

Statement of Intent 2024-2028

Te Tauāki Whakamaunga atu



Presented to the House of Representatives pursuant to section 139 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

Email info@taumataarowai.govt.nz

Call +64 4 889 8350

Mail Level 2, 10 Brandon Street, PO Box 628,
Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Statement of Intent 2024-2028

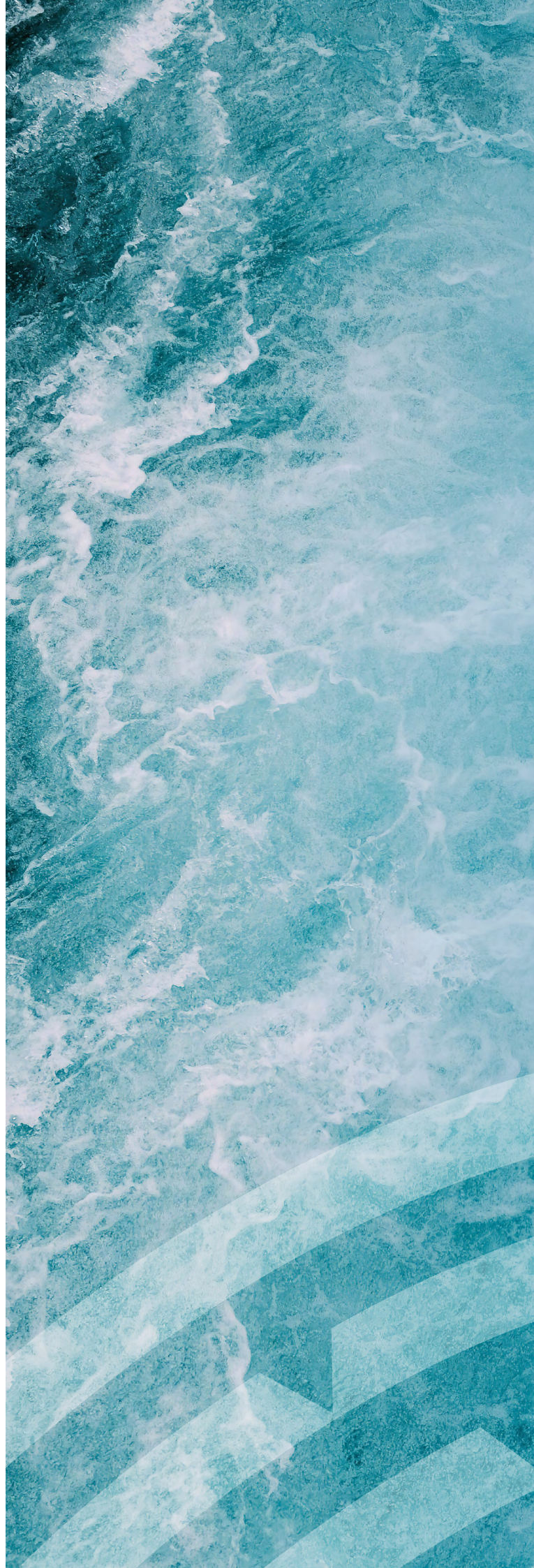
Date July 2024

ISSN 2815-8458 (Print)

ISSN 2815-8466 (Online)

Unless otherwise stated, the information in this Statement of Intent is protected by copyright and is subject to the copyright laws of New Zealand. The information may be reproduced without permission, subject to the material being reproduced accurately and not being used in a misleading context. In all cases, Taumata Arowai must be acknowledged as the source.

Note: copies of this document can be downloaded from taumataarowai.govt.nz



Te Whakatauāki a Taumata Arowai

Ko te wai ahau, ko ahau te wai
He whakaaturanga tātou nō te wai
Ko te ora te wai, ko te ora o te tangata
He taonga te wai me tiaki
Ko wai tātou
Ko wai tātou

I am water, water is me
We are reflections of our water
The health of the water is the health of the people
Water is a treasure that must be protected
We are water
Water is us

Table of Contents

Te rārangi upoko

Introduction from the Board Chair, Te Puna Chair and Chief Executive	6
Statement of responsibility	7
About Taumata Arowai	8
Context for this document	8
Treaty of Waitangi	8
Our statutory objectives	8
Monitoring and governance	9
Our strategic context	11
Our name and identity	11
Drinking water	11
Sources of drinking water	12
Wastewater	12
Stormwater	13

What we do	15
Who we work with in the water system	15
How we operate as a regulator	16
The work we do	17
Our strategic framework	20
Linking our planning and reporting with the framework	20
Our statutory objectives	21
How we will assess our performance	22
Connections between our goals, impacts and the work we do	23
Our long-term goals	25
The impacts we want our work to have	29
Our organisational operations	31
How we will organise ourselves to deliver	31
Our good employer obligations	31
Acquisition of shares and joint ventures	31

Introduction

He kupu whakataki

Taumata Arowai is the water services regulator, we regulate suppliers on behalf of the public to ensure that drinking water is safe. We also have a role influencing the performance of wastewater and stormwater services across New Zealand.

The outbreak of cryptosporidiosis in Queenstown in late 2023 was a stark reminder of what can happen when drinking water suppliers do not have the necessary protections in place to ensure communities do not get sick from their tap water.

