

4 September 2023

File Ref: [EXTREL-893300156-5667](#)

Mayor Anita Baker  
Porirua City Council

Mayor Tory Whanau  
Wellington City  
Council

Mayor Campbell Barry  
Hutt City Council

Mayor Wayne Guppy  
Upper Hutt City  
Council

BY EMAIL

Tēna koutou katoa

## Reducing water use in our region's cities

My councillors and I are looking forward to the Water Shortage Summit in just over a week's time, and I would like to thank you Mayor Campbell for convening this opportunity to meet.

Like you, Greater Wellington is extremely concerned about the state of water leakages in the four cities of our region. We understand that the current rate of water loss through our reticulated network is in the order of 55% of potable water coming from our Te Marua, Wainuiomata and Waterloo treatment plants. This is an extraordinary and unsustainable level of water loss.

For many years, the cities of the Wellington region have discussed the options to address this issue and we appreciate the resourcing provided to Wellington Water to fix leaks and bring back stability and resilience to our water supply network. Now though, we need to up our game and bring all our resources to focus on this issue, so that water demand returns to manageable levels.

I understand that informal conversations between yourselves and Wellington Water now indicate a willingness to include residential water metering as a key tool to manage the growing water demand. GW wholly supports this direction. We are aware of other jurisdictions' experiences in introducing water meters and the benefits delivered as a result. We believe that the time has come for all the cities of the Wellington region to make that change as well.

GW is also working with Wellington Water to plan for our long-term needs, keeping in mind our growing population. As you will be aware we purchased land at Pakuratahi some years ago for the purposes of new storage lakes.

This new development however will have significant impacts – both financially on our ratepayers and environmentally through large scale construction. We will continue planning based on the

assumption that our four cities are committed to the introduction of residential water metering and resolving the significant leaks in the reticulated water network.

For us it is fundamental that water treated for consumption safely reaches our residents. We are very conscious of the obligations that come with Te Mana o te Wai, which include not being wasteful of this precious resource.

This view is consistent with the recommendations of Te Whanganui a Tara Whaitua Implementation Programme that “Territorial Authorities and the relevant three waters agency implement universal residential metering to identify water wastage, reduce demand and enable more effective network management”. In Te Mahere Wai, Te Kāhui Taiao noted that municipal water supply is depleting Te Awa Kairangi, Wainuiomata and Ōrongorongo, and that to remedy this impact on te nui o te wai (water abundance), work was required to reduce takes and increase flows.

Working together, water metering, water storage and education to achieve consistent water use savings will complement our collective investment in pipe renewals and in other key assets to help provide for the needs of today’s population and those of our future citizens.

At this point I also want to signal that GW will be advocating through the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee’s Future Development Strategy for **sustainable** growth with the right kind of urban development in the right parts of our region. We need to pull all available levers to minimise the impacts of development on our environment and carbon emissions. We also need to prioritise funds and construction capacity for investment in renewal of existing infrastructure that will support more homes within existing urban areas.

We look forward to seeing you next week at the Water Shortage Summit, and to us reaching resolution on our pathway to a more resilient water future.

Yours sincerely



**Daran Ponter**  
Chair

CC:

Greater Wellington Long-term Plan Committee Members

Mana whenua iwi Chairs, Chief Executives

Mayors of Kāpiti Coast, Masterton, Carterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils

Chair of Wellington Regional Leadership Committee