
From: Info
Subject: Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai Update August 2026



Water Services Authority Taumata Arowai

August 2026

Welcome to our August newsletter.

It continues to be interesting times as the sector transitions to new operating models. In recent weeks, we've met a number of mayors, chairs, new board members, and senior leaders with conversations focused on strengthening understanding of our role, clarifying responsibilities and setting expectations. We'll continue this engagement over the coming months at both board and executive levels.

We look forward to catching many of you next month at the Water NZ conference in Hamilton and sharing insights. If you're attending, visit us at Stand 119 in the centre of the exhibition hall. Chair Raveen Jaduram, Dr Sara McFall, Steve Taylor, and I all have speaking slots and attending staff will deliver presentations and poster sessions.

The conference will be a chance for me to say farewell before I finish up as chief executive. I will talk more about this, and how proud I am of our accomplishments in our next newsletter.

In the meantime, this newsletter includes:

- key information for drinking water suppliers

- a sneak peek at engagements coming up on some of the new tools the Authority is developing (NEDS, stormwater, wastewater standards)
- a welcome to new Authority Board and Māori Advisory group members
- links to more guidance and updates.

Ten-year anniversary of Havelock North



A decade ago this month, contamination of the Havelock North drinking water supply resulted in 5,000-plus people falling ill, four deaths, and led to a national inquiry.

This is a time to acknowledge those who lived and worked in Havelock North through this crisis; this was a terrible time for the community. It is also an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come as a sector since this tragedy.

The tragedy showed what can happen when risks to drinking water are not adequately managed, and that stronger oversight and accountability across the drinking water system were urgently needed.

In the years since, the Authority has worked to transform how drinking water is regulated and managed. We are proud of the role we have played in this transformation and the effort you have all contributed in helping deliver safe water, every day for everyone – for which we thank you.

[Read more](#)

For drinking water suppliers

El Niño and drinking water

Earth Sciences New Zealand has confirmed El Niño conditions have been reached in the tropical Pacific and are expected to strongly influence New Zealand's weather into 2027.

We're committed to ensuring all communities have access to safe and reliable drinking water every day.

If dry weather conditions in your area are likely to impact your ability to provide safe and sufficient drinking water, we encourage:

- council suppliers to inform us early
- smaller suppliers to inform your local council early.

We also encourage all suppliers to engage as early as possible with:

- your consumers
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand
- anyone else you provide drinking water to, e.g. water carriers.

Early conversations help us work together so everyone has a sufficient supply of drinking water.

Expanded set of updated Rules FAQs published

We have published an expanded set of FAQs on our website that support the updated Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules 2026 we published in late June.

The FAQs are based on the technical questions that attendees asked in the webinar we ran last month on the updated Rules.

[Read the FAQs](#)

Rules reporting transition: Extended reporting deadlines

Talking of the updated Rules (which come into effect 1 July 2027), we have extended the reporting deadlines in recognition of the additional work required of suppliers.

These transitional arrangements will support suppliers through the change while continuing to provide assurance of key compliance requirements.

We have prepared a table to summarise the transitional arrangements for Rules reporting over the next year.

[View the transition table](#)

Upcoming discussions on the Authority's new tools

Strong interest in National Engineering Design Standards (NEDS)

We're delighted with the huge interest we're experiencing on the NEDS.

Last week we launched engagement on a proposed organisational framework for the NEDS and an approach to prioritising what we cover.

Since then, we've had significant interest from across the sector. We'd especially like to thank Water New Zealand, Apōpō, Urban Development Institute of New Zealand (UDINZ), and Engineering New Zealand for their support in promoting the engagement and helping connect their members with this important work.

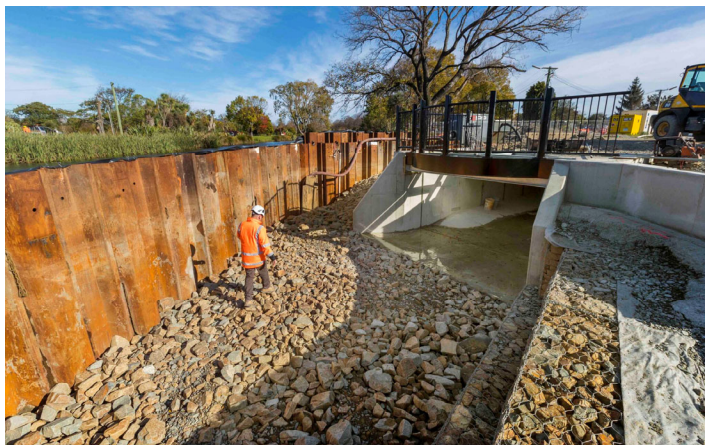
Over the coming months, we'll work with the sector, developers and technical experts to test options, refine the technical detail, and make sure the standards work in practice for different providers and communities.

