



Water Services Authority  
Taumata Arowai

# Amended Statement of Intent

2024 – 2028

18 December 2025

# 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 water is the health of the people  
Water is a treasure that must be protected  
We are water  
Water is us.

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This whakatauāki was gifted to Taumata Arowai  
by Shane Te Ruki, Ngāti Maniapoto-Waikato, Ngāti Porou.

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Presented to the House of Representatives pursuant to section 149A of the Crown Entities Act 2004. Amendments made pursuant to section 148 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

Email [info@taumataarowai.govt.nz](mailto:info@taumataarowai.govt.nz)

Call +64 4 889 8350

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

Amended Statement of intent 2024 – 2028

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# Foreword

Water is fundamental to New Zealand's wellbeing, supporting healthy communities, a thriving environment, and a resilient economy. As the water services regulator, the Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai (the Authority) is entrusted with safeguarding the quality, reliability, and sustainability of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services for all New Zealanders.

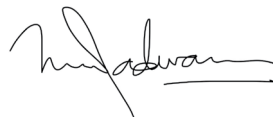
The Authority's vision is clear: safe water, every day, for everyone. Achieving this vision requires more than regulation; it demands agility and a commitment to continuous improvement. We work alongside suppliers, councils, iwi, hapū, and communities, recognising that lasting change comes from collaboration and shared responsibility.

The Authority's approach is guided by transparency, risk-based decision-making, proactive engagement, and proportionality. We are clear about our regulatory priorities and when and how we will act, so suppliers and communities know what to expect and can have confidence in our leadership.

The next four years will bring significant change and opportunity. With the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 now in place, we have a strong legislative foundation, new regulatory tools, and greater certainty for the sector. Our expanded mandate includes developing National Engineering Design Standards and Infrastructure Design Solutions and supporting education and training for rural and domestic suppliers. These changes position us to respond to immediate challenges and shape the long-term future of water services in New Zealand.

Trust and confidence in the water sector are built on clarity, consistency, and leadership. We are focused on providing practical guidance, timely support, and clear priorities as the Government and councils deliver Local Water Done Well. We will keep consumer interests at the heart of our strategy, ensuring that safety, reliability, and environmental protection remain our guiding principles.

This Statement of Intent sets out our strategic direction for the next four years. It outlines the framework for our regulatory work, the outcomes we aim to achieve, and the values that guide us. We are confident that our strong foundations and leadership will enable us to deliver on Government expectations and our vision of safe water, every day, for everyone.



**Raveen Jaduram**  
Board Chair



**Allan Prangnell**  
Chief Executive

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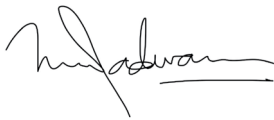
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# Statement of responsibility

The Statement of Intent 2024 – 2028 describes the four-year vision and strategic intent of the Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai (the Authority) and was prepared in accordance with the requirements of sections 138 to 149A of the Crown Entities Act 2004. This Amended Statement of Intent builds on the Statement of Intent 2024 – 2028, with amendments made pursuant to section 148(2)(b)(ii) of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

We, the undersigned, certify that the information contained in this Amended Statement of Intent 2024 – 2028 is a fair and reasonable reflection of the strategic and operating intentions of the Authority.

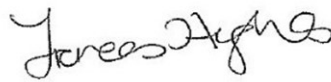
Signed on behalf of the Board:



**Raveen Jaduram**

**Board Chair**

Date 18/12/2025



**Dr Frances Hughes** CNZM

**Chair, Finance Risk and Assurance Committee**

Date 18/12/2025

# Context

The Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai (the Authority) is New Zealand’s water services regulator. Our job is to make sure every community can trust the water coming out of their taps, and that our drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems and networks protect both people and the environment.

## Statutory objectives

The Taumata Arowai – the Water Services Regulator Act 2021 outlines the Authority’s statutory objectives. Our objectives 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
- develop and administer National Engineering Design Standards for network infrastructure<sup>1</sup>
- 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.

The Authority’s 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.

