

TAPPED IN

Bringing you news, updates and information from Watercare

Spring 2025

Latest news



The Wonder Wai Discovery Centre is a fully mobile, seven-metre-long trailer which has been redesigned as an educational visitor centre.

Wonder Wai Discovery Centre hits the road

We're excited to launch our new Wonder Wai Discovery Centre – a vibrant, hands-on experience that brings Auckland's water journey to life. Wonder Wai will be travelling across the region, connecting with communities and sparking curiosity about how water is managed in our city.

Wonder Wai builds on the success of our Central Interceptor Discovery Centre, which welcomed more than 120,000 visitors over the past 4.5 years. Now refreshed and reimagined, it features interactive games and models that guide visitors through six key stages of Auckland's water journey: rainfall, water sources, water treatment, household use, wastewater treatment, and water's return to nature.

This mobile centre is part of our wider water literacy programme, which includes free in-school lessons for primary and intermediate students, and guided tours of Waitākere Dam for secondary students. Through these initiatives, we're helping Aucklanders understand the infrastructure behind their taps and toilets – and why it matters.

Wonder Wai will be popping up at events and locations throughout the city. Keep an eye on our website for updates on where we're headed next – we'd love to see you there.

Scan the QR code or visit watercare.co.nz/wonderwai. You can also follow us on our social media channels:



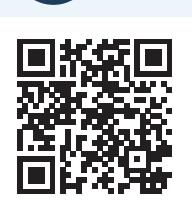
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What's happening in your area

Major infrastructure upgrades kick off in Waiwera

We've broken ground on a \$45 million programme to upgrade and replace critical water and wastewater infrastructure in Waiwera and Hatfields Beach.

The project includes a new wastewater pump station at the existing Waiwera Wastewater Treatment Plant site, along with a 4.6-kilometre pipeline connecting to the Hatfields Beach Pump Station. This upgrade will ensure the wastewater network can meet the demands of a growing population across Waiwera, Hatfields Beach, and surrounding suburbs.

In addition, a new 840-metre watermain will be installed to strengthen the local water supply network, drawing from the existing Waiwera reservoirs.

The new watermain will improve the resilience of the water supply, helping to deliver a more secure and reliable service to the community.

Potholing investigations and site establishment works are currently underway. Construction is expected to be completed by late 2026.



North/West

Herne Bay collector tunnel design work advancing

We're building a 2.1m-diameter tunnel to collect combined wastewater and stormwater overflows from the lower Herne Bay area and feed into the colossal Central Interceptor at Pt Erin.

The Central Interceptor conveys flows to our Māngere Wastewater Treatment Plant for safe treatment. Together, these projects will significantly reduce overflows to the environment. This new infrastructure aims to improve the quality of inland waterways and swimmable beaches by the end of 2028.

The project will use a micro tunnel boring machine to install the tunnel, stretching for approximately 1.5 kilometres. In addition, eight tunnel shafts will be constructed, along with intercepting shafts that connect to existing engineered overflow points. Smaller pipelines will also be laid along Marine Parade and nearby streets – up to 1000mm in diameter along Marine Parade, and between 200mm to 450mm for local connections. These smaller pipelines will be installed using open trenching.

While the Herne Bay collector tunnel is currently in design, the main construction works will start sequentially early next year.



Central

Smart sensors prevent wastewater overflow in Ōtara

A smart sensor recently installed in Ōtara's wastewater network has already prevented its first overflow, marking an early success for our \$12 million Smart Network Programme.

The sensor – which detects flow levels in the wastewater network – detected a developing blockage just days after installation. This allowed crews to respond immediately and clear the obstruction before it caused any damage.

This proactive approach is part of our wider rollout of 5000 sensors across Auckland, with 1,000 already in place. These sensors provide real-time data that helps identify issues like blockages and tidal ingresses, enabling faster and more efficient responses.

The technology is proving to be a smart investment, offering valuable insights into the performance of Auckland's wastewater systems. As the rollout continues across Auckland, we are gaining a deeper understanding of the network and preventing overflows before they happen.



