

MEDIA RELEASE

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Less than one year to go to water services change in Wairarapa-Tararua

With less than 12 months to go until the first day of operations, the countdown is on for Waiti Waters, Wairarapa-Tararua's new water services provider.

Waiti Waters will go live on 1 July 2027. Officially launched and named in April this year, work has been progressing on the transition from four separate district council water services providers to a single council-owned organisation.

Masterton, Tararua, Carterton and South Wairarapa district councils have partnered with Rangitāne and Ngāti Kahungunu to establish the entity which is governed by a Board of Directors.

Chaired by experienced governance leader and Wairarapa local Adrienne Young-Cooper, the Board is made up of directors Clive Rundle, Jo Hayes, Maria Robertson and Sir Paul Collins. Recruitment for the chief executive is also underway, with the successful candidate expected to start with the organisation by September.

Young-Cooper said that while there is still work ahead to ensure a smooth transition, strong progress has been made in recent months, and a significant emphasis had been placed on learning more about the current infrastructure across the region.

"For the Board, one of our priorities is to get out and about in the region over the transition period to get to know the future staff of Waiti Waters, and to build an understanding of the assets and services that will be transferred to Waiti Waters from July next year," she said.

So far, the Board members have visited Frederick Street Water Treatment Plant (Carterton), Carterton Wastewater Treatment Plant, Martinborough Wastewater Treatment Plant, Dannevirke Oringi Tararua Alliance Operations Centre, and the Dannevirke Impounded Water Supply and Water Treatment Plant. A visit to the Homebush wastewater treatment plant in Masterton is planned in coming weeks.

"With less than a year to go before water services pass from the four Councils' control to Waiti Waters, our focus is on building an organisation that can do the job – and do it well," Young-Cooper said.

"We are actively building the foundations of our organisation, with a current focus on getting our leadership in place and supporting the transfer of staff from the four Councils, with employment pathways now confirmed for water services teams."

Work is continuing on the Waiti Waters' financial strategy, including preparations to join the Local Government Funding Agency, and planning for the Water Services Strategy which will set out Waiti Waters' 10-year delivery plan and will be available for public engagement next

year. Other work is also progressing on the procurement of new finance and billing systems and securing a new head office location, establishing a permanent base for the organisation in the region.

“As a Board we are committed to working closely with Councils and iwi partners to ensure the region benefits from this change. With the transition work for water’s staff from the Councils’ now well progressed, we remain focused on ensuring we deliver safe, reliable, cost-effective water services, that we are customer and community centred, and that we take opportunities to contribute to regional growth and employment as a large locally based infrastructure provider.”

From day one, Waiti Waters will serve around 25,000 connections across the four districts. It will also manage water assets valued at about \$700 million and deliver a capital investment programme of \$400 million over the next decade.

The network includes:

- 1,322 kilometres of pipes
- 14 reservoirs supplying drinking water
- 69 pump stations
- 31 water and wastewater treatment plants across the four districts

Until 1 July 2027, the four Councils remain responsible for water services delivery and customers can continue to contact their Councils in the usual ways.

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