TAPPED IN

Bringing you news, updates and information from Watercare Summer 2024/25

Easy does it with your water use this summer

On hot days, people often spend more time outdoors watering gardens, washing cars, or cooling off with sprinklers. This can cause a spike in overall water demand and put pressure on our treatment plants and networks. So, when it comes to using water this summer, we want to remind Aucklanders, 'easy does it'.

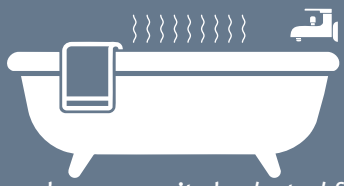
On average, summer water use in Tāmaki Makaurau is around **452 million litres per day** (MLD). But at the height of summer, when we're enjoying stretches of hot and dry weather, that figure climbs a lot higher. For example, in February 2020, water use reached a record of 549 MLD (based on the seven-day rolling average). Our goal is to avoid record-breaking high demand this summer. That's why we'll be keeping a close eye on Auckland's water use.

We'll also be monitoring our dam levels, river flows, and the weather outlook when managing our numerous water sources. Our two Waikato water treatment plants can treat up to 225 million litres of water from the Waikato River daily, if needed. The second plant isn't operational right now, but it provides a good safety net in case the weather turns out to be drier than expected. We're also working to bring our Pukekohe Water Treatment Plant back online after it was flooded in the 2023 summer storms.

While we have a resilient water supply designed to handle peak demand, reducing the summer spike in use can help defer costly infrastructure upgrades. It's not about going without water; it's about taking it easy with your water use.

In this edition of *Tapped In*, learn about the importance of finding and fixing water leaks to reduce water waste. You can also sign up for a public dam tour and find waterwise activities to help keep the kids entertained during the holiday period.

What can you do with 452 million litres of water?
Fill around 3 million bathtubs



... or keep our city hydrated for a day in summer..