We are committed to ensuring we are driving value from the public money we receive and use strong evidence and evaluation practices to ensure we provide transparency on the performance for Taumata Arowai against key outcomes. We are committed to ensuring Taumata Arowai is agile, pragmatic and open to working constructively with the sector to support the best outcomes for all New Zealanders.

This Statement of Intent (SOI) sets out our strategic intentions over the next four years. We know the next four years will be a time of significant change, particularly for Local Government suppliers and operators, as the Government works with councils to deliver Local Water Done Well. We will continue to monitor these changes and may update the SOI earlier than required by the legislation should this be required to ensure the SOI continues to be relevant to the context Taumata Arowai operates within.

To deliver on our vision of 'Safe water every day for everyone | Kia tiakina te wai, hei oranga mō te katoa', we weave the values of good governance, stewardship and care and respect for water into our regulatory approach. We have in place a strong leadership team that is providing assurance that we are continuously seeking opportunities to deliver value-for-money as the regulator.

Taumata Arowai is committed to upholding Te Mana o te Wai as outlined in our legislation, and on restoring

and preserving the balance between water, the environment and people.

Achieving our vision is not something Taumata Arowai can do alone. We must work alongside and provide support for suppliers and network operators. It is critical that Taumata Arowai is clear about our regulatory priorities and what actions we are taking to provide clarity for those we regulate. This SOI outlines the framework for our regulatory work and provides that clarity. The Regulatory Strategy that will be published in 2024 will build out our regulatory priorities for the next three years.

We are confident that our strong foundations will enable Taumata Arowai to give effect to Government expectations and deliver on our vision of safe water, every day for everyone, *kia tiakina te wai, hei oranga mō te katoa*.



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Dame Karen Poutasi
Board Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Tipa Mahuta
Te Puna Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Allan Prangnell
Chief Executive



Statement of responsibility

Tauāki Haepapa

This Statement of Intent has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of sections 138 to 149A of the Crown Entities Act 2004. This Statement of Intent describes the four-year vision and strategic intent of Taumata Arowai.

We certify that the information contained in this Statement of Intent 2024 – 2028 is a fair and reasonable reflection of the strategic and operating intentions of Taumata Arowai. Submitted to the House of Representatives pursuant to section 149(3) of the Crown Entities Act 2004. The statement of responsibility is signed on behalf of the Board of Taumata Arowai.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Poutasi'.

Dame Karen Poutasi
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Ellison'.

Riki Ellison
Board Member

About Taumata Arowai

Mō Taumata Arowai

Taumata Arowai is the water services regulator, established in 2021. Our core function is ensuring drinking water suppliers provide safe, reliable, and sufficient drinking water to people throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. We also set standards, monitor and report on the environmental performance of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater networks.

Context for this document

This Statement of Intent (SOI) is a statutory document, required under section 139 of the Crown Entities Act 2004. The timeline for this SOI is intended to be through to 30 June 2028, with an updated version to be developed in 2027.

This SOI reflects what we know about the sector and the challenges it faces, and where we want to have the most impact in the medium term.

Due to the changing nature of our operating environment and strategic context, it is possible that we may need to amend or issue a new SOI earlier than the standard three yearly review. This will be the case if government policy for water services changes, or a change in direction for us as a regulator means we must reconsider our focus and the priority areas outlined in this document.

Treaty of Waitangi

The legislation Taumata Arowai operates under acknowledges our obligations with respect to the Treaty of Waitangi | Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles, including to partner and engage early and meaningfully with Māori, and to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai as it relates to our powers, functions and duties. Taumata Arowai also has specific Treaty settlement obligations in relation to the Waikato River¹ and Whanganui River². We will ensure we continue to meet our obligations and responsibilities.

Our statutory objectives

The Taumata Arowai—the Water Services Regulator Act 2020 outlines our objectives, which are to:

- protect and promote drinking water safety and related public health outcomes
- effectively administer the drinking water regulatory system
- build and maintain capability among drinking water suppliers and across the wider industry
- give effect to Te Mana o te Wai³, to the extent that Te Mana o te Wai applies to our functions and duties
- provide oversight of, and advice on, the regulation, management, and environmental performance of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater networks
- promote public understanding of the environmental performance of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater networks.

¹ Sections 17(8) – 17(10) of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 and Sections 18(8) – 18(10) of the Ngati Tuwharetoa, Raukawa, and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010

² Section 15(2) of the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017

³ At the time of publishing this document, there has been a signal from the Government of its intention to rebalance the existing National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, including Te Mana o te Wai. This may change how we would meet this statutory objective in the future.

Our mandate covers drinking water, wastewater and stormwater. It ranges from regulatory oversight, making secondary legislation, compliance monitoring and enforcement, through to public reporting, system coordination and advice, and sector capacity building and guidance.

The Water Services Act 2021 (WSA) provides the main legislative framework we operate under for the regulation of water services.

Te Mana o te Wai

Te Mana o te Wai³ recognises the relationship between the health of water and the health of the wider environment and people. We are required to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai to the extent it applies to our functions and duties. We do this through our planning, reporting, engagement, regulatory decision making and communication activities.