## Legislative framework

The Water Services Act 2021 (the Act) and the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 provide the main legislative framework the Authority operates under for the regulation of water services.

The Authority recognises our responsibilities and obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi | Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and we are committed to improving how our regulatory approach responds to them.

The Authority will routinely consider what actions we may need to take to uphold our Treaty obligations when performing our functions and will work closely with the sector as they go about meeting their obligations as part of a whole-of-system approach. The Authority will also satisfy specific obligations that we have when those functions affect activities in the Waikato, Waipā, Whanganui, and Whangaehu River catchments<sup>2</sup>, or other areas where similar obligations arise in the future.

## Accountability statement

This Statement of Intent (SOI) sets out our direction and priorities through to 30 June 2028. It is a statutory document, required under section 139 of the Crown Entities Act 2004. We’ve updated this SOI, as required by section 148 of the Crown Entities Act, to reflect recent changes in legislation and our operating environment. This includes the addition of a new statutory objective from 26 August 2025, under Part 9 of the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Act 2025.

<sup>1</sup> This objective was added from 26 August 2025 under Part 9 of the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Act 2025.

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Raukawa and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010, the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010, the Nga Wai o Maniapoto (Waipa River) Act 2012, the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017, and the Ngāti Rangi Claims Settlement Act 2019.

## The Authority's regulatory role

The Authority began regulating drinking water in November 2021, taking responsibility for the safety and quality of water supplied to communities across New Zealand. In October 2023, our role expanded to include setting standards and overseeing the environmental performance of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater networks. The recent legislative changes under the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Act 2025 (enacted in August 2025) have strengthened our approach further. The Act now places greater emphasis on:

- taking suppliers' compliance costs into account while always protecting and promoting public health
- allowing the Authority to issue exemptions proactively, so we can respond quickly and flexibly to different situations
- giving us new powers to encourage better verification and sector ownership of drinking water safety plans (DWSPs) and related information, and
- excluding some very small supplies (serving 25 or fewer people) from the regulatory regime.

We know that every water supply and supplier is different. That's why the Authority does not take a one-size-fits-all approach. We are committed to operating in a way that is:

- **Transparent:** We are clear about our priorities and what we expect from suppliers.
- **Risk-based:** We focus our actions and expectations on the biggest risks to public health.
- **Proactive:** We anticipate risks, provide practical guidance and support, and look for ways to keep improving.
- **Proportionate:** We consider the size, complexity, and risk profile of each supplier or supply, as well as the costs of different options to improve performance or achieve compliance.

The Authority's job is to set clear expectations, provide practical guidance, and offer different pathways for compliance. We work closely with suppliers, councils, iwi, and communities to build capability, share best practice, and support continuous improvement. When needed, we take action to protect public health and the environment.

You can find more detail about our regulatory approach and what suppliers can expect in our [Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy 2025–28](#).

# Strategic context

New Zealand's water sector has experienced profound change over the past few years, seeing the foundations of a new regulatory system laid. Our SOI is both a reflection of this journey and a signal of our commitment to lead the next phase, where we will move from establishment to system improvement, and from compliance as a baseline to resilient water services as an aspiration.

Central to the Authority's work is a risk-based, evidence-led regulatory approach, ensuring that our regulatory interventions are proportionate, transparent, and targeted where they will have the greatest impact.

Our regulatory approach is shaped by what we know and what we continue to learn about the drinking water system and the broader water environment. Data from suppliers, laboratories, and incident notifications, as well as sector engagement and outreach, inform our priorities and interventions. The Authority's public reports have become the cornerstone for understanding risk, performance, and opportunity across the sector.

Key insights include:

- **Persistent risks to drinking water safety:** Microbial and chemical contamination, ineffective treatment, and supply interruptions remain real threats to public health.
- **Variable performance and capability:** While some suppliers demonstrate strong compliance and risk management, others, especially smaller or community-based suppliers, require targeted support and guidance.
- **Environmental pressures:** The Network Environmental Performance Report underscores the interconnectedness of water quality, infrastructure, and environmental outcomes. It highlights the need for integrated approaches that consider source protection, efficient use, and sustainable management.



