

Hawke's Bay Private Drinking Water Supply Pilot

Project Overview

3 November 2021



As part of its three waters reform programme, Government has introduced new regulations for drinking water across the country.

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, all councils will be required to identify drinking water suppliers in their communities and carry out drinking assessments to determine water supply demand, safety, quality, and any potential risks.
- By 2028, all unregistered drinking water suppliers, including rural, marae, and papakainga 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 **representative 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 assessments
- Support our communities through a contestable fund to assist participants in this pilot project with costs associated with new regulations.



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, including rural, marae and papakainga 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.





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 & acceptable solutions directly to Taumata Arowai (the regulator).
- The opportunity to apply for funding via a Council grant to help meet the requirements of the Act and new standards.

Funding to support Private Drinking Water Suppliers

Private drinking water suppliers can apply to Council for a 'Private Drinking Water Supplier Fund' grant.

Provided as part of the governments COVID -19 stimulus funding for three waters, the total funding available is **\$600,000** apportioned as follows:

- Wairoa District Council - \$150,000
- Napier City Council - \$150,000
- Hastings District Council \$150,000
- Central Hawke's Bay District Council \$150,000

This grant fund is **contestable**, so success will depend on the application meeting the grant criteria, the priority of the grant purpose compared with others, and the grant money available. The grant will open for applications on **1 December 2021** and close **30 April 2022**.

Potential fund uses

- Water quality testing
- Water safety plan creation/updates
- Small water system equipment or upgrades
- Drinking water supply training courses
- Installing systems to prevent water backflow
- New water tanks
- New water source investigation
- Preparing operations and maintenance manuals and standard operating procedures

Funding eligibility

- Applicants will demonstrate alignment with one or more of the stated Hawke's Bay project objectives.
- Applicants must show intent to engage with Councils and be transparent about the performance of their drinking water & associated systems.
- Applications will support the objectives of the Water Services Act 2021 for the continuous improvement of the quality of drinking water services.
- If the applicant is an individual they must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident of New Zealand; if the application is from a group or organisation, the Private Drinking Water Supply must be based in the Hawke's Bay region.
- For further details & grant funding applications go to: <https://www.hb3waters.nz/hawkes-bay-stimulus-projects>

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.

Defining a Drinking Water Supplier:

If you own or operate a water supply (that you know, or ought reasonably to know) 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.