Monitoring and governance

Responsible Minister and monitoring agency

The Minister of Local Government is the Minister responsible for Taumata Arowai. The Minister's role is to oversee and manage the Crown's interest in, and relationship with, Taumata Arowai and to exercise Ministerial responsibilities under relevant legislation. Taumata Arowai is also accountable to Parliament for its actions.

This SOI is informed by the Minister's Interim Letter of Expectations provided to the Taumata Arowai Board in February 2024.

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) | Te Tari Taiwhenua is the Government monitoring agency for Taumata Arowai.

The Board

The Board is responsible for the stewardship and future well-being of the organisation. The Board ensures we act in a manner consistent with our objectives and functions. The Board is also required to meet its responsibilities under the Crown Entities Act 2004.

The Taumata Arowai—the Water Services Regulator Act 2020 imposes additional collective duties on the Board alongside those arising under the Crown Entities Act 2004. Profiles of the Board members are available on our [website](#).

Te Puna

Our statutory Māori Advisory Group, Te Puna⁴, contributes to the success of Taumata Arowai in meeting its objectives, including in giving effect to Te Mana o Te Wai, with respect to the functions of Taumata Arowai in relation to drinking water, stormwater and wastewater.

The relationship between the Board and Te Puna is reflected in He Pukapuka Orotau i Waenga i Te Poari Me Te Puna (Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and Te Puna).

The activities of Te Puna are also the subject of Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere o Te Puna (Terms of Reference) which record the role of Te Puna and the principles on which it operates.

Profiles of the Te Puna members are available on our [website](#).

⁴ Name gifted by Shane Te Ruki.



Our strategic context

Te horopaki o te rautaki

Our name and identity

Taumata is used to refer to a summit of people coming together around an important area of focus. It signifies the importance of water, the bringing together of people to reach a shared goal for this precious resource, and the responsibility of our role as a regulator.

Taumata also conveys a high point in the landscape, a peak or stepping stone to a higher place. This speaks to our legislative goals to see the water services sector improving over time.

Arowai conveys our focus on wai (water) as a taonga. It is our responsibility to build on the strong foundations laid out at our conception as we regulate water services and champion safe water for all.

Drinking water

Suppliers for drinking water

Local councils are the main providers of drinking water to New Zealanders. Collectively, they operate 529 supplies across the country, serving approximately 4.4 million people.

Government agencies (principally the Ministry of Education, the Department of Conservation, Department of Corrections, and the New Zealand Defence Force) also operate a large number of supplies (467), but these are typically much smaller in scale, serving an estimated 1.4% of the population.

Approximately 14% of our population receive drinking water from community and private supplies or are self-supplied. Many of these independent supplies are located in remote communities with poor infrastructure, limited access, and greater distance to health services. These supplies are also disproportionately exposed to severe weather events and their impacts. Some

independent supplies, such as marae, campgrounds and community halls, have fluctuating populations and often also provide civil defence support in emergencies.

Community and private supplies who were not registered under the previous Ministry of Health regime have until November 2025 to register as suppliers with Taumata Arowai. They then have a further three years to comply with all relevant requirements. For many of the private and community supplies, we will focus on the provision of guidance and education including advising on acceptable solutions to support them to provide safe drinking water.

Overall, Taumata Arowai will take a proportionate approach, including sufficient cost benefit considerations to compliance with suppliers, considering aspects like the risk to public health, the size of the supplier and the population served.

Gaps in drinking water treatment

Our verification, monitoring and reporting work to date has shown us there are gaps in the treatment that suppliers have in place to provide reliably safe drinking water to communities.

In particular, we have identified multi-barrier approaches as the priority for filling most of the gaps in treatment. No single treatment barrier is effective against all sources of contamination. For example, chlorine is a highly effective treatment against bacteria and viruses but is not effective against protozoa. This means that from a practical perspective, a multi-barrier approach that treats water for both bacteria and viruses, as well as protozoa is the most effective way to avoid people getting sick from their drinking water.

Most councils have adequate treatment barriers in place, but a minority have not yet installed protozoa barriers or need to upgrade their systems as a high

priority. We are mindful of the challenges facing councils in maintaining, renewing and upgrading their water services. We are working with councils as they put practical measures in place to ensure the water they supply to their communities is safe to drink.

Preparing for and responding to incidents and emergencies⁵

Sometimes emergencies can occur that have a significant impact on suppliers or present a serious risk to public health. This can include a major water contamination event, or a sudden onset emergency like an earthquake or severe weather event. Incidents can highlight and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of water infrastructure in communities, including rural and isolated communities. Suppliers put incident and emergency response plans in place, which Taumata Arowai oversees as part of its risk management planning review and monitoring function.

The role of Taumata Arowai is to maintain oversight of incidents, ensure any responses where there is serious risk to public health are appropriately managed, and support suppliers to manage sudden onset emergencies. Along with maintaining regulatory oversight, we provide advice and guidance to drinking water suppliers in situations where there is a serious risk to public health and work with Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora, local authorities, and Civil Defence to ensure communities have safe water to drink.

We will continue to work with the water services sector and relevant agencies to strengthen capability and coordination in managing emergencies.

