

8 May 2024

OIA IRO-593

[REDACTED]

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Official information request regarding 'Water Woes' (our ref: OIA IRO-598)

Thank you for your official information request dated Thursday 25 January 2024. On Friday 8 March 2024 we communicated our decision to grant your request. I apologise for the time it has taken to respond to you.

You requested the following;

- *I assume pipework in new subdivisions is being installed to an acceptable standard so is it old pipework that is the problem. It is obvious that all faulty pipework cannot be replaced overnight so has a start been made on replacing some of the problem areas?*
- *How much money is being spent in fixing leaks compared with money spent replacing ancient problem pipes.*
- *Has it been evaluated which areas have to be replaced with new piping?*
- *Where are the leaks occurring.*
- *Galv pipes, Plastic pipes, valves, fittings.*
Is the water pressure to high in some areas?
- *There has been talk that additional water storage may be required.*
If all the leaks were fixed would there be sufficient water storage capacity to sever the population that the lakes are required to serve?
- *Are Wellington Water repairing all leaks with their own staff or are they employing Subcontractors to assist with leak repairs. Is it a money shortage or labour shortage that the work is taking so long?*
- *The Post 25 Jan (Pipes are calling for more cash). Is it just cash required and is there enough labour available.*

You also noted that “[you are] a Lower Hutt Resident and would be interested in answers to the above in particular as it affects Lower Hutt”.

Please see our responses to your questions in the appendix of this letter.

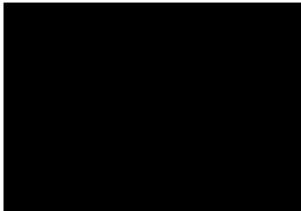
Information about water usage in the Wellington Region can be found here:
<https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/resources/maps/supply-map/>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi,



Group Manager, Network Strategy and Planning



**Head of Customer Experience
Customer Operations Group**

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www.wellingtonwater.co.nz

Our water, our future.

Wellington Water is owned by the Hutt, Porirua, Upper Hutt and Wellington City Councils, South Wairarapa District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council. We manage their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services.

Question One: I assume pipework in new subdivisions is being installed to an acceptable standard so is it old pipework that is the problem. It is obvious that all faulty pipework cannot be replaced overnight so has a start been made on replacing some of the problem areas?

Answer...

Yes. Further information is provided below.

Question Two: How much money is being spent in fixing leaks compared with money spent replacing ancient problem pipes.

Answer...

Leak Repair Spend versus Pipe Renewal Spend

Opex (leak repair) financials below:

Council OPEX Budgets / LTP	Original 23/24 Budget	*Increased 23/24 Budget (Confirmed Q2)
HCC – Drinking Water – Reactive Maintenance – Network	4,779,698	6,279,698

This represents the budgets available for drinking water network response and repairs. It does not include leak detection or planned maintenance activities.

*Please also note that the Quarter Two (Q2) 2023-24 Financial Year (FY) budget column above includes an additional \$1.5 million provided by Hutt City Council to support increasing the leak repair activity being undertaken.

Capex (Pipe Renewals) financials below:

Water Type	Programme	FY23-24 \$
Drinking Water	Pipe Network Renewals	16,040,000

Question Three: Has it been evaluated which areas have to be replaced with new piping?

Answer...

We use a number of methods to determine which areas need to be replaced:

- We set the overall strategic approach to pipework renewals based on expected lifespans for different pipes and material types and provide long term planning advice on this basis.
- For critical pipes where a failure of the pipe would lead to a loss of service to large parts of the system (and therefore a large number of customers) we use non-destructive condition assessment techniques to more accurately determine the expected remaining life, and plan for their renewal prior to failure.
- For non-critical pipes, we prioritise pipes for renewal using a range of factors including age, material, expected condition, and failure history.

The rate of renewals is limited by the funding available.

In addition to renewing pipes because of age, we also undertake growth and catchment studies to understand how well the pipe network is performing. Where we identify sections of the network where the demand has increased beyond its design capacity, or where significant amounts of new development is expected, we may recommend upgrades to replace existing pipes.

Question Four: Where are the leaks occurring.

Answer...

Across the network. Visit our job status map [here](#).

Question Five: Galv pipes, Plastic pipes, valves, fittings. Is the water pressure too high in some areas?

Answer...

Yes. Wellington Water has an ongoing program of pressure management improvements to reduce areas of high pressure to within the target level of service (25 – 90m pressure).

Question Six: There has been talk that additional water storage may be required. If all the leaks were fixed would there be sufficient water storage capacity to serve the population that the lakes are required to serve?

Answer...

To balance supply and demand over the next 30 years we estimate the region we will need to achieve savings of around 100 million litres per day due to population growth and reductions in water take expected at re-consenting due to overallocation of the catchments. We expect

much of this deficit will come from water loss reduction (around 40 million litres per day), however this is not sufficient without the additional benefit of residential metering and construction of additional storage lakes.

The proposed additional storage lakes at Te Marua are therefore needed as a key part of addressing projected growth in demand in the next 20 to 30 years, and are expected to take about 10 years to implement and commission.

It's also important to understand that it is not possible or economically feasible to eliminate all leakage and water loss from the water supply entirely, and that fixing leaks is an ongoing process. Our strategy includes reducing network water loss by around 20 million litres per day by the mid-2030s and by a further 20 million litres per day by the mid-2050s.

Investment in additional source capacity and a reduction in demand achieved through residential metering is needed in addition to the water loss reduction activities to achieve a sustainable water supply. This forms the basis of the advice put forward to our client councils to inform the Long-term Planning process.

Question Seven: Are Wellington Water repairing all leaks with their own staff or are they employing Subcontractors to assist with leak repairs. Is it a money shortage or labour shortage that the work is taking so long?

Answer...

There is a mix of Wellington Water staff and Sub Contractors fixing leaks.

There are a number of matters that impact on the time it takes to repair a leak, funding and labour are one. Priority, location, other services in the proximity and associated permits required are others. All these matters in combination dictate the time it can take to repair a leak.

Question Eight: The Post 25 Jan (Pipes are calling for more cash). Is it just cash required and is there enough labour available.

Answer...

See answer to Question Seven. Increased investment allows further development, training, and growth of resources needed to meet the water loss challenge and bring down leakage to a sustainable level. However, this is a long-term process requiring a sustained level of increased investment to achieve.