



## **Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai update April 2025**

Good afternoon

Easter is almost upon us and I'm sure we're all looking forward to the break.

This is a big year for local government as councils consult their communities and make important decisions on water service delivery under Local Water Done Well. The Local Government (Water Services) Bill is making its way through Parliament with big changes expected on the regulatory oversight regime involving us and the Commerce Commission. As the Commission gears up to perform its role, regulatory oversight will soon cover both the quality/quantity demands of water services and the sustained efficient investment required in the infrastructure that carries it.

The Bill is expected to pass into law in the third quarter, ahead of the local government elections in September/October.

Like you, we have a lot going on.

### **High interest in proposed wastewater standards**

There has been considerable interest in the proposed wastewater environmental performance standards, with hundreds of people attending the webinars and Q&A sessions we have run. It's been great to see such active engagement. Make sure you get your feedback in before [consultation](#) closes next Thursday 24 April.

Once set, we believe these standards will be a game changer for the wastewater system, allowing councils to deliver big cost savings to their communities and time efficiencies to their people. The standards will clarify treatment and performance requirements, allowing councils to budget future consenting much more confidently and accurately, and enable them to report to us on their performance.

Understanding the water networks through better information is the first step to improving performance and managing risks to the environment and to public health.

### **Consultation on proposed changes to encourage greater use of end-point treatment technology**

Adopting an Acceptable Solution utilising end-point treatment provides rural and small to medium-sized drinking water supplies as an alternative to centralised treatment in providing safe drinking water.

We are looking at ways to improve the current three Acceptable Solutions and plan to consult the sector by early May.

We expect the changes, once confirmed, will support greater uptake of end-point treatment device technology as a cost-effective solution to safe water for our smaller and rural water supplies.

Our aim is to have improved Acceptable Solutions in place around the middle of the year.

### **Consultation on downstream supplies coming in May**

‘Downstream supplies’ are drinking water supplies that get water from a registered supply that someone else manages – and then they provide that drinking water on to others (e.g. new subdivisions connected to a town supply, airports, ports and large industrial sites).

We’ve heard that those that manage downstream supplies want to better understand their responsibilities to ensure the drinking water provided through these arrangements is safe.

We plan to consult council and potential downstream suppliers on a proposed approach in May.

### **Engaging with community and private supplies in Northland**

Last month, our staff led a series of engagements in Northland as part of our community and private supplies outreach.

We delivered our Te.Ihorangi community-based workshops in collaboration with Ngāti Whātua, Te Uri o Hau and Te Roroa in Dargaville, and with Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Wai in Whangārei. I want to thank our partners who helped us ensure the workshops were useful.

We had a strong turnout from marae supplies, both registered and unregistered, with many keen to understand compliance pathways and how to move toward registration.

We were also privileged to attend Wānanga.Waiora, a hapū and kaitiaki-led symposium focused on water protection, management and related projects, held at Waitangi. We were invited to present on our priority projects including the proposed wastewater standards, which sparked important questions, reflecting the deep interest iwi and hapū have in understanding how these standards may impact their communities.

We gained valuable insights and strengthened relationships that will support our ongoing efforts, including the development of practical resources to assist community and private water supplies.

### **Making Rules reporting easier**

As mentioned previously, we've been working on an in-depth review of the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. Last year, we consulted on and updated the Rules for small to medium drinking water supplies; these refreshed Rules came into effect 1 January 2025.

We have now developed guidance for [very small communities](#), [small supplies](#) and [medium supplies](#) to help suppliers understand what the changes mean for them. Please check out this new guidance.

We are continuing this work and plan to consult on changes to Rules for large drinking water supplies serving 500 or more people later this year.

Meanwhile, we've developed a webform to make reporting easier for medium supplies reporting on level 2 Rules, due 28 April 2025. Earlier this week, we hosted a webinar, to show private and community supplies how to report via the webform. If you missed it, you can find a recording [here](#).

A recent update to the Hinekōrako portal means suppliers can now only upload supply data for Supply IDs linked to their account. You don't need to do anything differently but if you find you no longer have access to a supply you believe you should or if you have any questions, please email [OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz](mailto:OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz).

### **Refreshed regulatory focus for next three years**

We're currently refreshing our Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy and expect to publish this by 30 June. The strategy will set out what our

expectations are, what we will focus our attention on and how we will work with the sector over the next three years. Watch this space.

### **Annual systems reports are shaping up well**

Drafting is well underway on our annual system reports – Drinking Water Regulation Report 8680 (DWRR) and Network Environmental Performance Report 8689\_80 (NEPR).

For the DWRR, I'm pleased to note that council reporting on the Rules has improved, more suppliers are reporting better performance against the Rules, and there are more suppliers with the required barriers for bacteria and protozoa.

However, work on the NEPR underscores the scale of the infrastructure challenges our sector faces and the need for better data. This year we have taken a close look at the quality of data submitted by network operators across asset condition and water loss and note that, while the information is better, there is still significant room for improvement.

The two reports will be published by 30 June. Meanwhile, we're working closely with the Commerce Commission to ensure the environmental network performance reporting and the Commission's initial Information Disclosure regime are aligned.

### **Help us make our website better for you**

We're working to improve our website to better meet your needs. If you have any feedback on using the current website, please complete our [short survey](#). It's anonymous and will take just a few minutes to complete. Your feedback will really help us to make the site more useful for you.

Yours sincerely



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wish to receive these regular email updates, you can select a different person as your portal user in Hinekōrako. If you have subscribed to be updated you can use the unsubscribe link below.