Sources of drinking water

The hazards and risks to sources of drinking water must be both understood and well managed as the first barrier against contamination and illness. A 'source' is the water body from which water is taken for a drinking water supply. Sources include rivers, lakes, aquifers and collected rainwater.

Drinking water suppliers must prepare and implement a source water risk management plan as part of their drinking water safety planning. This plan identifies the hazards and risks associated with source water and how they will be managed. Taumata Arowai reviews source water risk management plans as part of a broader review of drinking water safety plans.

The impacts of climate change and drought, as well as weaknesses in the environmental performance of wastewater and stormwater networks, can also increase risks to sources of drinking water.

Wastewater

Many council wastewater treatment plants were built between the 1960s and 1980s. A significant number of these plants no longer meet modern design or environmental standards. Approximately 15% of wastewater treatment plants have expired resource consents, averaging five years since expiry. Overall, at least 70% of plants require re consenting by 2034.

Achieving the performance levels necessary to meet modern design and environmental standards, as well as community aspirations, will require a major upgrade of many of these treatment plants in the coming decade. This will be a significant challenge, particularly for small communities with a low rating base.

⁵ Taumata Arowai uses the following working definitions of incidents and emergencies. An incident is an event that results in, or may contribute substantially to, significant harm, damage, or level of service disruption. An emergency is the escalation of an incident or another event which causes or is likely to cause a serious risk to public health, and/or requires a significant coordinated response. They exist on a continuum, and you can have one without the other.

Regional councils are the consenting authorities for wastewater discharges. They manage the effects of activities through their resource management policy statements and plans in accordance with national direction, which can include setting regionally specific limits and standards that must be met. They also monitor and enforce the consents they issue.

A primary role of Taumata Arowai is to shine a light on the environmental performance of public wastewater networks through oversight and public reporting. This is intended to improve the body of publicly available information about the environmental performance of public networks, enabling comparisons and better understanding of how progressive improvements can be achieved.

We also contribute to greater national consistency through our ability to make minimum standards and targets for aspects of public wastewater networks. This will bring greater certainty for network operators and provide a nationally consistent approach to support efficiencies which may result in cost savings for network operators needing to make significant long-term investments.

We aim to increase public understanding of network environmental performance and how this impacts their local environment so they can have confidence in the service provided by public operators. Greater understanding is also likely to support better engagement in local democratic processes and decision-making around water services network investment and management.

Stormwater

Urban stormwater networks are under increasing pressure with urban population growth. Storm events, such as Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023, are likely to increase in severity and frequency with the impact of climate change. Urban stormwater can also spread waste and other contaminants from human activities, impacting urban waterways and downstream estuaries and coastal areas.

Responsibility for stormwater networks is complex, with stormwater infrastructure involving a variety of ‘hard’ engineering (e.g. pipes, pumps, flood control structures) and ‘soft’ engineering options (e.g. wetlands, rain gardens, detention basins).

Further complexity is added, with multiple players involved in ownership, maintenance and management. While individual property owners are responsible for maintaining their own drains, gutters and stormwater pipes, territorial authorities typically maintain stormwater infrastructure and assets. Flood management assets are generally controlled by regional councils. Stormwater infrastructure that services road and rail corridors is owned and operated by transport corridor managers, such as territorial authorities, New Zealand Transport Agency | Waka Kotahi, and KiwiRail | Te Kupenga Mahi.

As with wastewater, while regional councils are the consenting authority for stormwater discharges, Taumata Arowai shines a light on the environmental performance of urban stormwater networks. We also contribute to greater national consistency through our ability to make minimum standards or targets for aspects of urban stormwater networks.



What we do

Ā mātou mahi

Who we work with in the water system

Within the landscape of the water sector, effective relationships are essential for achieving our goals. From government agencies and regulatory bodies to water utilities, and local communities, each entity plays a crucial role in shaping the sustainability and resilience of our water resources.

We work with a range of stakeholders, partners and groups to deliver on our regulatory mandate, including:

Mana whenua and treaty partners

We partner with mana whenua to engage with local communities and solve problems.

Government and research agencies

We work with government and research organisations to develop solutions together.

Regulated community and industry

We work with the industry and regulated community to help deliver better outcomes.

Interest groups and the water supply chain

We work with interest groups and the water supply chain to gain important insights to inform our work.

Communities

We work with communities to understand the water quality issues affecting those communities and what they need from us to achieve their goals for water quality.

Other regulators

We work with other regulators to solve problems and reduce regulatory overlap.

Our work with other regulators

We are part of a wider water regulatory system with oversight for drinking water, wastewater and stormwater. We aim to ensure our actions are aligned with and complementary to the other regulators. Our deliberate engagement with other system actors supports efficiency and provides clarity of roles where interests overlap.

We expect that, as government policy for water services changes, there will be changes to who we need to work with and how. We will continue to engage collaboratively with other relevant agencies and regulators to ensure the wider future regulatory regime across the water regulatory system is proportionate and does not duplicate efforts.

How we operate as a regulator

We use a range of approaches and regulatory tools to ensure suppliers:

- have effective risk management practices
- understand the rules
- treat and monitor their water
- address safety and sufficiency issues
- keep records and report transparently.

