

## Local Government Leaders' Water Declaration

As the leaders of their communities the Mayors and Chairs of New Zealand declare their continuing and absolute commitment to valuing and managing water as a precious resource. We want New Zealand to be world leaders in sustainable water management and will work with our communities and partners towards that goal.

Our water resource is precious and must not be taken for granted. The quality of our water and its abundance is fundamental to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing of New Zealand. Water is a taonga and our lifeblood. Iwi have a special relationship with freshwater and this is reflected in the statutes and in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM). Specifically, the NPSFM requires that freshwater is managed to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai, an integrated approach to fresh-water management that recognises the association of the wider community with the rivers, lakes and streams but also the relationship of iwi and hapū and their values with freshwater bodies.

Protecting our freshwater - lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater - is important because it ensures there is enough clean and safe water for all of our uses, now and into the future, and to ensure the health of freshwater ecosystems. Achieving this will require a collaborative effort from many parties – councils, communities, central government, Māori/Iwi, business and the primary sector.

Local government plays a central role in the management of our water resources, and because of this is uniquely placed to play a leading role in this long-term effort:

- Regional and unitary councils are responsible for managing water quality and quantity. They may permit some activities and require consents for others, such as taking water and the discharge of contaminants, and prevent certain activities.
- Territorial authorities are typically responsible for providing and managing infrastructure for drinking water, stormwater and sewage (although arrangements differ in some regions), and manage land use through district plans.

Councils work every day to deliver better water outcomes – it is core business and makes up a significant proportion of council work and expenditure. We engage with communities and by working together we have seen some good successes, but there is much more work to do. As well as our ongoing clean-up work, demand for water from businesses, the primary sector and growing urban communities are bringing greater challenges for us all and these are exacerbated by climate change.

As a result, in 2017 and 2018, local government will scope the costs of maintaining and/or improving water quality and its continued supply through its Water 2050 project. Water 2050 will underpin the need to think about water in a holistic way, raising the cost implications of investment in drinking, waste and stormwater assets and services to meet increased standards for water quality, and outlining the need for a national conversation on costs and new funding tools.

## **We, the Mayors and Chairs commit to:**

### **1. Continue to make water a key priority**

- Improve the water in our regions with, and for, our people and their descendants, asking our communities and stakeholders for their priorities for water and reflecting these in key planning documents.
- Respect the cultural values and special connections held by Māori to our water, honour our obligations to Māori and work with Māori to implement Treaty of Waitangi Settlements. This includes recognising Te Mana o te Wai in freshwater management which includes the relationship that iwi and hapū have with, and values for, water bodies. This will be expressed in our plans, and in the engagement processes with Māori used to develop these plans. It may also be reflected in our governance structures.
- Ensure that those people who have the privilege of using our water do so responsibly, by requiring and enforcing conditions of resource consent. We will lead work to change how people value water and consider their individual and collective impact. Provide clean, safe and reliable drinking water for our communities as a priority.

### **2. Work with our communities to improve our freshwater**

- Work with our communities to foster a sense of pride in the freshwater of New Zealand and maintain or improve water quality across our region and manage water use and consumption. This will include working to improve the quality of our stormwater by deterring the use of certain products, and initiatives to manage demand for domestic consumption.
- To lead, champion and support communities to take action to restore and protect water. For example, this might include setting nutrient limits across a catchment, riparian planting and fencing of waterways.

### **3. Provide information on the state of our freshwater**

- Provide information about the state of our freshwater, and make access to information about water easy for everyone by hosting information on the national website, LAWA (Land, Air, Water Aotearoa), and on our own websites.
- Issue a national report annually on the state of freshwater across our jurisdictions. This will provide New Zealanders with a “national state of water,” and a region-by-region summary, of key water quality measures.

### **4. Be clear about the costs of improving our water**

- Work with our communities so that the costs and priorities for investment in infrastructure to provide a secure supply of water and maintain and improve water quality are clearly understood. We will do this through our long term planning processes and as we change our resource management plans to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management. Water 2050 will also be critical work in creating the case for new funding and financing tools for water infrastructure.

## **We, the Mayors and Chairs call on the government of the day to:**

### **1. Take an integrated approach to water**

- Recognise the interlinked nature of all water, whether natural rivers, lakes, streams or groundwater and drinking water, stormwater or wastewater, and reflect this in coherent, integrated water policy.

- Recognise the impacts of climate change on our water resources and work with us to develop options to address these.