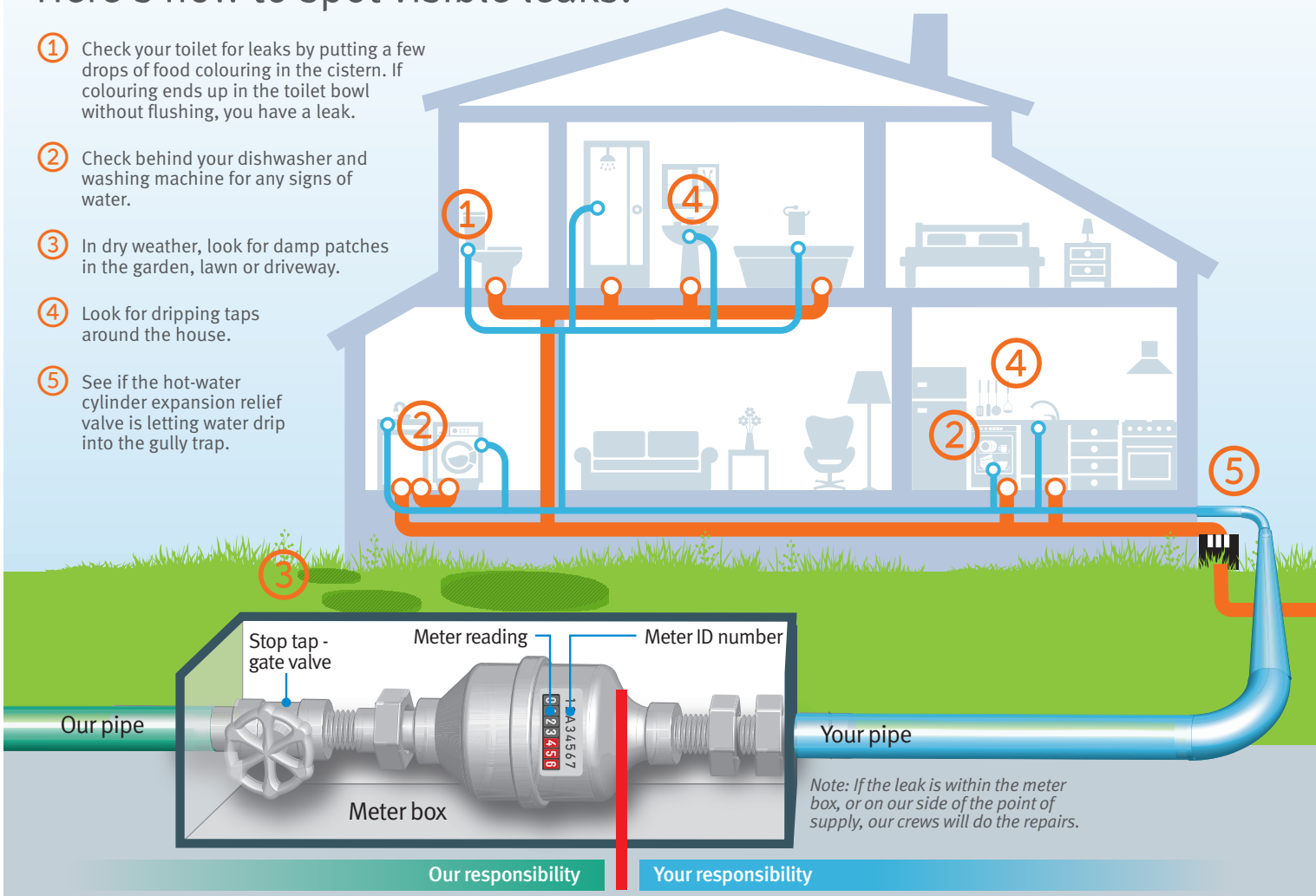
Watercare

Spot and stop

Your guide to finding leaks at home so you can reduce the volume of water being wasted and save on your monthly bill.

Here's how to spot visible leaks:

1. Check your toilet for leaks by putting a few drops of food colouring in the cistern. If colouring ends up in the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak.
2. Check behind your dishwasher and washing machine for any signs of water.
3. In dry weather, look for damp patches in the garden, lawn or driveway.
4. Look for dripping taps around the house.
5. See if the hot-water cylinder expansion relief valve is letting water drip into the gully trap.



Note: If the leak is within the meter box, or on our side of the point of supply, our crews will do the repairs.

What we're doing to manage leaks

This summer, our crews will be working tirelessly to fix leaks in our public water networks. So, if you see a leak when you're out and about, please report it on our website.

We'll have our proactive leak detection programme running too, which finds leaks that aren't visible above ground.

Here's how to detect hidden leaks:

Your water meter can show you how much water you're using, and it can help you detect leaks. A simple leak test can help you detect hidden leaks on your property.

Pick a time when no water is being used on your property, then find your water meter and read the numbers. After two hours, read your water meter again then compare the two readings. If the numbers are different, you have a water leak. You may need to call a registered plumber to locate the leak.

Easy does it

Check out our website for more water-savings tips, kids colouring competitions, smart water play activities and more. You can also follow us on our social media channels:

@WatercareNZ @watercare_nz @watercare_nz

Pukekohe Water Treatment Plant returning to service

We're returning the Pukekohe Water Treatment Plant to service which will boost Auckland's water supply by six million litres a day.

The plant was severely damaged during last year's Auckland Anniversary floods, which destroyed critical components such as chemical dosing systems, pump drives, and electrical equipment. Since then, Pukekohe's water supply has primarily come from the Waikato River, treated at the Waikato Water Treatment Plant.

Instead of simply rebuilding, the plant is being reconfigured and upgraded to reduce flood risk. Critical components are being relocated to higher locations, and new underground ducts are being installed to protect major electricity cables. The rehabilitation also includes upgrading the chemical dosing system to use self-generated chemicals, ensuring more efficient water treatment.

The plant will be fully operational at the end of summer when water demand is at its peak.

Join us at Mangatāwhiri Dam

Join us for a free tour of our Mangatāwhiri Dam in the Hūnua Ranges, one of the five southern dams that provide 60 per cent of Auckland's water supply.

This is a great opportunity to learn about Auckland's second largest dam including its construction, and how water is stored, treated and delivered to homes and businesses.

Date: Saturday 1 February 2025

Time: 10am-4pm

Where: Mangatāwhiri Dam, Hunua Ranges Regional Park, Auckland

Bookings: Each tour is capped at a maximum of 25 people.

There is no cost for the tour, but you must book a ticket to gain entry.

Scan the QR code to book your spot.