We do this to strengthen the overall performance of the water services sector and improve environmental outcomes.

In determining whether to utilise specific tools and approaches we take a proportionate and reasonable approach, including sufficient cost benefit considerations, to our decisions and implementation of standards and regulations. This ensures compliance issues are addressed in a cost-effective manner and timeframe, matched to the risk associated with the issue.

Regulating is not a one-size-fits-all activity. We recognise that each drinking water supplier and supply is unique. So, in each instance, we work to understand risks to people and the environment, consider past and current supplier actions and attitudes, and then take appropriate action to help ensure communities have safe, sufficient water. Through our information and outreach activities we provide practical guidance, capability building and visibility of treatment and risk management planning requirements, as well as acceptable solutions for compliance.

The work we do

Taumata Arowai regulates suppliers to ensure the water services that communities receive are safe and sufficient.



We set standards and make our expectations clear

We set expectations that are proportionate to the scale, complexity and risk profile of suppliers

We set rules and standards within the framework created by the WSA. This includes setting Drinking Water Standards, Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules, and Aesthetic Values that set out for suppliers their responsibilities to provide safe and sufficient drinking water.

We also support improvements in the environmental performance of networks, through reporting and by setting network environmental performance measures, targets or standards.

We will support the development of supplier knowledge and capability through research, education and training. Our aim is to ensure we understand the reality suppliers and stakeholders are operating in so that the standards we set are pragmatic.

The Board has put in place a compliance, monitoring and enforcement (CME) strategy for drinking water under section 136 of the WSA. Our upcoming Regulatory Strategy will build out our regulatory priorities for drinking water, wastewater and stormwater. These will provide clarity on our focus for the next three years to both suppliers and other regulatory agencies by setting out our regulatory priorities and regulatory approach.



We provide a range of options to comply with the standards and rules

We provide suppliers with a range of options to ensure safe drinking water

A majority of council suppliers comply with planning and treatment rules that ensure that drinking water is safe and does not pose a serious risk of illness now or in the future. We recognise that treating and managing drinking water to ensure it is safe imposes a cost on suppliers, which is often borne by communities. However, a lack of effective treatment can cause public harm through illnesses and death.

Each type of supply differs in its combination of complexity, scale, risk and management needs. In our work with suppliers, especially community and private supplies, we aim to provide a range of options for them to consider which allow them to comply with the standards and rules to supply safe and sufficient water services.

Through our information and outreach we provide practical guidance, capability building and visibility of treatment and risk management planning requirements, as well as acceptable solutions for compliance (including exemptions where appropriate).



We take action when needed

We have a range of powers that we use in a proportionate and considered manner

We actively monitor and assess supplier compliance with the requirements, standards and rules that have been set. We do this to ensure suppliers are providing safe, sufficient drinking water and are adequately addressing risks and hazards on an ongoing basis. We work closely with suppliers to ensure they understand our expectations and have access to effective and fit-for-purpose guidance on how to comply.

Sometimes we will need to use our powers when requirements are not being followed. When this occurs, we will use our powers in a proportionate and considered way, including sufficient cost benefit considerations, that accounts for both the risk of harm and the actions and circumstances of the supplier.



We maintain oversight of supplier responses to incidents and emergencies

We maintain oversight of incidents, ensure any responses where there is serious risk to public health are appropriately supported, and support suppliers to manage emergencies

Taumata Arowai reviews supplier risk management planning to ensure they have response plans to manage incidents as they arise.

Drinking water suppliers and accredited testing laboratories are required by the WSA to notify us of any instances where drinking water samples taken from supplies show the water may be unsafe, or (for suppliers) if sufficient water cannot be provided for drinking and sanitation.

We triage notifications and prioritise responding to those deemed critical because they pose a risk to public health. We work closely with water suppliers to ensure they are addressing notified issues. It is important we respond in a timely way to minimise public health risk.

Sometimes incidents present a serious risk to public health. In these cases, the response to incidents is escalated to ensure that safe drinking water is provided. We play a role alongside health organisations other key regulatory partners.

Emergencies related to natural hazards or other events can also be beyond the capacity of a supplier to manage and require a significant coordinated response. Where there is an emergency which impacts drinking water, we provide coordination and support with other agencies, working with suppliers, communities and response partners to manage the impact on public health and ensure people have safe water to drink.



We provide transparency to the public on the performance of their water services

We report on the sector's performance so the public can be informed

Taumata Arowai produces two key reports a year which provide an outline of the sector's performance: our Drinking Water Regulation Report and our Network Environmental Performance Report. These reports provide transparency to the public on the performance of their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services. These also highlight sector trends and risks and shine a light on compliance with standards and rules.

We also provide information on our website, including public registers, about drinking water supplies, as well as wastewater and stormwater networks.

Over time as we receive more and better-quality data through reporting requirements, we expect the value of this information to improve, reflecting the important role we play in analysing and communicating to the public on the safety of their water, and how the supplies and networks that serve them are performing in alignment with standards, rules and good planning practices.



