

# Kōrero Wai

Number 3

## Welcoming our Kaimahi to Waikato Waters

Across the next 18 months, around 170 kaimahi/staff from our shareholding councils will transition into Waikato Waters. This is one of the most important steps in standing up a water organisation that puts people first - our people, our communities, and our wai.

From field operators to project managers, asset managers to engineers and technicians to corporate specialists - our people will join a larger, regionally connected enterprise, and while Waikato Waters brings scale, many kaimahi/staff (especially field operators) will continue their essential mahi within

their home communities - protecting public health and keeping water flowing safely and sustainably. Our Establishment Team is moving at pace to ensure Waikato Waters is ready on 1 July 2026 - a place where kaimahi/staff feel welcomed, supported, and part of a purpose driven organisation designed for the future of water in the Waikato.

As Waikato Waters moves from establishment into transformation, new roles, new skill pathways, and new opportunities will emerge. This is an exciting time to be part of something being built from the ground up, with people and purpose at the centre.



## Kanohi Ki Te Kanohi - Roadshows

Throughout December, the Establishment Team met with council kaimahi/staff across the rohe through on-the-ground roadshows. These conversations allowed staff to hear directly about Waikato Waters, ask questions and provide feedback on the draft organisation structure.

The final organisation structure will be ready by the end of February.



## The journey to Waikato Waters vision

### Year 1 Establishment

Solid foundations – bringing all six water businesses together

### Years 2-3 Transition

Building the new entity and establishing new ways of doing things

### Years 4-5 Efficiency

Benefiting from scale and delivering value

### Years 5+ Transformation

Delivering on vision and strategic outcomes

# Building one system, one approach

Our digital and operational systems are the backbone of Day One readiness, and work is progressing quickly.

- Infor has been confirmed as our single system for asset management, finance, and HR.
- Datacom has been selected for payroll.
- Work continues with councils to validate the operational technology and SCADA approach for Day One.
- A shared services model for GIS is also being explored, with more detail to come in the new year.

This single-system thinking is central for adding value to customers and supporting staff, achieving efficiencies and consistency across our seven-council region.



## Shareholder Representative Forum (SRF) update

The Shareholder Representative Forum - made up of the mayors (or their delegates) from each of the seven shareholding councils - represents the ownership voice for Waikato Waters.
















They will issue a Statement of Expectations that guides the future Board's strategic direction.

### Key updates:

- recruitment for additional directors begins in the first half of 2026, completing the five-member Board
- the SRF next meets in March to begin drafting the Statement of Expectations.

Don McLeod has been confirmed as the Independent Chair of the SRF. Steph O'Sullivan has been confirmed as Chair of the Chief Executive Working Party.

## Assets being transferred to Waikato Waters

| Activity  | Asset   |  HAURAKI<br>DISTRICT COUNCIL |  te kaitiaki<br>DISTRICT COUNCIL |  ŌTOROHANGA<br>DISTRICT COUNCIL |  South<br>Waikato<br>DISTRICT COUNCIL |  Waipā<br>DISTRICT COUNCIL |  Waitomo<br>DISTRICT COUNCIL | Total |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|-------|
|  Water Supply |  Treatment Plant         | 4   | 10  | 6  | 6  | 6   | 4   | 36    |
|   |  Reservoir/Tank          | 3   | 11  | 18   | 11   | 18  | 17  | 78    |
|   |  Pump Station            | 5   | 17  | 20   | 7  | 14  | 4   | 67    |
|   |  Pipes (kms) approximate | 583   | 374   | 279  | 283  | 765   | 86  | 2,370 |
|  Wastewater   |  Treatment Plant         | 7   | 6   | 1  | 4  | 2   | 4   | 24    |
|   |  Pump Station            | 51  | 57  | 16   | 19   | 68  | 10  | 221   |
|   |  Pipes (kms) approximate | 179   | 252   | 46   | 167  | 371   | 66  | 1,081 |



# Our new website - a refreshed home for Waikato Waters

We've recently refreshed the Waikato Waters website. This update is about improving clarity - giving customers, kaimahi/staff and stakeholders a simple, welcoming place to learn about our journey and what's coming next.

The updated content introduces Waikato Waters in a way that feels both local and future focused, highlighting:

- who we are - a locally led, regionally connected water organisation built on partnership and shared purpose
- why we exist - to protect our wai, care for our people, and support thriving, resilient communities across the Waikato
- how we work - side by side with councils, iwi, communities, contractors, and our workforce to deliver safe, sustainable water services.

