project. As the Moa Point wastewater rehabilitation would become the largest diameter sewer pipeline renewal project to take place on New Zealand's shores, Interflow says it tackled the challenge head on.

COVID-19 challenges local project

Although the contract was awarded in late February, the 260 m reline of Wellington's main sewer could not commence until April, causing crews to quickly learn the importance of adaptability and agility with the coronavirus emergency in NZ.

While the country's lockdown regulations have been some of the strictest in the world, Interflow was classified as an essential service meaning the wastewater network's critical repairs could continue, albeit with a few workflow adjustments.

Interflow Project Engineer Saadia Ali says there were many challenges the crew overcame to ensure the project was kept on schedule.

"The expectation that our colleagues from Australia would fly out and provide support was

no longer a reality and required us to employ some unconventional approaches," she says.

Despite expecting assistance from Australian counterparts and training from experienced Rotaloc staff, once travel restrictions were put in place by both the Australian and NZ governments, Interflow's crews were required to turn to virtual channels to bridge the training gap.

Tenacity and determination yields results

Ms Ali says using digital technologies enabled the crew to develop the necessary skills needed to deliver these works.

"The solution was a remote Rotaloc training session held via video link to bring our team up to speed on the patented technology's application and operations," says Ms Ali.

The Rotaloc installation of a new liner into the pipe provides a durable, long-term solution to protect Wellington's wastewater interceptor from corrosion and support the needs of the community for at least another 50 years.

"Our team worked extremely hard to overcome the challenges faced due to the pandemic," says Ms Ali.

"We were working away from our families in

an 'Interflow bubble' and had to rethink the way we collaborated with our customers, contractors and the broader community."

Commitment to the community

Through collaboration and forward thinking, Wellington Water and Interflow rebuilt the city's critical wastewater link before any significant harmful effects impacted the city. With works now completed, Wellington's residents can relax knowing the wastewater network and services to homes, local businesses and the community are back to being fully operational.

Interflow says its flexibility during the pandemic allowed the company to tackle the challenges of COVID-19 head on and deliver the project successfully.

"The virtual training and collaboration that took place during this project demonstrate the company's innovative approach to problem solving," says Interflow.

"Furthermore, the solution is now incorporated into the NZ team's service offering moving forward, enhancing their ability to respond to challenges of this type in the future." ●



Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all site personnel were required to wear PPE equipment such as face masks.

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