Our strategic framework

Tō mātou mahere rautaki

Our strategic framework (outlined in the image below) is focused on achieving our long-term vision, which is to have **safe water every day for everyone | kia tiakina te wai, hei oranga mō te katoa**.

Taumata Arowai is the regulator that works on behalf of the public to ensure the water services they receive are safe and sufficient.

We want our work to have four main impacts over the next four years. We want to see:

- an improvement in the safety and sufficiency of water services
- water suppliers see Taumata Arowai as a credible responsive regulator
- hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed
- water services' impact on the environment improves.

We will prioritise our resources and efforts to ensuring our work is focused on these impacts.

Over the long term, this will contribute to achieving our three goals.

- People can rely on safe and sufficient water services
- Water suppliers operate in an effective and efficient way
- The water that communities rely on for drinking is healthy.

Linking our planning and reporting with the framework

In addition to our Statement of Intent, Statement of Performance Expectations and Annual Report Taumata Arowai has planning and reporting requirements specified under section 136 of the WSA. This section of the WSA requires us to develop a Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy, a Drinking Water Regulation Report, and an annual report on network environmental performance. We are also developing a Regulatory Strategy to communicate to the sector our regulatory priorities for the next three years, as well as developing approaches to ensure our work meets relevant Treaty settlement obligations.

As well as supporting their accountability purpose, our reports reflect good management practice. This practice involves clearly articulating strategy, linking strategy to business planning, monitoring the delivery of business plans and the performance of the sector, and evaluating results. Our drinking water and network performance reports create a single source of national-level information about trends and risks in water services, based on sector reporting. This provides an evidence base to shape up proactive interventions we or others make.

Our Regulatory Strategy and Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy will give the sector clarity about our expectations over the next three years, by setting out our regulatory priorities and regulatory approach. We will publish the Regulatory Strategy in 2024.

Our statutory objectives



Protect and promote drinking water safety and related public health outcomes



Effectively administer the drinking water system



Build and maintain capability among drinking water suppliers and across the wider industry



Give effect to Te Mana o te Wai to the extent that it applies to our functions and duties



Oversight of and advice on the regulation, management, and environmental performance of drinking, waste and stormwater networks



Promote public understanding of the environmental performance of drinking, waste and stormwater networks

Legislation

Our vision

Safe water, every day for everyone

Kia tiakina te wai, hei oranga mō te katoa

Our long-term goals

People can rely on safe and sufficient water services

Water suppliers operate in an effective and efficient way

The water that communities rely on for drinking is healthy

Statement of Intent

The impacts we want our work to have



Safety and sufficiency of water services improve



Water suppliers see Taumata Arowai as a credible, responsive regulator



Hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed



Water services' impact on the environment improves

The work we do that will contribute



We set standards and make our expectations clear

We set expectations that are proportionate to the scale, complexity and risk profile of suppliers



We provide a range of options to comply with the standards and rules

We provide suppliers with a range of options to ensure safe drinking water



We take action when needed

We have a range of powers that we use in a proportionate and considered manner



We maintain oversight of supplier responses to incidents and emergencies

We maintain oversight of incidents, ensure any responses where there is serious risk to public health are appropriately supported, and support suppliers to manage emergencies



We provide transparency to the public on the performance of their water services

We report on the sector's performance so the public can be informed

Statement of Performance Expectations

How we will assess our performance

Te arotake i ā mātou mahi

In 2023/24 we updated our strategic framework (see prior section). We will achieve our strategic objectives by carrying out our functions within one reportable output class, namely our statutory responsibilities as New Zealand's water services regulator.

The three sub-sections of our framework are focused on our performance as a regulator, and our progress toward achieving our vision:

- Our long-term goals
- The impacts we want our work to have
- The work we do that will contribute.

We have outlined how we will assess our performance in this section. We have outlined our performance measures in detail in our Statement of Performance Expectations.

The following diagram shows the correlation between each, with the impacts we want our work to have.

We will review our suite of performance measures regularly to ensure we measure our performance accurately over time. This will include working with our monitoring agency, the Department of Internal Affairs, to ensure we are conducting regular assessments of performance trends over time and have in place appropriate targets for our performance.

We will update and potentially add measures as we build on our regulatory activities (for example when an authorisations framework is in place and once we have developed wastewater standards). We may also update or add measures in response to any changes in government policy for water services, or ministerial expectations of Taumata Arowai.

Under section 137 of the WSA, Taumata Arowai is also required to report on how we achieved the objectives and targets set out in our drinking water Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy in our annual Drinking Water Regulation Report. This report is published by 30 June each year and covers the preceding calendar year.

