

1.0 Overview

1.1 Activity description

The water supply network is managed by the Council to ensure both cities have high-quality water available at all times for drinking and other household and business uses, and for emergencies such as fire fighting. The Council aims to ensure this network is managed as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

Wellington has a water network that includes 81 reservoirs and tanks, 34 water pumping stations, more than 7300 hydrants and about 1000km of underground pipes.

A role of Council is to promote water conservation through public education efforts and by installing and reading water meters. Meters allow trends in water consumption to be monitored and assist with the detection of leaks. Commercial customers are charged for water used and the meters also provide an incentive for them not to waste water.

The water network is managed in accordance with the water asset management plan, which ensures detailed service level requirements such as network condition and capacity, water quality standards, continuity of supply, response to complaints, and criteria for upgrades and renewals are met. Under the plan, we detail how we will comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements at all times.

Key service level requirements and underlying standards include:

- Drinking water supplied meets relevant New Zealand Standards.
- All parts of the network should have sufficient capacity for customer supply and fire-fighting requirements. Pipes that do not meet these requirements are upgraded. We replace about 12.5km of pipeline a year. This is about one percent of the network.
- All parts of the network should have at least 24 hours storage capability in case of emergency.

This plan covers the ten year planning period from 2009/10 to 2018/19.

1.2 Council involvement

A secure supply of water is a fundamental requirement to protect the health and wellbeing of the community, including key support for fire protection and business development.

In urban areas potable water supply are most effectively supplied by means of reticulated (piped) community water supply. This allows the costs associated with maintaining high standards and efficient infrastructure to be spread over a wide population. The existing water supply system has been developed and built up over many years as a public system to serve the needs of the community.

The Wellington City Council manages Wellington's water supply because:

- The activity directly supports the achievement of a number of community outcomes (outcomes the Wellington community believe describe the city they wish to live in). It also directly supports the achievement of Council outcome nine (safer – protecting public health and the environment), and supports economic growth of the community.
- The Council can provide a specified level of service in a cost-effective manner.

- The Local Government Act 2002 (section 130) requires the Council to continue to provide water services and maintain its capacity to do so.
- The Health Act 1956, (sections 23 and 29) requires Council to 'improve, promote and protect public health' within the district as necessary.
- The community, through the community outcome process, has strongly indicated its support of Council involvement to sustainably manage the water supply activity to protect public and environmental health and to actively reduce adverse environmental impacts.

1.3 Key water supply issues

Key water supply issues identified by the Wellington City Council which are being addressed are:

- **Levels of service.** The level of service provided to Wellington City by the water supply network is consistent with current industry standards and levels of service provided by other councils in New Zealand and analysis indicates the current level of service broadly satisfies community expectations. The Council will continue to gather data to better describe the actual level of service provided and determine resident satisfaction with a greater level of confidence.
- **Future change.** The effects of future climate change are uncertain, although warmer temperatures and increased periods of little to no rainfall are expected. Population growth and urbanisation are expected to continue. The projected increase in demand for water from these changes requires active management, recognising that planning for change and implementing identified initiatives takes time.
- **Risk of natural disaster.** A catastrophic natural disaster, such as a major earthquake, could limit the ability to provide clean, wholesome water to the community. Reinstating systems to distribute drinking water, both temporarily and permanently, would be costly and would take considerable time.
- **Continuous improvement.** The Council recognises the fundamental need to continually improve its asset management processes. Water supply services must be provided at agreed service levels and with increasing efficiency to reduce costs, reduce resource use and minimise environmental impacts.