## State of the system

### Drinking Water

Our Drinking Water Regulation Report paints a picture of both progress and persistent risk. Across New Zealand, more communities are benefitting from robust monitoring, improved transparency, and a growing culture of accountability. Yet, the sector remains diverse in scale and capability. Microbial and chemical contamination, ineffective treatment, and supply interruptions are still real threats to public health, especially for smaller or community-based suppliers. A significant number of unregistered supplies remain outside the regulatory system, representing both a challenge and an opportunity. Bringing these supplies into compliance is essential for ensuring safe water for all, but will require targeted support, guidance, and engagement.

### Wastewater

The Network Environmental Performance Report reminds us that effective wastewater management is critical for both public health and environmental protection. Many wastewater systems are aging, with capacity constraints leading to overflows and untreated discharges, especially during heavy rainfall or system failures. Nutrient and contaminant loads continue to impact freshwater and

marine environments, and there is a pressing need to ensure all communities, including rural and remote areas, have access to safe and effective wastewater treatment. Around 60% of all consents of public wastewater treatment plants are due to expire in the next 10 years, and 20% are already operating on expired consents.

### Stormwater

Stormwater systems are under increasing pressure from urban growth, land use change, and more frequent and severe weather events. Flooding and surface water contamination are growing risks, exacerbated by climate change and aging or inadequate infrastructure.

### Water Infrastructure

Much of the country's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure is aging, with many assets reaching or exceeding their intended lifespan. Deferred maintenance, historical underinvestment, and the increasing demands of population growth and climate change have left many networks vulnerable to failures, leaks, and inefficiencies.

As we take on a more active role in overseeing infrastructure performance and renewal, our focus is on supporting the sector to invest wisely, plan for the long term, and ensure that infrastructure is resilient, efficient, and fit for purpose, now and into the future.

Over the next few years, the landscape of water services in New Zealand is set to change even further. The Government's Local Water Done Well reforms are ushering in a new era, with new water organisations being stood up across the country. These entities will bring fresh capability, new ways of working, and a renewed focus on delivering for communities. The coming years will bring both challenges and opportunities. Evolving service delivery models and the realities of climate change will require agility and innovation.

The Authority's role as regulator is to provide stability and assurance through this transition; setting clear expectations, supporting continuous improvement, and holding the system to account as it evolves. We are here to guide and oversee the emerging system, ensuring that as new organisations take shape, the principles of public health and environmental protection remain at the heart of every decision. Together, we are building a future where safe, sustainable water services are not just an aspiration, but a reality for every New Zealander.

# Strategic framework

The Authority is working towards a future where everyone in New Zealand can rely on safe drinking water and effective water services. Achieving this takes partnership across central and local government, iwi and hapū, water suppliers, and communities. We all have a role to play.

The Authority's strategic framework sets out the key impacts we want to achieve:

- safety and sufficiency of water services improve
- water suppliers see the Authority as a credible, responsive regulator
- hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed by suppliers, and
- water services' impact on the environment improves.

The Authority will prioritise our resources and efforts to ensure our work is focused on these impacts. Over the long term, this will contribute to achieving our three goals.

- Safe and sufficient drinking water;
- Effective water infrastructure; and
- Sustainable environmental performance.

## Linking performance assessment to the framework

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

- our long-term goals
- the impacts our work will have, and
- the work the Authority does that will contribute.

Descriptions of what we aim to achieve and how we will track progress against long-term goals, and the impact of our work, are outlined in this document.

Details of the activities we undertake, and measures for our service delivery are outlined in the Authority's Statement of Performance Expectations each year.