**2. Quantify the costs of meeting increased standards**

- Quantify, with local government, the costs and trade-offs required to meet freshwater quality standards and limits for water quality. This includes understanding the cost implications for our infrastructure and the costs to meet water quality standards and limits such as restoration and mitigation.
- Identify, with local government, additional funding required to meet any increase in standards and targets, and provide local government with additional tools to fund maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure to meet both existing and new standards.

**3. Work with us to meet the costs to improve water quality**

- Work with local government on a plan to meet these costs and develop new tools for funding and financing infrastructure.
- Increase funding where necessary to fund improvements in freshwater quality.

**4. Work with us to be world leaders in water management**

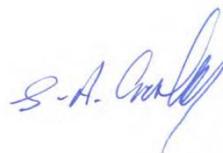
- Give long-term cross-party commitment to improve water quality, manage water quantity and provide stability, to enable us to work toward New Zealand being a world leader in water management.
- Explore the role of economic instruments in water policy and in pricing for water services. Options include pricing water, taxing water consumption and setting a royalty for consumption.

The current state of our water is the result of impacts over many years. We believe there is now a consensus that as a nation we want better for New Zealand. This Declaration is local government's commitment to achieving the goals we all want – plentiful clean and safe water for generations to come.

**UNDERSIGNED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND:**



**Dave Cull**  
President, Local Government New Zealand  
Mayor, Dunedin City Council



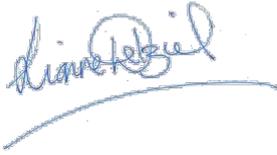
**Stuart Crosby**  
Vice President, Local Government New Zealand  
Councillor, Bay of Plenty Regional Council



**Hon Phil Goff**  
Mayor, Auckland Council



**Justin Lester**  
Mayor, Wellington City Council



**Lianne Dalziel**  
Mayor, Christchurch City Council



**Rachel Reese**  
Mayor, Nelson City Council



**Brian Hanna**  
Mayor, Waitomo District Council



**Wayne Guppy**  
Mayor, Upper Hutt City Council



**Tracy Hicks**  
Mayor, Gore District Council



**Doug Leeder**  
Chair, Bay of Plenty Regional Council



**Jan Barnes**  
Mayor, Matamata-Piako District Council



**Hon John Carter**  
Mayor, Far North District Council



**Don Cameron**  
Mayor, Ruapehu District Council



**Richard Kempthorne**  
Mayor, Tasman District Council

**THE FOLLOWING MAYORS AND CHAIRS ALSO SUPPORT THIS DECLARATION**



**Mayor John Booth**  
Carterton District Council



**Mayor Alex Walker**  
Central Hawke's Bay District Council



**Steve Lowndes, Acting Chair**  
Environment Canterbury



**Nicol Horrell, Chair**  
Environment Southland



**Mayor Meng Foon**  
Gisborne District Council



**Chris Laidlaw, Chair**  
Greater Wellington Regional Council



**Mayor Ray Wallace**  
Hutt City Council



**Mayor John Tregidga**  
Hauraki District Council



**Mayor K (Guru) Gurunathan**  
Kāpiti Coast District Council



**Mayor Winston Gray**  
Kaikoura District Council



**Mayor Graham Smith**  
Mackenzie District Council



**Mayor Helen Worboys**  
Manawatu District Council



**Mayor John Leggett**  
Marlborough District Council



**Mayor Lyn Patterson**  
Masterton District Council



**Mayor Bill Dalton**  
Napier City Council



**Mayor Neil Holdom**  
New Plymouth District Council



**Bill Shepherd, Chair**  
Northland Regional Council



**Mayor John Forbes**  
Opotiki District Council



**Mayor Grant Smith**  
Palmerston North City Council



**Mayor Mike Tana**  
Porirua City Council



**Mayor Andy Watson**  
Rangitikei District Council



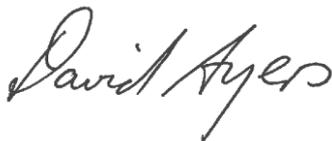
**Mayor Sam Broughton**  
Selwyn District Council



**Mayor David Trewavas**  
Taupo District Council



**Mayor Allan Sanson**  
Waikato District Council



**Mayor David Ayers**  
Waimakariri District Council



**Mayor Craig Rowley**  
Waimate District Council



**Mayor Jim Mylchreest**  
Waipa District Council



**Mayor Viv Napier**  
South Wairarapa District Council



**Mayor Gary Kircher**  
Waitaki District Council



**Mayor Garry Webber**  
Western Bay of Plenty District Council



**Mayor Tony Bonne**  
Whakatane District Council