

Webinar key points

Here are key points from our webinar for whānau, hapū and iwi held on Friday, 3 December 2021.

General

- We should all be able to access safe drinking water from our taps and continue our traditional practices around water, such as mahinga kai, tohi and gathering culturally significant materials, such as raupō and pounamu. We have an obligation to ensure our tamariki can do this now and for generations to come.
- Taumata Arowai is on a new journey to bring water services sharply into focus, to give effect to our aspirations and to listen and engage with whānau, hapū and iwi.
- It's like we are building a house and we've just had the soft opening. There are a lot more rooms to fill out and the information you're giving us and the questions you're asking are helping that process.
- There are many suppliers in New Zealand that are not providing safe drinking water. Last week, 30 water supplies had positive *E. coli* results and two water supplies issued boil water notices. An *E. coli* result means the supply has faecal contamination (e.g. from farm, animal, human or bird waste) and other organisms could be present that could cause serious illness.

Our role

- Our role as a regulator is to ensure all communities have access to safe drinking water. If there is any threat to health, we'll step in and make sure the supplier is doing what they need to be doing to make sure the water they supply is safe.
- To clear up some confusion, Taumata Arowai is not directly involved in the Government's three waters plan to transfer assets from councils to central government entities. Those entities will **not** take over small supplies. Although we are not directly involved, we can answer questions if you have some.
- We're not directly involved in freshwater management or the review of the Resource Management Act, but we're watching them closely as they'll affect our mahi. We are working with other government agencies to align our messages and approach and are happy to provide what information we know.

Supporting marae, papakāinga, and small rural communities

- We know approximately 100 marae and kāinga were registered as drinking water suppliers with the Ministry of Health. But we also know there are far more marae, papakāinga, and iwi/Māori farm blocks that supply water. They all have different challenges, and we want to have conversations with you about these and develop solutions that are place based.

- As we lift the standards and ask people to rise to them, we recognise that many small suppliers have limited funding and capacity. Taumata Arowai is not a funder, but we will actively lobby those parties who will supply the money and assistance. Our aim is to build a co-investment environment that supports Māori success in this area.
- In the future, the proposed large water entities could play a key role in funding and the Department of Internal Affairs currently has a \$30 million fund for marae and small water supplies. We'll lobby for that to be expanded in coming years. Your ongoing advice will inform how much is required.

Empowering kaitiakitanga

- Taumata Arowai does not exercise any authority over land under the Water Services Act. Our role is to enable Māori to exercise your mana whakahaere, mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and kaitiakitanga over your rohe. Te Mana o te Wai provides a pathway for us to recognise and respect this.

A broader view of water quality

- In the past, the Ministry of Health followed the requirements of the World Health Organisation to set the standards for water quality and suitability. We're set up to look at things differently and our legislation directs us to consider mātauranga Māori when looking at drinking water quality. We need your help to do this.

Timeframes

- Taumata Arowai will be in touch with the registered community (those registered with the Ministry of Health immediately before 15 November 2021) in the next three months.
- Mid-January we'll start engagement on the draft Rules, Standards, and Acceptable Solutions. We'd like your feedback. We've got an opportunity to make changes before bringing them into effect around July 2022.
- If you weren't registered with the Ministry of Health before 15 November 2021 you have time. Up to four years to register and a further three years to be fully compliant. If you don't know whether you were registered, then contact us.

We need your help and engagement

- We're very sincere about the desire to talk with you and get your feedback about our mahi. The conversations we're starting will continue to build over the coming decades so that the health of our communities and environment are improved and enhanced.
- For more information, please visit our website www.taumataarowai.govt.nz or email info@taumataarowai.govt.nz with your questions.