Connections between our goals, impacts and the work we do

Goals			Impacts		Work we do				
People can rely on safe and sufficient water services	Water suppliers operate in an effective and efficient way	The water that communities rely on for drinking is healthy			We set standards and make our expectations clear	We provide a range of options to comply with the standards and rule	We take action when needed	We maintain oversight of supplier responses to incidents and emergencies	We provide transparency to the public on the performance of their water services
			Safety and sufficiency of water services improve through:						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » More people have access to water from registered supplies » More suppliers have plans in place to deal with risks and issues of safety and sufficiency » Consumer advisories are in place for smaller amounts of time » Notifications of unplanned restriction or insufficient supply reduce over time 						
			Water suppliers see Taumata Arowai as a credible, responsive regulator because:						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Our standards and expectations are clear and accessible » Our guidance is accessible and easy to understand 						
			Hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed through:						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » More supplies having multi-barrier protections in place » More suppliers have identified water-born hazards in source water and have management plans in place » More suppliers and network operators have plans to manage or mitigate the hazards and risks, including in emergencies 						
			Water services' impact on the environment improves through:						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improved level of source water monitoring and reporting » Water loss from networks declines 						



Our long-term goals

Our long-term goals are outcomes Taumata Arowai is working to achieve within the next 15 years. Taumata Arowai is part of a wider regulatory system for drinking, waste and stormwater. We must ensure our actions are complementary to the other system regulators to achieve these long-term goals.

Goal One

People can rely on safe and sufficient water services

Everyone in New Zealand should have access to safe drinking water in sufficient quantities no matter where they live. This is not always the case everywhere in New Zealand.

Over time, we are aiming for our work on improving safety and sufficiency of water services, increasing the identification of hazards and risks to drinking water, and improving water services' impact on the environment will contribute towards our goal of people having access to water services that are safe and sufficient, regardless of where they live.

Approximately 14% of the population, or 800,000 people, receive drinking water from private and community suppliers that are not operated by local or central government or are self-supplied. We want supplies to register, as registration supports greater visibility that water services are safe and sufficient.

We also want to see suppliers managing risks to the safety of drinking water through risk management tools, such as drinking water safety planning and issuing consumer advisories (notices to boil water, to not drink water, and to not use water) if they identify problems with the safety of drinking water. For these to be effective we want to see an increase over time in supplies that have submitted drinking water safety

plans to Taumata Arowai, and a decrease in the median time it takes for suppliers to lift an advisory (i.e. to investigate and address the problem that required the advisory).

We also want to see a downward trend in insufficiency in terms of repeated events of unplanned restriction or insufficient supply for a supplier. This would show us that more people can rely on their water services being sufficient for their needs. We are expecting an initial increase in the next three years of measuring our progress here as more suppliers become aware of the requirements for them to notify us of instances of insufficiency. We see this as a positive first step.



Goal two

Water suppliers operate in an effective and efficient way

Our role is to regulate water suppliers. For regulation to be effective, it needs to address harms and needs in a clear, proportionate, practical and efficient way. We want to see suppliers operating effectively, efficiently and reliably. A shared understanding of what is needed to provide safe drinking water is vital, and a key part of this is effective treatment.

Over time, we are aiming for our work on improving safety and sufficiency of water services, increasing the identification of hazards and risks to drinking water, and ensuring that water suppliers see Taumata Arowai as a credible, responsive regulator to contribute towards a goal of water suppliers operating in an effective and efficient way.

We will ensure our standards, expectations and compliance pathways support suppliers to consider standardisation and cost efficiencies rather than requiring unique or bespoke solutions. We will do this when setting standards for wastewater and in our administration of drinking water regulations.

While this will require coordination across the water regulatory sector, our work will contribute to this alongside the work of other regulators within the water system. We will continue to work with the other regulators to deliver an effective and efficient system.

We will measure progress towards achieving this goal by asking suppliers and the wider water sector if we are being clear and if information on options is easy to access and understand. This will be measured annually via a survey mechanism.

Goal Three

The water that communities rely on for drinking is healthy

A 'source' is the water body where water is taken for use in a drinking water supply. Sources include rivers, lakes, aquifers and collected rainwater. This water needs to be looked after to make sure communities can rely on it for drinking water. Prioritising and protecting the health of source water is a reflection of Te Mana o Te Wai, and we will measure and monitor this.

Over time, we are aiming for our work on improving safety and sufficiency of water services, increasing the identification of hazards and risks to drinking water, and improving water services' impact on the environment will contribute towards our goal of the water that communities rely on for drinking is healthy.

Looking after our water includes active source water monitoring and risk management by water suppliers, ensuring wastewater and stormwater discharges are not impacting the safety of the water we rely on for drinking, only taking what we need from sources, and supporting effective collaboration and information sharing between councils, government and communities.

We want to see an increase in the number of suppliers that are submitting a source water risk management plan as part of their drinking water safety planning. Source water risk management plans consider where drinking water is sourced from, assess contamination hazards and risks and reference the source water monitoring programme. Further, they ensure there is a plan in place (visible to all relevant local authorities) to manage risks to water quality at source and to treat the water appropriately before it is provided to consumers.

We are intending to work with suppliers in relation to having monitoring programmes in place for source water. The Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (the Rules) require suppliers to analyse the health of their water through sampling and monitoring requirements. We will be providing information and guidance to suppliers on this, and we want to see an increase over time in the number of sources being monitored that meet source water monitoring rules.

We also want to provide transparency to the public on water loss from networks in our public reporting about the performance of their water services. Water loss from networks means potentially a large proportion of the water taken from the source is wasted. More water is being taken than is required and therefore that water is not available to provide for the health of the overall source water body, putting increasing burden on the source water ecosystem and resilience. We want to see a downward trend in water loss as we shine a light on this through our reporting.



