

## By email

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Tēnā koe Dame Kerry

## Regional Collaboration of Water Services Delivery Plan

Congratulations on your new role as Chair of the Wellington Water Services Advisory Group.

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to clarify our position as we enter a joint collaborative process for the intended Water Services Delivery Plan.

GWRC believes that reform of the three waters sector is overdue and fully support efforts to better govern and manage water assets. We are keen to explore options for regional collaboration of water services, which may include transferring ownership of assets related to the Wellington Metropolitan Bulk Water Supply. However, under any proposed model for regional water services, GWRC will retain its function as the regional environmental regulator under the Resource Management Act 1991, along with all associated duties and powers.

GWRC is of the view that the potential creation of a new regional entity to govern and manage water assets and operations, will effectively replace the need for GWRC's involvement in the provision of bulk water to the Wellington metropolitan area. If a new regional entity eventuates then this is the point at which GWRC may seek to exit the current arrangement put in place by the Wellington Water Board Act 1972 (WWBA). GWRC is only likely to remain if it cannot be satisfied that the new set of arrangements are in the best interests of the community, within the Metropolitan area.

The functions and duties that currently fall to GWRC under the WWBA will need to be reallocated to and/or replaced by any new water entity, with some functions potentially remaining with GWRC. We require the Hutt and Wainuiomata Water Collection Areas be retained in GWRC ownership due to their wider values (e.g., biodiversity & recreation). We aim to agree on management arrangements for these assets, that provide for operations on similar terms and conditions as currently exist, and for joint consideration of future proposals.

In assessing options for a new water services model, we seek to ensure that any new entity has the structural and operational factors needed for success. We believe that the region can agree on a new model that will provide better water services for Wellingtonians. However, we will require

evidence that a new model will provide for better and more sustainable asset management before considering the transfer of our assets.

If we were to release responsibilities and assets to a new entity, a suitable financial arrangement would need to be agreed upon. GWRC will need to be able to transfer the bulk water supply assets and the associated debt.

We agree to enter the initial design phase with the above position stated and clear to the other working parties. We are committed to maintaining the highest level of asset management for our bulk water assets while new regional water arrangements are developed. We will want to be assured that a new model will have this same focus.

We wish to strengthen the level of involvement and influence that Iwi / Māori partners have at all levels of the design process and in any proposed new model. We acknowledge that policy, legislation, and practice have consistently undervalued Māori rights and interests in water.

Lastly the management of stormwater remains a vexed issue which needs careful consideration. Please ensure that this issue does not “fall off” the work programme.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. We look forward to working together to improve water services for our region.

Ngā mihi



**Daran Ponter**  
Council Chair

CC: Members of the Wellington Water Services Advisory Group