## 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



Develop and administer National Engineering Design Standards for network infrastructure



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

## Vision

**Safe water, every day for everyone**  
Kia tiakina te wai, hei oranga mō te katoa

## Long-term goals

**Safe & Sufficient Drinking Water**

**Effective Water Infrastructure**

**Sustainable Environmental Performance**

## The impacts our work will have



**Safety and sufficiency of water services improve**



**Water suppliers see the Authority as a credible, responsive regulator**



**Hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed by suppliers**



**Water services' impact on the environment improves**

## Work the Authority does



**Set standards and make our expectations clear**

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



**Provide a range of options to comply**

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



**Take action when needed**

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



**Maintain oversight of suppliers 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



**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

Legislation

Statement of Intent

Statement of Performance Expectations

## Connections between the Authority's goals, impacts and activities

Goals			Impacts	Work the Authority does				
Safe and sufficient drinking water	Effective water infrastructure	Sustainable environmental performance		Set standards and make expectations clear	Provide a range of options to comply	Take action when needed	Maintain oversight of supplier responses to incidents and emergencies	Provide transparency to the public on the performance of their water services
			<b>Safety and sufficiency of water services improve through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more people having access to water from registered supplies</li> <li>more suppliers putting plans in place to deal with risks and issues of safety and sufficiency</li> <li>consumer advisories are in place for shorter timeframes</li> <li>notifications of unplanned restriction or insufficient supply reduce over time.</li> </ul>					
			<b>Water suppliers see the Authority as a credible, responsive regulator because:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the standards and expectations we set are clear and accessible</li> <li>the guidance we provide is accessible and easy to understand.</li> </ul>					
			<b>Hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed by suppliers through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more supplies having multi-barrier protections in place</li> <li>more suppliers are monitoring hazards and risks in distribution zones.</li> </ul>					
			<b>Water services' impact on the environment improves through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving levels of source water monitoring and reporting</li> <li>declining water loss from networks.</li> </ul>					

## Long-term goals

The Authority is working towards outcomes that will make a real difference for people and communities over the next 15 years. As part of a wider regulatory system for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater, we know our actions need to complement those of other regulators to achieve these long-term goals.

### Goal One: Safe and sufficient drinking water

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

About 14% of New Zealanders (around 800,000 people) get their drinking water from private or community suppliers or are self-supplied. We want more of these supplies to register with us, because registration gives us better visibility and helps ensure their water is safe and reliable. Supplies that are not currently registered have until November 2028 to register with the Authority. As supplies are registered, more people will be able to rely on their supply having regulatory oversight by the Authority.

We also want to see suppliers actively managing risks to drinking water safety. This means using tools like drinking

water safety plans and issuing consumer advisories (such as boil water advisories) when problems are found. We want to see more suppliers submitting their plans to us, and a decrease in the time it takes for suppliers to lift advisories (indicating that problems are fixed faster).

We are interested in ensuring people experience fewer unplanned restrictions or an insufficient supply of drinking water. Insufficiency<sup>3</sup> can happen anywhere, and it can sometimes be due to circumstances outside a supplier's control (e.g. extreme weather or unexpected damage to a pipeline). However, there are also instances of insufficiency related to a lack of appropriate risk management by water suppliers. Our goal is to see fewer events of insufficiency over time, showing that more people can count on their water services. In the short term, we do expect to see an initial increase in reported events as more suppliers learn about the requirement to notify us. This is a positive first step, as it means we are getting a clearer picture of where improvements are needed.

Our Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy supports this goal by focusing regulatory attention and resources on the highest risks to drinking water safety and sufficiency.

### How the Authority will measure progress over time

	Desired trend	Baseline <sup>4</sup>
Number and percentage of the population that have access to drinking water from a registered, verified supply	Increasing number of people that are accessing drinking water from registered supplies <sup>5</sup>	4,458,538 83.7%
Percentage and number of registered supplies that require and have submitted a Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP)	Increasing trend <sup>6</sup> for both percentage and number	1023 supplies with a DWSP, which is 54.8% of the supplies that require one.
Median duration of drinking water consumer advisories (warnings to boil, not drink or not use) by category of advisory	Temporary advisories ≤ 10 days  Long-term advisories: ≤ 500 days <sup>7</sup>	Temporary advisories: 6 days  Long-term advisories: 620 days
Number of notifications of unplanned restriction or insufficient supply	Increasing trend until 2027/2028 <sup>8</sup>	202

3 Water suppliers are required to notify the Authority of instances where their ability to maintain a sufficient supply of water for drinking and sanitation purposes is at imminent risk, or they have a planned or unplanned restriction or supply interruption that is/will be longer than eight hours. These instances are talked about as 'insufficiency'.

