



Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai update February 2026

Good afternoon

It's been an eventful start to what we know will be another big year for all of us.

Managing drinking water during severe weather

Extreme weather events have impacted most of the country throughout the summer – at times creating challenges for those managing drinking water supplies.

Our vulnerability to weather events is a timely reminder to think about the resilience of your drinking water supply. We have a [factsheet](#) about drinking water supplies following a flood event that may be helpful for smaller communities.

For all suppliers, we have more information about [drinking water in an emergency](#) on our website.

You may also face challenges communicating with your consumers during a weather event. Your drinking water safety plan should consider how you will let people know when to boil water or where alternative water is available when the safety and reliability of their drinking water is impacted.

New emergency number

From 5pm today, we are updating our main line to an 0800 number and implementing a dedicated 0800 emergency number.

- Main Line: 0800 454 715
- Emergency: 0800 454 717

If there is an imminent risk of serious illness or death arising from your drinking water supply, or you need to discuss an urgent matter, please contact us immediately.

Oversight of New Zealand's wastewater system

The Authority has a system oversight, standard-setting and public reporting role in relation to the environmental performance of water services infrastructure.

Upgrading New Zealand's public wastewater infrastructure is one of the most significant challenges facing New Zealand. Recent treatment plant and network failures serve to highlight the scale of our national wastewater issue. We are currently monitoring the response and investigation into what happened at Moa Point, to understand what lessons and changes should be applied elsewhere in the system and how we can reduce the risk of these events happening in the future.

Last year, we set four national wastewater standards, including new requirements for monitoring and reporting of overflows and by-passes. These will improve the networks' consistency, reliability and cost-effectiveness. [See the national wastewater environmental performance standards](#)

We have noticed some misunderstandings about the wastewater standards, particularly the discharge to water standard. We'll be doing some myth-busting in the next couple of weeks to provide more accurate information.

The final standards are designed to deliver strong environmental and public health outcomes while being practical and affordable. Importantly, the standards are risk_based – they are tailored to environmental sensitivity, providing stricter limits in more sensitive receiving environments and more cost-effective solutions in lower-risk areas. They are based on the best available scientific evidence. Research, extensive consultation and engagement with many councils and other stakeholders, as well as a range of other sources of insight informed their development.

This year we will also begin reporting against new wastewater network performance measures alongside drinking water in our annual Network Environmental Performance Report. Thank you to council suppliers for completing this reporting, we have seen a marked improvement in the quality and timeliness of data provided this year.

This new information has helped build a better understanding of our national wastewater network performance. An early analysis of the data is identifying areas of concern around ageing infrastructure and expired consents, and it has identified areas where we need more information for us, and the public, to see the

bigger picture. We will be engaging with regional councils, as the primary wastewater regulators, to fill in these gaps.

Our full annual Network Environmental Performance Report 2024-2025 will be published in June and we will look to share early insights as they emerge and make data sets available.

Support for new Water Organisations

Councils have started transferring their water services to new Water Organisations, CCOs, or inhouse business units, as part of enacting their water service delivery plans under Local Water Done Well.

We are implementing updates to our self-service portal, Hinekōrako, so that we can support you in making the changes required. Information will be provided directly to overall supply contacts soon. If you will be transferring anything ahead of 1 July 2026, or have questions, please contact our Operations Support team email OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz.

We will continue to engage with the new Water Organisations and councils about their compliance obligations through the transition and will continue to publish targeted guidance on our website.

As you work through the coming months, I am interested in hearing what you need from us to support you in the transition. Please feel free to email me or your existing Authority contacts directly to ask questions or set up a discussion.

Consultation on the Rules for large supplies

Thanks to everyone who gave feedback on our proposed changes to the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules for large supplies. Consultation closed 19 December 2025.

We are pleased with the high quality, detailed feedback you provided. We received 79 submissions and 115 people attended drop-in-sessions. We are currently working through your feedback as we develop the final Rules and may get in touch to further discuss points raised in your submission. We expect to publish the revised Rules and a summary of submissions in the next few months.

Compliance pathways to safe drinking water

There are three ways drinking water suppliers can meet their responsibilities.

Suppliers can follow the [Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules](#) (the Rules) and have a Drinking Water Safety Plan, reporting annually (see below for reporting requirements).

An [Acceptable Solution](#) may be a more straightforward and cost-effective compliance pathway for some suppliers.

A third option is exemptions, which may be granted to give suppliers flexibility where compliance is impracticable, inefficient, unduly costly or unduly burdensome in exceptional circumstances. Our approach is to use exemptions sparingly to solve exceptional problems or respond to exceptional circumstances, where other options have been discounted. Suppliers must still be able to ensure their drinking water is safe. See [our website](#) for more information.

Rules reporting requirements

Annual reporting on the Rules is a legal requirement for registered drinking water suppliers that follow the Rules. The deadline for annual reporting is tomorrow, **25 February 2026** (or 40 working days from 31 December 2025 depending on local statutory holidays).

If your drinking water supply serves a population of **500 people or under**, there are multiple options for how to submit your reporting:

Excel spreadsheet – Download a spreadsheet reporting template from Hinekōrako and fill in your supply details and reporting. Upload this to Hinekōrako once complete.

- **Submit your results via the webform in Hinekōrako** – current security settings mean the webform times out after one hour. This means you may lose your information if you take longer than one hour to complete your reporting. We are working on a solution for this issue, but if you expect your reporting will take longer than one hour, you may prefer to use the spreadsheet.

The webform is not available for supplies which have elected to follow any level 3 rules.

If your supply serves a population of **500 people or more**, you can submit your reporting via Excel spreadsheet or the application programming interface (API).

Having good processes and procedures help to ensure your reporting is on time and accurate. If you have any questions about reporting on the Rules, please contact our Operations Support team.

Email OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz.

Updates to Hinekōrako

There have been some updates to our self-service portal Hinekōrako in February.

Lapsed registration status to show on Public Register

When the registration renewal is not completed by the due date, the status of the supply on our Public Register of Drinking Water Supplies will change to “Lapsed”. This ensures that consumers are aware that the information contained in the Register may not be up to date (suppliers receive two reminders to complete their renewals before the due date).

Ownership type changed to supply category

We have changed the existing “Ownership Type” field in Hinekōrako to a new field called “Supply Category” and made it compulsory for all suppliers. The options available under this field align with our [Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy](#) and ensure that we send appropriate information to suppliers. For most suppliers, the information will transfer directly to the new equivalent category from the existing type.

If your supply previously had “Other” selected as the Ownership Type, there may be a more suitable category for your supply. For information about the new categories, see our [guidance for registering your water supply](#). To update your supply details, see our [guidance for editing your supply](#).

Water carrier suppliers who previously did not need to provide this information will receive instructions on next steps to add their category directly.

Relationship types

We have streamlined the relationship roles currently available in our system. This involved removing the roles for supply shareholder, employee, director, trustee and other. All current relationships with these categorisations will remain in our system and can be updated to one of the other relationship types by suppliers, if necessary. To update your supply details, see our [guidance for editing your supply](#).

Yours sincerely



Allan Prangnell

**Chief Executive
Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai**

If you're receiving this email update because you're a drinking water supplier or network operator and have duties under the Water Services Act 2021 and you don't 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.