South/East

In focus

Biosolids: Planning now for 2035

Every time you flush or shower, your wastewater begins an important journey. It travels through a network of pipes to a treatment plant, where it's carefully cleaned before being returned to nature. During this treatment process, soil-like material called biosolids are produced. By 2035, we'll need a new way of managing biosolids in Auckland – so planning is getting underway now.

What are biosolids?

Biosolids are the soil-like 'leftovers' from the wastewater treatment process. Part of it comes from treated human waste (poo), but it's also made up of the microorganisms (or good bugs) that help clean our wastewater.

How are we managing biosolids today?

All of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's wastewater treatment plants produce biosolids. We have a range of options available for their disposal, which include trucking them to certified commercial landfills or turning them into compost for use as a fertiliser. While these have been serving us well, we need to explore other options for managing biosolids in the long term to ensure we have reliable and resilient servicing solutions in place for our growing city.

At our largest wastewater treatment plant in Māngere, where three quarters of Tāmaki Makaurau's wastewater is treated, we are using biosolids to rehabilitate an area on Te Motu a Hiaroa (Puketutu Island) that was quarried from the 1950s until the early 2000s.

Each day, we truck more than 400 tonnes of biosolids just down the road to the island. The biosolids are tipped into pre-constructed cells in the former quarry and covered over with earth at the end of each day.



What is the challenge ahead?

Right now, we have a successful system in place, but it won't last forever. By 2035, the rehabilitation project on the island will be complete and Auckland will need a new proven and reliable solution in place that is capable of handling more than 175,000 tonnes of biosolids each year.

Over the next year, we'll be assessing our options for managing biosolids; guided by mana whenua, communities, and technical experts.

To learn about these options, and to give feedback via our online survey, please visit watercare.co.nz/biosolids or scan the QR code. Everyone who completes the survey will go in the draw to win a \$100 voucher as a thank-you for helping us shape Auckland's wastewater future.



In the know

A record-breaking planting season in the Hūnua Ranges



Operations controller Brendon Dockary among the native trees that were planted in 2019.

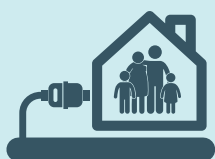
Our Hūnua Regeneration Programme has completed its biggest planting season yet, with over half a million native trees added this winter. This milestone brings the total number of trees planted to over one million, making it one of Aotearoa's biggest native planting initiatives.

The Hūnua Ranges are home to four dams that supply around two thirds of Auckland's drinking water. Since acquiring forestry rights in 2017, we have been working to restore 2200 hectares of former pine forest to native bush, helping to stabilise the land and protect our water catchment from erosion and slips.

This winter, our crew planted up to 75,000 plants a week, covering about 70 hectares. While no more pines will be planted, some areas of the forest will be harvested as the existing pine trees mature. We then regenerate the harvested area with natives such as mānuka, kānuka, tī kōuka and kahikatea. This ensures we are replicating the natural state of the forest as much as possible.

The regeneration programme will continue until around 2035, when the last pine trees are expected to be harvested. Once complete, the restored catchment will be opened to the public for future generations to enjoy.

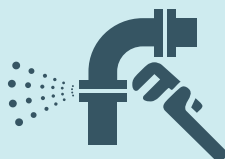
Snapshot: key figures from the past quarter¹



39.6
billion litres
of water
produced



2392
new properties
connected to our
networks



8595
number of leaks
fixed across
Auckland

¹ From July-September 2025.

Priority assistance

We provide an extra layer of assistance for those who need it.



If you or someone close to you has a visual or hearing impairment, health or medical concerns, or needs language support, we're here to help with free, practical assistance.

Here are some of the services we offer:

- Free water meter reads on your behalf.
- Translator services through voice and chat.
- Support for financial hardship.
- Enhanced e-bills to work with the text reader.

For more information, visit watercare.co.nz/priority-assistance or scan the QR code.



Hearing impaired?
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video.



KEEP IN TOUCH

To get in touch, please email our communications team at communications@water.co.nz.

You can learn more about what we do at watercare.co.nz