[We encourage you to have your say through the online survey.](#)

If you have questions, please email neds@taumataarowai.govt.nz

Visit our website to find out more

Help shape urban stormwater management



Extreme weather, ageing infrastructure, development and affordability challenges are putting New Zealand's stormwater networks under growing pressure.

This week, we published a stormwater engagement paper. The paper sets out three immediate priorities: promoting infrastructure standardisation, improving national stormwater data, and supporting risk-based planning and investment.

We want to know what you think. Strong sector input will help us shape a practical and proportionate work programme for the future.

We encourage you and anyone with an interest in stormwater to read the paper and share your views through our [online survey](#).

If you have any questions, contact our team at stormwater_wastewater@taumataarowai.govt.nz.

Visit our website to read the stormwater engagement paper and find out more

New wastewater standards

We are preparing for consultation in September and October on proposals for two more wastewater standards – on odour from wastewater treatment plants, and on metals in treated wastewater discharged to water bodies.

The proposals build on the first set of standards. They extend national consistency into areas where standardisation can reduce consent complexity and support better environmental outcomes over time.

Keep an eye out for more on these proposals soon.

Read the first set of standards

New Board and Te Puna members

The Minister of Local Government has appointed two new Board members and two new members to our Māori Advisory Group – Te Puna this month.

These appointments bring both the Board and Māori Advisory Group to their full complement.

Scott Pearson and **Hon. John Carter** have joined the Board, bringing valuable experience and fresh perspectives.

Soltice Morrison (Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Rereahu-Maniapoto) and **Cheyenne Wilson** (Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa) join Te Puna, bringing leadership with te ao Māori at the heart.

All four new members are appointed for three-year terms.

[Read more about them on our website](#)

More helpful information and guidance for drinking water suppliers

New guidance on our website

We're developing guidance and resources to help drinking water suppliers provide safe drinking water for everyone.

We've created a new 'Water treatment and testing' webpage. It covers the basics of risks to source water, why they matter and how they can be managed through treatment and testing.

[Visit the Water treatment and testing web page](#)



We've updated the 'Registering your supply' web page with more information about which drinking water supplies need to register with us by November 2028.

We created a video with Dunstan Hills Orchard on assessing treatment and preparing to register. Dunstan Hills Operations Manager Ian Nicholls (above) is learning more about the requirements for his supply ahead of registering with us by November 2028.

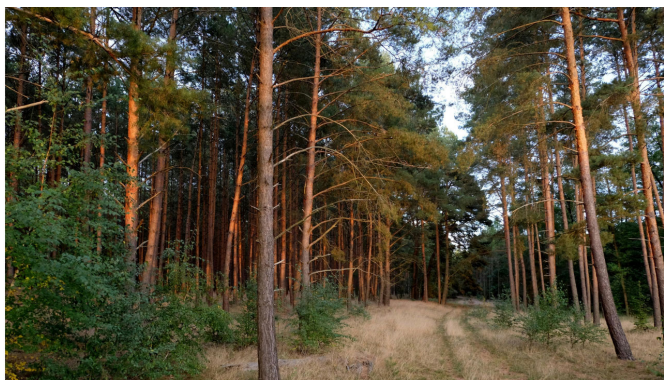
[Visit the Registering your supply web page and watch the video](#)

More resources are coming soon!

We're finalising a series of animated videos aimed at helping people understand what to do when a consumer advisory notice is issued for water they normally drink. The series covers Boil Water, Do Not Drink and Do Not Use water notices.

We're also working on videos to help people who manage small drinking water supplies maintain an end-point treatment system. This short series shows how to change a cartridge filter and replace a UV lamp.

FIND OUT MORE



New guidance for the wastewater standard for discharge-to-land

We have published comprehensive guidance for the discharge to land standard. The guidance booklet is just under 40 pages.

[Find out more on our website](#)



NEPR 2024/25 published

Last month we published our Network Performance Environmental Report 2024/25 which provides insights into the environmental performance and impact of water services networks.

[Read the report and watch a recording of an information session on our website](#)



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