The impacts we want our work to have

These impacts describe the changes Taumata Arowai wants our work to achieve over the medium term. They are what ‘success’ looks like for our work for the next three to five years.



Impact One | Safety and sufficiency of water services improve

We have carried out extensive work to verify the details of registered supplies and used that information to monitor emerging issues, and report on the sector’s performance (via our Drinking Water Regulation Reports). This has shown us there are gaps in the safety and sufficiency of water services in New Zealand. This is caused by a range of factors, including ageing infrastructure, water supplier capability, and gaps in how drinking water is treated.

We are expecting all of the work we do to result in an improvement in the safety and sufficiency of water services. We will be tracking our progress by tracking if suppliers have comprehensive drinking water safety plans in place to deal with risks and issues of safety and sufficiency.



Impact Two | Water suppliers see Taumata Arowai as a credible, responsive regulator

To be an effective regulator, Taumata Arowai needs to ensure we are seen as credible and responsive by those we regulate. They may not agree with our decisions but seeing us as credible is critical to being able to effectively work with suppliers to improve their services to communities. We also need to be responsive to emerging and current risks that impact the manner in which suppliers are providing safe drinking water.

Responsiveness is an essential component to credibility – if we are not following up in a timely way, we will not be credible. Equally, the information and technical guidance we supply to the sector should be accessible and clear to make it easier to comply.

Perceptions of our credibility by the sector, built through community, professional and other networks, are also important to understand.

We expect the work we do setting standards and making our expectations clear, providing a range of options to comply with standards and rules, and taking action when needed will all contribute to an increase in suppliers seeing Taumata Arowai as a credible, responsive regulator.

We intend to measure our progress by looking at trends in suppliers’ experience-based and perception-based views of Taumata Arowai. We will gather this information via a survey mechanism.



Impact Three | Hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed

All drinking water suppliers should have effective methods to identify and manage risks to ensure drinking water is safe. Our work to date in monitoring emerging issues and reporting on the sector's performance shows us that there are gaps in the reliability and safety of the drinking water supplied to communities.

We are expecting all of the work we do to result in an improvement in how suppliers are identifying and managing hazards and risks to drinking water.

A multi-barrier protection and treatment approach, gives the best guarantee of safe drinking water. It is

a priority for us to have our work over the next three years result in an increase in multi-barrier protections in place, and an increase in the population accessing drinking water that is protected by effective multi-barrier approaches.

We also want to see suppliers identifying and managing hazards and risks for their supplies, including outlining clear plans for how they intend to identify, manage and/or mitigate the hazards and risks that are applicable for their supply.



Impact Four | Water services' impact on the environment improves

Piped networks are complex. The assets associated with water pipes are largely underground and difficult to assess. However, when networks deteriorate, communities experience increased leakage and water loss.

Discharges from stormwater or wastewater back into the environment can directly impact the health of the water that communities use as a source for their drinking water. Communities that utilise surface waterbodies (e.g. lakes and rivers) for drinking water supply are particularly vulnerable to contamination from wastewater and stormwater discharges.

As the regulator we expect to see an improvement in how wastewater and stormwater networks are managed to improve the impact they have on the environment. We are expecting our work in setting standards and making our expectations clear, as well as our work providing transparency to the public on the performance of their water services to result in this improvement.

We will utilise new wastewater standards to provide for standardisation and outline clear expectations of the baseline requirements for those operating wastewater networks. Once we have these standards in place, we will look at how we can meaningfully measure progress against the implementation of these standards across the wastewater treatment system in New Zealand.

Our organisational operations

Ā mātou mahi whakahaere

We are an effective, credible regulatory agency. We are a capable and resilient organisation with staff able to regulate effectively and respond to water supplier and community needs.

How we will organise ourselves to deliver

Over the next four years, Taumata Arowai will need to invest in our people, processes, and tools to deliver on our priorities in an effective and efficient way.

To do this, Taumata Arowai will



Recruit and retain the people and capability we need to deliver on our goals and vision



Ensure all our people are safe, welcome, and able to thrive



Ensure we have the right systems, processes and tools in place to enable our people to be effective in their work



Have business resilience and continuity plans in place so we can respond during disruptive events



Work with our monitoring agency to have a funding model that allows us to effectively deliver over time.

As we move into the next phase of our organisation, we are intending to engage with our people to develop our values and ways of working. We will reflect this in our Statement of Intent once the work has been completed.

Our good employer obligations

As a Crown entity, Taumata Arowai must be a good employer. We actively work to minimise bias or discrimination and create an environment of equal employment opportunities (EEO).

Taumata Arowai is committed to the principles of EEO. We apply this through supporting and promoting good equal employment practices across Taumata Arowai. Equal employment is one of the ways Taumata Arowai recognises and supports the aims and aspirations of Māori, thereby contributing to the spirit of partnership envisaged by the Treaty of Waitangi.

EEO policies are subject to regular reviews and updates. As each policy is reviewed, or new policies adopted, a review period is set and added to the calendar.

Acquisition of shares and joint ventures

Taumata Arowai does not intend to acquire any shares in other organisations or enter into any joint ventures as per section 100 of the Crown Entities Act.



taumataarowai.govt.nz