

# Western Water Supply Programme Frequently Asked Questions



October 2025

## 1 Why build a new water treatment plant at Waima?

The Huia Water Treatment Plant is more than 100 years old and treats about 20% of Auckland's drinking water. It's nearing the end of its life. A new plant on Watercare land at Woodlands Park Road and Manuka Road will secure safe, reliable water for generations.

## 2 What is the Western Water Supply Programme?

This is a group of related projects requiring strategic alignment and close management of interdependencies. The programme primarily consists of the Huia Water Treatment Plant replacement, new raw watermains (Huia Raw Watermain and Upper Nihotupu Raw Watermain), an upgraded pump station, and new reservoirs and pipelines. Managing them as one programme achieves broader strategic outcomes, optimised management of our resources and helps deliver combined benefits which exceed what the individual projects can accomplish alone.

## 3 What options are being considered for the Huia Raw Watermain?

Two options remain: a tunnel from the Lower Nihotupu Dam, or a pipeline laid in the road corridor. Both options have been carefully assessed by a range of experts including Te Kawerau ā Maki for factors such as heritage, operation, cultural and community impact. Information on our website shows the route options being considered for the next stage for the Huia Raw Watermain.

## 4 What would be involved in the tunnelling options?

Tunnelling is a trenchless option, which minimises surface disruption. It requires building some launching and receiving pits or shafts to set up the tunnelling equipment and support the drill and install of the pipe sections.

## 5 Why not just use the road?

In some places this works, but in West Auckland slips and steep terrain make it less straightforward. Both options have pros and cons, and the decision will be based on technical investigations and take community feedback into account.

## 6 How much will it cost?

At this stage, we don't have exact costs as there are a number of dependencies which will ultimately determine this. The high-level cost ranges for both core options at this stage are similar. More detailed design work over the next 12 months will refine these estimates.

## 7 What about trucks and traffic?

We know these are big concerns. We're working with Auckland Transport on road safety and timing of construction traffic, especially near schools. Closer to the time of construction traffic management plans will need to be developed based on how our contractors will deliver the project.



**8 Where will the excess soil (spoil) be taken and disposed of? Will it also go to Parau similar to spoil from the new water treatment plant?**

We are investigating options for disposal of the spoil generated by the replacement watermain. Te Kawerau ā Maki are regularly consulted on this, and we will also be consulting with other Council organisations to coordinate locations as they work on slip remediation efforts. It is unlikely that we will be able to use Parau.

**9 Do you need a consent to do these projects? Will it be publicly notified?**

We will need a resource consent for the raw watermain projects. At this stage we need to determine the route and that will better help us to understand what is required for consenting. We are not yet at a stage where we can confirm our consenting process but will communicate this once we are at that stage.

Consent for the Huia Water Treatment Plant replacement has already been granted and is available on our website.

**10 What about heritage and local facilities?**

A condition of the consent for the new Huia Water Treatment Plant is that Watercare must restore the heritage Nihotupu Filter Station within five years of commencing construction on the water treatment plant. Plans are still being developed for this restoration project but will be shared with the community once more detail is known.

Depending on methodology of nearby works, there is potential that some walking tracks may have restricted access. We do not yet have details however closer to the time of construction any closures will be notified to the wider community.

**11 How are mana whenua involved?**

Te Kawerau ā Maki are partners in this work. They've contributed to technical workshops, assessments and design feedback, and we continue to meet regularly, usually, once a month.

**12 What about the environment?**

New infrastructure will be designed with the environment in mind, including things like avoiding light pollution to support the Waitākere Ranges Dark Sky initiative. As part of the Resource Consent for the Huia Water Treatment Plant replacement project, Watercare are also required to have a number of environmental management plans in place.

**13 How will the community be kept informed?**

Keeping the community informed and involved is a priority. A dedicated engagement specialist will share regular updates, use visuals to show what's planned, and make information available online after key meetings. This will help ensure community members have access to the latest information.

**14 What is happening now and what is next?**

Geotechnical investigations for the Huia Raw Watermain are underway and we are aiming to complete these by December 2025. These investigations will help us determine the best option to progress into design. Additional, focus will be on the design of the preferred route option, informed community feedback and technical studies starting in 2026.



**15 How is maintenance performed on the raw watermains? Is one option easier to access for maintenance than the other?**

The tunnels are easier to maintain. Maintenance will generally be via the tunnel portals and will be via technological means i.e. underwater drone cameras rather than man entry. There will be limited operational intervention to the tunnels.

For the pipes in the road, as the pipes are pressurised there will need to be periodic maintenance of valves, condition assessment activities etc which will all probably require road closures for access. Any shutdowns will also require road closures.

**16 Will the Western Water Supply Programme affect the Rainforest Express tramline?**

We don't know yet. The programme is still assessing options, and until those are finalised, it's too early to confirm whether the tramline or tracks will be impacted.