
SUMMER GARDEN WATERING WATER RESTRICTIONS

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to recommend to the Council to:

1. Delegate the decision of imposing water restrictions to the Chief Executive Officer to the 30 June 2013 in order to manage the current demand on the region's scarce water resource;
2. Seek support for a review of section 8.3 of the Water Services Bylaw 2012 which would have the intent of passing the delegations of imposing water restrictions from the Council to the Chief Executive as and when required.

2. Executive summary

Wellington City Council uses a variety of demand management tools to protect the security of supply enjoyed by the city's residents and businesses.

There are a number of mechanisms which support the demand management of our water resource across the city and region. These currently include;

- Year round garden watering restrictions
- Active leak detection programmes
- Annual maintenance and renewals programmes

The above activities are augmented with the adoption of a formal water conservation programme that is directed at Council, residential and commercial consumption.

The use of short term demand management tools, usually in the form of outside use restrictions, is entrenched in water supply management practices around the world.

In extended periods of warmer and drier weather, the Council needs to be in a position to respond quickly to changing demand patterns and supply capabilities in line with the other territorial authorities that rely on the region's bulk water supply.

The recommendations contained within this paper will enable Council to respond promptly to changing short term demand issues and provide Council and the community with the confidence that the security of the water supply is being appropriately managed.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Delegate the decision of imposing water restrictions to the Chief Executive Officer from this date until the 30 June 2013.*
- 3. Seek support for a review of section 8.3 of the Water Services Bylaw 2012 which would have the intent of passing the delegations of imposing water restrictions from the Council to the Chief Executive as and when required.*

4. Background

Wellington's regional drinking water network, as a "run of river" supply, is vulnerable to prolonged warm and dry periods. The seismic strengthening and upsizing of one of the Stuart Macaskill lakes has exasperated the situation this summer with limited storage available to provide the normal security of supply.

The use of limited garden watering restrictions has been the region's preferred practice for addressing short-term demand concerns with an option for escalating the restrictions as required.

Regionally the use of garden water sprinkler hours was aligned in 2009¹ to reflect garden watering on alternate days (depending on the property street number) between the hours of 6am-8am and 7pm-9pm.

In 2012, a Water Supply Bylaw was adopted to replace the Water Charter (from 2008). This was done to allow demand management initiatives to be more readily applied and to remove operational difficulties that had arisen subsequent to the repeal of the Council's previous Water Bylaw. Currently the Water Bylaw, best demonstrated by the current circumstances, does not allow for the quick operational responses to imposing water restrictions as required.

It is suggested that an amendment to the bylaw is investigated, and if agreed to with the Council, any proposed amendments consulted on alongside the 2013/14 Draft Annual Plan process.

5. Discussion

The escalation of watering restrictions is considered within the Council to be a short-term demand management tool that is used alongside the demand management programmes of active leak detection, renewals, maintenance programmes and conservation programmes during high demand periods.

¹ Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 August 2009

The regional approach for demand management over summer or high demand periods sees joint advertising across the four City Councils, coordinated by Greater Wellington Regional Council's bulk water division. All decisions are based on current supply conditions (river flows, aquifer levels and storage lake levels) against long-term NIWA weather forecasting.

This is a risk based approach that is based on the region's ability to meet its agreed water supply level of service.

5.1 Year round garden watering restrictions

Wellington has operated, albeit informally of late, year round garden watering restrictions. These allow for:

"Sprinklers and garden hoses 6am - 8am and 7pm - 9pm on alternate days. If you have an even-numbered address, you can use sprinklers on even days of the month and vice versa"

"A hand held garden hose or watering-can/bucket can be used at any time"

As Wellington's winter/summer consumption patterns do not vary significantly it has been customary practice that these restrictions have been adopted all year round.

Supporting this approach, investigations have demonstrated there is no empirical evidence, either local or international, indicating alternate watering days will unduly affect residents (or their gardens and lawns).

5.2 Water use restriction schedule

The format for increased controls or restrictions on outside water use sees a gradual increase as per the following schedule.