Highlights of the tour:

- Go on a guided tour with our dam technicians and see first-hand how a dam works.
- See one of New Zealand's largest reforestation projects – we're progressively rehabilitating a commercial pine forest with native trees and plants.
- Learn about the ecosystem and our trap-and-haul programme for native fish and eels.

Check out how full our dams are

Visit our website for live information on how full our dams are. We expect the volume of water stored in our dams to increase over winter and decrease over summer. At the moment, we are not in a drought. However, water is precious so please take it easy with your water use.

Day in the life of Joe Gendall

When Joe Gendall saw a job ad for a hydrologist role at Watercare, he knew it was the perfect role for him with a blend of office and field work.

Within his first three years of the job, he responded to a wide range of hydrological events, from drought to extreme flooding.

Now a senior hydrologist, he manages Watercare's hydrometric network, which has 66 sites across Auckland – rain gauges, dam level monitoring equipment, ground water monitoring and stream flow monitoring sites.

The network tracks the volume of water at each stage of the water's journey and the data feeds into the company's source management model.

Joe recently made a splash in the industry by inventing a new technique for assessing the accuracy of rain gauges, which was adopted by other hydrologists in New Zealand and Australia.

How much rainfall a rain gauge is going to record is affected by a range of things – including topography, elevation, exposure (such as high wind), and whether there are any obstructions.

All of those things need to be taken into account, because they have an impact on the air flow, which in turn affects rainfall recorded at the site.

Joe's solution uses a 3D camera, combined with some basic programming, to capture changes in obstructions – like vegetation growing near the rain gauges.

To learn more about Joe's journey, visit **watercare.co.nz** and search for 'meet our people' or scan the QR code to read the full article.

Sponge water bombs

This is a great waterwise activity to keep children entertained and cool in summer. They only take a few minutes to make and can be used over and over again – reducing water balloon litter!

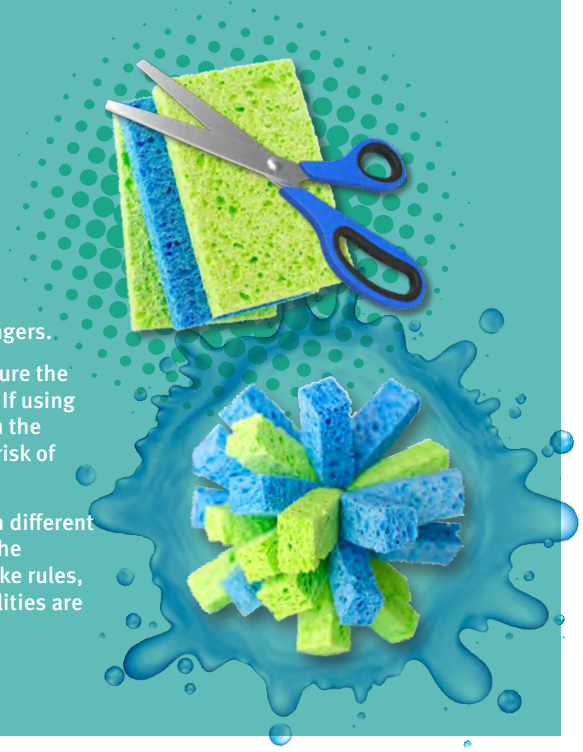
What you need:

- Sponges, look for thicker ones
- Good scissors
- Strong string, or cable ties
- Two buckets

How to do it:

1. Cut your sponges into long fingers.
2. Use string or cable ties to secure the sponge fingers in the middle. If using cable ties, make sure you trim the remainder off, to remove the risk of scratching.
3. Place two buckets (half full) in different areas of your garden and let the children go wild! They can make rules, set home bases – the possibilities are endless!

Visit watercare.co.nz and search for 'smart water play'.



Remember to flush your taps

We encourage you to flush a large glass of water from your drinking water tap each morning before using any water. This removes any metals that may have dissolved from plumbing fittings overnight.

New Zealand's water can be slightly acidic and can dissolve metals. If water stays for several hours in your household pipes, it can dissolve heavy metals such as lead or copper. Small amounts of these metals may then enter your water supply. This is a simple precaution for all households on both public and private water supply.

The health risk is small, but a build-up of heavy metals in your body can cause health problems. We continue to meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand 2022 and Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules 2022 and deliver safe water.

Visit **watercare.co.nz** and search for 'drinking water'.

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**