4 The baseline for these measures was set using the 2024/2025 results.

5 The percentage of the population with access to drinking water from a registered supply will never reach 100%, because of some domestic self-supplies that are generally rural and involve roof water catchment. The percentage measurement will also be impacted by the overall population in New Zealand, which fluctuates year to year.

6 100% of supplies is not achievable because supplies could have a general exemption or an Acceptable Solution in place that exempts the supplier from needing to submit a plan.

7 Long-term advisories are impacted by significant outliers with historic issues that need to be addressed. As long-term advisories are resolved, this has an impact that means the range of durations for long-term advisories is large (some can be quite short, and some are very long), which skews the results.

8 The Authority expect to see an initial increase in the first three years of measuring as more suppliers become aware of the requirements for them to notify the Authority of instances of insufficiency. This is a positive first step. From 1 July 2027 onwards, the Authority will start to seek a downward trend.

## Goal Two: Effective water infrastructure

Communities across New Zealand depend on reliable, resilient water infrastructure, whether it is for drinking water, wastewater, or stormwater. Our goal is to make sure these systems are not only effective today but are also fit for the future.

The Authority is working to ensure that water suppliers and councils have the guidance and support they need to maintain and improve their infrastructure. We know that much of New Zealand's water infrastructure is aging and, in many cases, hidden underground. When these assets are not maintained, communities can face water loss, service interruptions, or environmental harm. That is why the Authority is focused on helping suppliers identify risks early, plan for renewals, and respond quickly to issues as they arise.

We want to see more collaboration and information sharing across the sector. By working together, we can make smarter investment decisions and ensure every community benefits from best practice. Our long-term goal is to see water infrastructure that is robust, efficient, and able to meet the needs of all New Zealanders, now and into the future.

### How the Authority will measure progress over time

Once we have standards in place (such as National Engineering Design Standards), the Authority will look at how we can meaningfully measure progress against this goal. Work to confirm measures of progress will be considered as part of the policy development work programme. Establishing a baseline for this area is likely to occur outside of the period for this SOL.

### How the Authority will measure progress over time

	Desired trend	Baseline
Percentage of suppliers that meet the source water rules in relation to having a plan for cyanobacteria <sup>9</sup> management	Increasing percentage of suppliers	To be established in 2025/2026
Number of sources being monitored that meet the source water monitoring rules <sup>10</sup>	Increase in the number of sources being monitored	707 of the total 1,926 sources being monitored (37%) <sup>11</sup>

9 Cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, are a cross between bacteria and algae. Cyanobacteria can be a problem because some species can produce toxins called cyanotoxins which can make people ill. This is an emerging area of risk, and the Authority are increasing our work in this space to educate and inform suppliers. Monitoring this area over time will enable us to see if that work is having an impact on the level of compliance of suppliers.

10 A key component of managing source water is to have a monitoring programme in place. The Rules require suppliers to analyse the health of their water through sampling and monitoring requirements. The Authority expect compliance with this part of the Rules to increase over time, especially for large supplies (as defined by the Rules), and will be focusing efforts on guiding and supporting supplies in this space over the next few years.

11 The baseline for this measure was set using the 2024/2025 results.

## Goal Three: Sustainable environmental performance

Communities across New Zealand rely on healthy rivers, lakes, aquifers, and rainwater for their drinking water. Looking after these sources is essential, not just for today, but for future generations.

We want to see more suppliers actively monitoring and managing risks, making sure wastewater and stormwater discharges do not threaten drinking water safety, only take what is needed and work closely with councils, government, and communities to share information and best practice.

Our water networks are complex and, as noted above, most pipes and assets are hidden underground. When these networks age or are not well maintained, leaks and water loss can increase, and poorly managed discharges can harm both public health and the environment. That is why it is so important to keep a close eye on the whole system, from source to tap and back to the environment.

