

Hawke's Bay Private Drinking Water Supply Pilot

Project Overview

30 November 2021



Government has introduced new regulations for those who provide drinking water to people. The Water Services Act (2021) now asks more of councils and private drinking water suppliers. If you supply drinking water from a private water source such as a bore, spring, stream, river or roof to a house other than your own, this will include you.

The **Water Services Act 2021** seeks to ensure that drinking water suppliers provide safe drinking water to consumers through a new drinking water regulatory and risk management framework.

The Act requires more of councils and private drinking water suppliers.

- At least once every three years, councils are required to undertake drinking water supply assessments for their communities to determine water supply demand, safety, quality, and any potential risks. Assessments must include communities who receive drinking water services from councils and also other drinking water suppliers/arrangements (including households within those communities).
- By 2028, all unregistered drinking water suppliers will need to meet the new Water Services Act, drinking water standards, and rules, or be using an acceptable solution (defined in the Act).
- There are also new obligations registered drinking water suppliers need to meet.

Hawke's Bay's Private Water Supply Pilot Project Objectives

The Hawke's Bay Councils (Napier City Council, Hastings District Council, Wairoa District Council, and Central Hawke's Bay District Council) want to partner with private drinking water suppliers to establish the best approach to help us all meet our new obligations under the Water Services Act.

This project provides a test platform for both council and drinking water suppliers to develop a methodology and framework so we can meet our respective obligations going forward.

We want identify the extent of private drinking water suppliers across Hawke's Bay and work with a sample to:

- Better understand our communities' suppliers, their expectations and needs
- Understand how the new regulations might be best implemented
- Develop together and trial a framework for water supply

An important project for Private Drinking Water Suppliers

This project will help suppliers by:

- Increase understanding of what the Water Services Act changes mean for them and the community they provide drinking water to.
- A technical assessment on their drinking water supply and recommendations to help them plan for meeting their obligations.
- Provide an opportunity to give feedback on the implications of the proposed regulations and acceptable solutions to Taumata Arowai (the regulator).



New obligations for all drinking water suppliers

- The new Water Services Act (2021) intends to ensure that drinking water suppliers provide safe drinking water, through a regulatory framework designed to improve the quality of water services in New Zealand.
- In March 2021, the government set up Taumata Arowai as a dedicated water services regulator.
- Taumata Arowai has drafted new rules and standards including 'Acceptable Solutions', intended to provide a straightforward approach which automatically complies.
- Taumata Arowai will be consulting on their draft Acceptable Solutions, drinking water standards and operational compliance rules in early 2022 and expect to have these in place by 1 July 2022.
- By 2025, all currently unregistered drinking water suppliers must register their supply with Taumata Arowai.
- By 2028, all currently unregistered drinking water suppliers will need to meet the Water Services Act, new drinking water standards and operational compliance rules, or be using an Acceptable Solution.
- By November 2022, currently registered suppliers must have submitted a water safety plan, including a source water risk management plan, with Taumata Arowai.



Defining a Drinking Water Supplier:

If you own or operate a water supply that is being used as drinking water by people outside of your own home, you are a drinking water supplier and will have responsibilities under the Water Services Act 2021.



New obligations for Councils

The Water Services Act (2021) amends Section 125 of the Local Government Act and introduces a new requirement for Councils (territorial authorities) to undertake water supply assessments of drinking water services.

The assessments require Councils to:

- Identify communities that receive a drinking water service
- Describe the nature of the drinking water service
- Assess whether the water is sufficient to meet current and future demands
- Describe the safety and quality of the drinking-water and identify any potential public health risks
- Assess consequences if the community loses access to the service and outline a plan to provide for ongoing access

Following the assessment, a Council must:

- Make the assessment public and provide a copy to Taumata Arowai (the national drinking-water regulator)
- Notify Taumata Arowai if any suppliers are, or appear to be, failing to meet statutory obligations, any absence or deficiency in a drinking-water service, and if there is a risk of a water supplier ceasing to operate
- Consider any findings in relation to the Council's current and future Infrastructure Strategy, Long Term Plan and District Plan.

Where suppliers and communities face significant problems or potential problems with their drinking-water services, Taumata Arowai may require the Council to work with them, the supplier and consumers to provide a solution to the problem. This may include taking over the management and operations for the drinking water service or providing drinking-water through an alternative arrangement.

The Department of Internal Affairs has estimated that there may be over 75,000 private water supplies across the country. There could be around 2,700 private water supplies in the region, based on the current population of Hawke's Bay.