It is important to note that there are no intentions, or provisions proposed, that would allow controls or restrictions on anything other than outdoor consumption.

1. Base Level

- Standard alternate day garden watering allowances / Hand held hose use
- "Year-round restrictions apply. Use sprinklers and garden hoses 6am - 8am and 7pm - 9pm on alternate days. If you have an even-numbered address, you can use sprinklers on even days of the month and vice versa"²
- "Hand held hose and watering cans/buckets can be used at any time".

² <http://wellington.govt.nz/services/environment-and-waste/water/water-restrictions>

2. **Level One**
 - Standard alternate day garden watering allowances / Hand held hose use
 - Water Patrols (providing advice on allowed watering hours)
 - Joint advertising across Councils
3. **Level Two**
 - Base Level and Level One, plus,
 - Increased advertising*
 - Increased use of water patrols
4. **Level Three**
 - Level Two, plus,
 - Increased advertising (restrictions/leak reporting) and water patrols
 - Ban on garden sprinklers and unattended irrigation systems (watering only by hand)
5. **Level Four**
 - Level Three, plus,
 - Increased advertising (restrictions/leak reporting) and water patrols
 - Ban on domestic hose use (watering-can/bucket use only)
6. **Level Five**
 - Level Four, plus,
 - Increased advertising (restrictions/leak reporting) and water patrols
 - Ban on all domestic outdoor water use (other than for emergencies)
 - Increased advertising provides for increased frequency and urgency within the message.

5.3 Escalation of restrictions

Wellington's historic experience with dry, warm periods resulting in higher than usual demand patterns indicate it is possible spikes in consumption can very quickly influence the ability of the Councils to supply water at the agreed levels of service.

These spikes can be partially countered by the use of additional restrictions that extend beyond Wellington City's *Base Level* controls already in place.

For the summer of 2013, and the extended dry period currently being experienced, the council delegations to the Chief Executive Officer will enable the use of the tiered restriction structure contained in section 5.2.

The restrictions are applicable to outside water use only and will include a clear public notification process of any variation in the level of restriction currently in place.

5.4 Consultation and Engagement

Public consultation or engagement has not been carried out on the escalation of watering restrictions over the 2013 summer period due to relatively short lead in time available to officers.

In relation to the correction of the bylaw to clarify the process for the escalation of outside watering restrictions it is recommended that this is carried out as part of the draft Annual Plan consultation process.

5.5 Financial considerations

There are no financial implications for Council requiring consideration.

5.6 Climate change impacts and considerations

The anticipated effects of climate change on water supply demand management have been factored into Council's strategic planning, Asset Management Plans and supporting documents.

The recommendations contained within this paper support the approach of demand management to mitigate the effects of climate change on the City's water supply requirements.

5.7 Long-term plan considerations

Water conservation is an ingrained theme within the Environment section of the Long-Term Plan. There are no impacts for the Long-Term Plan requiring consideration.

6. Conclusion

In order to maintain an appropriate level of readiness in dealing with increased demand and reduced supply, it is important that Council is able to respond promptly alongside the other Councils that rely on the region's bulk water supply network.

The mechanisms offered within this paper deal with the current short-term water restriction issues and will also provide a solution to what has now been identified as a long-term issue if not rectified.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

The recommendations contained in this paper support the strategic direction of the Eco City strategy and the Living City policy. The use of year round garden watering restrictions is also inherent with the strategic goals of the Council's "Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan".

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

There are no impacts on the Long-Term or Annual Plan nor are there financial implications.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The recommendations contained in this paper are consistent with Treaty of Waitangi principles and considerations.

4) Decision-making

This is not a significant decision – the report identifies and corrects an administrative oversight with no discernible negative effects being placed on an individual or the community.

5) Consultation

(a) General consultation

No consultation with the public was carried out on the matters or recommendations contained in this report.

(b) Consultation with Maori

No consultation with Mana whenua was carried out on the matters or recommendations contained in this report.

6) Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is considered to be consistent with existing Council policies.