Transparency and standardisation are also key. We are committed to reporting publicly on water loss from networks to drive a downward trend and help protect water sources, and exploring ways to increase standardisation to lift environmental performance across all water networks, for example, through setting national standards.



## The impacts we want our work to have

These impacts describe the real-world changes the Authority is working to achieve over the next three to five years. They are how we define success for our work, and they directly support our long-term goals: safe and sufficient drinking water, effective water infrastructure, and sustainable environmental performance.

### Impact One: Safety and sufficiency of water services improve

We aim for every community to have reliable access to safe, sufficient water daily. Our work includes verifying and monitoring registered supplies, addressing gaps in treatment and infrastructure, and supporting suppliers in managing risks. By prioritising multi-barrier treatment, strong safety planning, and prompt issue resolution, we expect increased access to safe water, fewer long-term advisories, and reduced supply restrictions.

Monitoring the effectiveness of multi-barrier treatments helps us gauge our impact. Backflow prevention is crucial to protecting drinking water from contamination. Additionally, supplies are expected to maintain barriers against protozoa and bacteria, including residual disinfection. These make up key components of a multi-barrier treatment approach.

Tracking these areas reveals whether our work is advancing the implementation and management of effective barriers, resulting in safer water services. Reliable, safe water protects public health, strengthens community resilience, and builds confidence in the system.

### How the Authority will measure its impact

	Desired trend	Baseline
Percentage of suppliers that have backflow protection and risk management in place <sup>12</sup>	Increasing percentage of suppliers	To be established in 2025/2026
Percentage of the population served by council or government owned supplies: <sup>13</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requiring a protozoa barrier, that have an effective barrier in place</li> <li>requiring a bacteria barrier, that have that an effective barrier in place</li> <li>requiring residual disinfection, which has residual disinfection in place</li> </ul>	Increasing trend in percentage	<sup>14</sup> Protozoa barrier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>92.6% of the total population supplied<sup>15</sup> by the relevant supplies have a barrier in place.</li> <li>For the population served by supplies we reviewed (58 supplies), 53.9% have a barrier in place that is effective.</li> </ul> Bacterial treatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>99.7% of the total population supplied by the relevant supplies have treatment in place.</li> <li>For the population served by supplies we reviewed (61 supplies), 66.9% have treatment that is effective.</li> </ul> Residual disinfection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>97.5% of the total population supplied by the relevant supplies have residual disinfection in place.</li> <li>For the population served by supplies we reviewed (60 supplies), 67.6% have residual disinfection that is effective.</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Water networks are designed to send water from the treatment plant to the people who use it. However, problems with pressure in the pipes can cause contaminated water, or other liquids, to be sucked into the water network from user connections. Properties with high-risk connections, such as industrial businesses, rural or private properties with swimming pools, may have a tap, hose, trough, or other place where treated water usually flows out. If this happens, it is called backflow. Backflow prevention is essential to ensuring drinking water does not become contaminated in the distribution network via contaminated water flowing from private connections back into the network. Ensuring preventative measures are in place and monitoring their effectiveness is a component of a multi-barrier treatment approach for ensuring the drinking water is safe.

<sup>13</sup> The Authority has been working closely with councils and government-owned supplies to ensure protozoa barriers, bacterial barriers, and residual disinfection are in place for all public supplies. The work to date of the Authority has increased these barriers being put in place. However, it is not enough for the barriers to exist; they also need to be operated and managed effectively. This measure will identify if the work programme is having an impact on increasing the amount of people protected by an effective barrier.

<sup>14</sup> The baseline for this measure was set using the 2024/2025 results.

<sup>15</sup> Supply population is the population served by all supplies that meet the criteria under the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules for needing an effective protozoa barrier, bacterial treatment and/or residual disinfection in place.

## Impact Two: Water suppliers see the Authority as a credible, responsive regulator

Credibility and responsiveness are at the heart of effective regulation. We set clear standards, provide practical guidance, and act quickly when risks emerge. Our approach is transparent, risk-based, proactive, and proportionate. We listen to feedback, engage regularly with suppliers, and tailor our support to their needs.

