

# Terms of Reference for Hutt City Council and Wellington Water Limited Review of the slip at Point Howard

The Chief Executive of Wellington Water Limited (WWL) has appointed Charles Barker, Director Regulatory Services, Regulatory Services Directorate (RSD) and the Chief Executive of Hutt City Council (HCC) has appointed Bruce Hodgins, Strategic Advisor to undertake a joint review of the circumstances surrounding the slip that occurred at 78 Howard Road, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt on 14 March 2023. Accordingly, the review will report to the Chief Executives of WWL and HCC.

## Background

On 14 March 2023, a slip occurred at 78 Howard Road, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt (“the slip”). The slip resulted in damage to power, gas and water services. We acknowledge the impact the slip had on customers with approximately 165 households being without water for approximately 48hours and having to boil water for a further 72hours.

Preceding the slip, Wellington Water was made aware that a waterpipe located at or near 78 Howard Road, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt was leaking. Wellington Water repaired the water leak at approximately 6.00am on Tuesday 14 March 2023.

To fix the leak, Wellington Water excavated around the water pipe. This excavation was completed in accordance with Wellington Water’s health and safety practices in respect of excavations.

## Objective and Scope of the Review

The purpose of this review is to inquire into and report upon the following:

***How the slip occurred at 78 Howard Road, Point Howard, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt and identify lessons to minimise future occurrences.***

In considering this question, the reviewers should provide a timeline summarising the actions of HCC and WWL from the first notification of the leak on 26 January 2023 up until WWL leaving the site at 6.00 am on Tuesday 14 March 2023, having repaired the leak.

The scope of the review includes reviewing the following documents and sources of information:

- Risk Assessment/Priority Framework for assessing the priority for responding to leaks (**WWL**)
- Actions taken post event including review of all open jobs in hill suburbs, leak detection sweep (**WWL**)
- Local water network including pipe material, age, condition, previous repairs in local zone, where it featured in the renewal programme (**WWL**)
- Local roading network including construction, previous repairs (**HCC**)
- Geotechnical including local geology, stability, mode of failure (**HCC**)
- Other environmental factors including recent weather pattern, earthquakes, adjacent construction (**HCC**)
- Customer Service Request workflow including volume for context, prioritisation framework, escalations process including permit process (**HCC** and **WWL**)
- Any other relevant communications relating to 78 Howard Road, Point Howard, Eastbourne (**HCC** and **WWL**)
- Any other material within the scope of the review (**HCC** and **WWL**).

As part of this review, the views of the Point Howard Residents Association will be sought and referred to within the report.

## Issues out of Scope

The review will not ascribe blame or liability to any party or person, cannot be used in any disciplinary processes with any workers involved, and will not pre-empt or duplicate any other inquiry into any incidents that come within scope of this review. The review is not to inquire into, determine or report in an interim or final way or otherwise prejudice the following matters:

- Whether any questions of liability arise,
- Health and safety obligations,
- Wellington Water's inquiry into the practices relating to the excavation and any close approach permit,
- Incident response in responding to the slip at 78 Howard Road, Point Howard, Eastbourne
- Any third party's inquiries or investigations into the slip, and
- Other leaks and slips.

An inquiry into whether health and safety practices were followed in respect of the excavation was carried out and completed on 17 March 2023. The report found that the health and safety practices were complied with.

## Reporting

The review will report findings and opinions on, and make any recommendations it considers fit within the scope of this review, and will include the following:

- General introduction
- Determine the facts
- Chronology of events
- Make findings
- Make recommendations
- Provide high-level insight and learnings to minimise future occurrences


The report will be respectful of Hutt City Council, Wellington Water and its people, by not identifying individuals by name or job title except where that is necessary to fulfil the terms of reference.

## Timeframe and Process

The review is expected to take 10 working days, with a draft report to be available by Wednesday 29 March 2023 and it will be finalised by 31 March 2023, for presentation to the HCC Mayor and WWL Board during the week of 3 April 2023.

The report must be provided to WWL and HCC in draft for legal advice and legal review, and for comment from Management of WWL & HCC. The final version of the draft report will be shared with the any affected parties for comment prior to finalisation. The finalised report may be distributed wider than HCC & WWL, and may be published online.

Signed on 24 March 2023 by:

  
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Tonia Haskell, acting Chief Executive  
Wellington Water Limited

  
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Jo Miller, Chief Executive  
Hutt City Council