## What's next for the website?

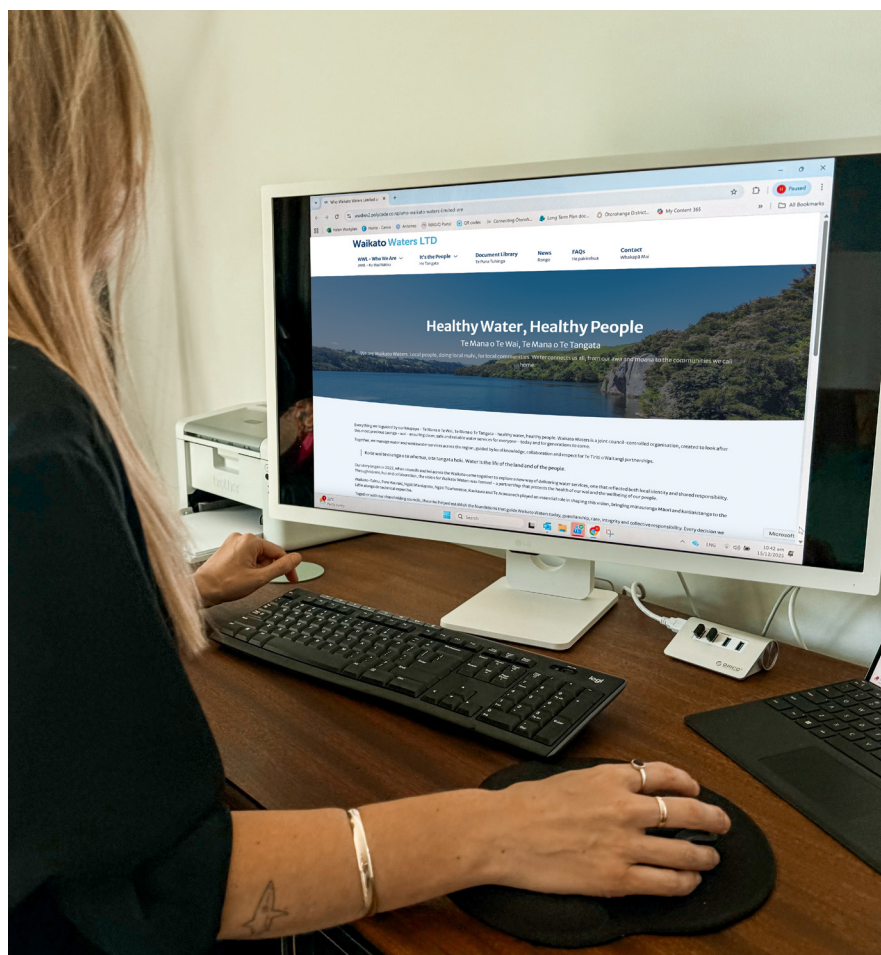
We're now moving into the next phase - designing the full look and feel and expanding the content to serve our people - kaimahi/staff,

potential employees, customers, suppliers and partners.

This next stage will include:

- a refreshed visual identity that reflects our values and story
- more detailed service and operational information
- dedicated information for transitioning kaimahi/staff
- a recruitment hub showcasing career pathways
- clear guidance for contractors and suppliers
- customer friendly explanations of billing, water quality, emergencies, and everyday water use.

The website will grow alongside the organisation - becoming a central place for updates, tools and the stories of Waikato communities caring for their wai.



## Waikato Waters establishment focus

The Establishment Team is focused on standing up an entity that will become "a best-in-class water organisation with customers at the heart of everything we do".

To get to best in class requires laying solid foundations for a significant and new Waikato entity\* by 1 July 2026. The task is complex and challenging – particularly with a range of existing teams, systems, assets and operational models to bring together in such a short space of time.

Key areas of focus currently include:

- the successful transfer of staff
- establishing clear pathways to ensure there is seamless customer service
- securing available data on all assets, debt, and liabilities
- establishing and aligning systems, standards and compliance eg payroll, health and safety, GIS, finance, human resources, consenting
- actions for incident management/customer response post-July are clear
- confirming funding streams are in place.

\*By mid-2027, Waikato Waters will serve 130,000 people, have assets around \$1.6 billion, generate \$155m in revenue, and manage \$3.3-\$3.6 billion in infrastructure investment over the next decade.



# Countdown to day one

Here's a snapshot of what's coming in the next three months.

- Final organisation design
- Offers to council kaimahi/staff
- Health and Safety Framework
- Customer service protocols
- Transfer Agreements with councils
- Incident Management Framework
- Initial Strategic Asset Management Plan
- Initial Capital Programme
- Initial IT Strategy
- Procurement Policy
- LGFA funding agreement
- Emergency services engagement model
- Appointment of Waikato Waters Chief Executive
- Recruitment of other executive roles

# Your questions answered



## Is Waikato Waters going to be privatised?

No. Every pipe, pump station, and treatment plant remains publicly owned and cannot ever be sold or privatised. Our water infrastructure exists solely to serve the people of Waikato and to protect our natural taonga.



## When will I get my first Waikato Waters bill?

From 1 July 2026, water and wastewater charges will appear as separate items on your rates bill, reflecting costs already identified by councils in their Long Term Plans. Waikato Waters begins direct charging from 1 July 2027.



## Will charges increase?

Yes - but not because Waikato Waters is being created. Councils have already forecast moderate to significant increases to address aging infrastructure, growth, and new regulatory standards. Waikato Waters modelling indicates potential savings of around \$400m across 15 years, but these take time to realise.



Paeroa Wastewater Treatment Plant