



Factsheet:

Priority projects for 2025

The opportunity for iwi chairs

We are regulating and seeking to improve the water services system across a number of areas this year. Details of this work is set out below. What is your interest and capacity to engage with us in this work?

Drinking water

A continued laser focus on safe drinking water

Council suppliers and several government agencies provide drinking water to 84% (~4.4 million) of people in New Zealand. Most but not all of these supplies have essential bacterial and protozoa treatment measures in place. Over the past year, as a result of our regulatory work to ensure all public supplies have essential multi-barrier protections, around 500,000 more New Zealanders are on track to have access to safer drinking water by the end of 2025. This will continue to be a top focus area for us.

Advice and guidance to support suppliers

This year we intend to increase our support and guidance for drinking water suppliers to help them deliver higher quality water to their communities. Our aim is to ensure this guidance is tailored for different groups of suppliers and is easy to use and understand.

Review of the Rules that apply to drinking water suppliers

We are working at pace to review the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (the Rules) to make them more straightforward for drinking water suppliers to use to meet their responsibilities.

In 2024, for small to medium drinking water supplies (serving 500 people or fewer), we consulted on and updated the Rules. These refreshed rules came into effect 1 January 2025. We have developed supporting information to help suppliers understand what the changes mean for them and further guidance is being developed.

In 2025, we plan to review, consult on and update the Rules for large drinking water supplies, those that serve 500 or more people. There is an opportunity to work with us to ensure that our rules are fit for purpose for all communities and to consider potential Māori approaches for applicability/incorporation.

Increasing our outreach to community and private supplies

Some 14% of New Zealand's drinking water is provided through community and private supplies. Many of these supplies are in remote or rural areas, can be hard to reach, affected by adverse weather and are run by volunteers, whānau or local communities.

We recently partnered with Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou to engage and upskill local drinking water suppliers in Te Tairāwhiti on safe drinking water. Waihanga Ara Rau, the workforce development council for construction and infrastructure, attended to understand future training needs along with other water industry experts. Together, we held workshops covering safe drinking water, how to clean and maintain drinking water systems, drinking water treatment and solutions and water sampling and testing.

We are planning further outreach programmes in 2025. The first is in Te Tai Tokerau in March, with another planned later in the year in the South Island.



Water Services Authority
Taumata Arowai

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Safe water, every day, for everyone.

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Opportunity for greater uptake of cheaper treatment options

Drinking water suppliers have a range of options to support their responsibilities to provide safe drinking water.

One option is to provide centralised treatment and to follow the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. Another option – one that we think many iwi and hapū might want to consider for their communities – is to treat water at the house or building where it is consumed with an “end-point treatment” system and to follow an Acceptable Solution. Acceptable Solutions are currently available for three types of drinking water supplies: roof, spring and bore, and mixed-use rural.

Please let us know if you would like to know more about Acceptable Solutions and how they could be a solution for your community.

Addressing key barriers around mixed-use rural supplies

As mentioned above, Acceptable Solutions are currently available for three types of drinking water supplies: roof, spring and bore, and mixed-use rural.

Supplies are classified as ‘mixed-use rural’ if at least 50% of water supplied is for farm (e.g. stock or irrigation) use and up to 50% is used as drinking water.

We have identified some challenges and opportunities to improve the safety of drinking water for consumers on mixed-use rural supplies and have made resolving these a priority in 2025.

We have established an advisory group to help us understand key barriers around mixed-use rural supplies and how we can overcome them. Our aim is to save drinking water suppliers and consumers time, effort and cost and deliver good quality drinking water for communities.

Wastewater

New national wastewater environmental standards

A key priority for 2025 is the development of New Zealand’s first set of nationally consistent wastewater environmental performance standards.

Most of New Zealand’s wastewater infrastructure was built 30 to 40 years ago and is reaching the end of its useful life. Over the coming decade, 57% of the 353 wastewater consents held by local councils will come up for renewal.

We’ve been working to develop an initial set of standards alongside a number of experts and representatives from councils, the industry, and iwi and hapū. These relate to the discharge of treated wastewater to water and to land, the reuse of biosolids, and to monitoring and reporting wastewater overflows and bypasses.

The proposed standards would set nationally consistent requirements for public wastewater networks and operators to meet. This would drive cost efficiencies and support network owners to better plan for the cost of infrastructure. Standards also aim to make monitoring and compliance for regional councils easier by standardising contaminant limits and monitoring and reporting requirements in consents. We expect they will improve environmental outcomes over time.

We have undertaken specific engagement on the standards with iwi and hapū in the Waikato, Waipā and Whanganui River catchments in line with our Treaty settlement obligations. We are undertaking broader engagement with iwi and hapū, subject to interest and capacity, between February and May.

We plan to consult on the proposed standards in February-April and expect to have the new wastewater standards in place by the third quarter of 2025.

Overall role

A levy is proposed

A proposed new levy to fund the Authority is expected to be in place by 1 July 2025.

Under the proposal, the levy applies to councils and council-controlled organisations that supply water services to the majority of New Zealanders. (Private and community suppliers, such as marae, are not proposed to be subject to the levy.)

The Government recently finished consulting on the proposal and consideration of feedback is underway. If approved by the Government, we would work with councils and CCOs on the levy’s implementation.

Annual national performance reporting published in June

In June 2025, we will publish two reports that cover the state of drinking water and commentary on the challenges facing wastewater and stormwater networks in New Zealand. We produce these reports each year.

- **Drinking Water Regulation Report 2024.** Covers supplier performance based on data and information for the 2024 calendar year provided by registered drinking water suppliers about the safety and sufficiency of the drinking water they supply.
- **Network Environmental Performance Report 2023/24.** Covers data and information for 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 provided by operators of publicly owned drinking water networks and includes some information about urban public wastewater and urban stormwater networks.

Production of these reports, which we look to improve each year, is a significant commitment by us to provide greater public transparency on the changing state of water services in New Zealand.



All information sheets can be located at taumataarowai.govt.nz/national-iwi-chairs-forum on our website.