When suppliers trust us as a credible, responsive regulator, they are more likely to engage, comply, and invest in improvements leading to better outcomes for communities. The best way to know if the Authority is having an impact is to ask the sector and hear their views.

### How the Authority will measure its impact

	Desired trend	Baseline <sup>16</sup>
Percentage of suppliers and stakeholders who say <sup>17</sup> that our standards and expectations are accessible and clear <sup>18</sup>	Increasing percentage for both suppliers and stakeholders	Suppliers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible = 71%</li> <li>• Clear = 55%</li> </ul> Stakeholders: To be established in 2025/2026
Percentage of suppliers and stakeholders who think our guidance is accessible and clear	Increasing percentage for both suppliers and stakeholders	Suppliers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible = 59%</li> <li>• Clear = 56%</li> </ul> Stakeholders: To be established in 2025/2026
Percentage of suppliers that see us as credible and responsive	Increasing percentage	Credible: 72% agree or strongly agree  Responsive: 61% agree or strongly agree

<sup>16</sup> The baseline for these measures was set using the 2024/2025 results.

<sup>17</sup> The Authority has several measures where suppliers and the wider water sector are asked for their views. This is measured at least once a year via a survey.

<sup>18</sup> Accessible is defined as easy to find and pitched at the right level. Clear is defined as easy to understand and to apply.



### Impact Three: Hazards and risks to drinking water are identified and managed by suppliers

We support suppliers to develop clear plans for managing hazards, including in emergencies, and we track progress through reporting and engagement. When hazards and risks are actively managed, the likelihood of contamination and supply failures is reduced, keeping communities safe and strengthening trust in water services.

After drinking water has been treated to make it safe, suppliers need to ensure it stays safe as they distribute it to their communities. Once the water leaves the treatment plant, it enters one or more distribution zones to get the

water to the community. As part of a multi-barrier treatment approach, suppliers need to identify and monitor hazards and risks to ensure that the treated water is protected. As noted above in Impact One, monitoring the effectiveness of multi-barrier treatments helps us gauge our impact. Tracking compliance by suppliers for monitoring hazards and risks in their distribution zone, including whether they are sampling and monitoring for chemical and bacterial contaminants in the water throughout distribution zones, identifies whether our work is advancing the implementation and management of effective approaches, resulting in safer water services for communities.

#### How the Authority will measure its impact

	Desired trend	Baseline
Percentage of suppliers that are sampling for and monitoring hazards and risks in their distribution zones	Increasing percentage	To be established in 2025/2026

### Impact Four: Water services' impact on the environment improves

We want to see water networks that protect both people and the environment. Our work will set national standards for wastewater and engineering design for all reticulated water networks, promote best practice in infrastructure design, and drive transparency through public reporting. We encourage monitoring, reduction of water loss, and improvements in environmental performance, especially where networks are aging or under pressure.

When water services minimise their impact on the environment, communities benefit from healthier waterways, greater resilience to climate change, and a more sustainable future.

#### How the Authority will measure its impact

Once we have standards in national wastewater environmental performance standards in place, the Authority will look at how we can meaningfully measure the impact of this work.

# The Authority's operations

The Authority is a capable and resilient organisation with staff able to regulate effectively and respond to water supplier and community needs. We will need to continue to invest in our people, processes, and tools to deliver on our priorities in an effective and efficient way.

## To do this, the Authority will:



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



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



ensure all our people are **safe, welcome, and able to thrive**



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

As we move into the next phase of our organisation, we intend 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.

## Good employer obligations

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

The Authority is committed to the principles of EEO. We apply this through supporting and promoting good equal employment practices across the Authority. Equal employment is one of the ways the Authority 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 are adopted, a review period is set and added to the calendar.

## Acquisition of shares and joint ventures

The Authority 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.



Water Services Authority  
Taumata Arowai

[taumataarowai.govt.nz](http://taumataarowai.govt.nz)