

28 September 2023

Kia ora koutou,

It's been a year since we were gathered as a citizens' assembly in the Fale at Auckland University. We wanted to provide you an update on all the things we have done as a result of your recommendations. Reflecting on how far we've come, I cannot express enough just how grateful we are for all your time and effort last year and for the great output from those conversations, which are helping us plan better in the short, medium and long term.

Regarding the main recommendation on recycled water, we have this to report:

Operational:

- Pilot plants for both non-potable and potable reuse have been constructed. The non-potable plant has, since late June, been providing the Central Interceptor's tunnel boring machine with recycled water for drilling and tunnelling and we are hoping to begin running trials in our potable plant in the coming months to help us understand the operational requirements of producing potable recycled water.
- Once the potable (purified recycled water) pilot plant is running, we will be able to collect operational and water quality data to inform our regulatory and community engagement programme.

Regulatory:

- Watercare is a 'first mover' in the recycled water space in New Zealand, so we continue to explore ways of addressing regulatory requirements. For this work, we are also looking to international experience for learnings.
- Watercare has made several submissions to central government supporting the use of recycled water.
- Watercare meets regularly with the Ministry of Health and Taumata Arowai, and at a high level we have discussed recycled water as a potential future water source option. It is expected that conversations will become more focused as our recycled water programme advances.

Community Engagement:

- Various pilot projects have been identified to gradually introduce the concept of recycled water to Aucklanders. These include:
 - Providing recycled water for irrigation from our Rosedale wastewater treatment plant to a nearby golf course. Early conversations with the golf course have been extremely positive, and we have proceeded with both human health and environmental impact reports which have both returned encouraging results.
 - We are partnering with Auckland Council to trial irrigation of soccer and softball fields at Rosedale Park using recycled water from the Rosedale wastewater treatment plant. We are currently in a design phase of the project and are hoping to have resource consent for the irrigation by early 2024.

- We are exploring the opportunity of using recycled water from the Māngere pilot plants for landscape irrigation at the Māngere wastewater treatment plant and potentially for irrigation of ornamental gardens on the neighbouring foreshore.

Regarding water efficiency and encouraging Aucklanders to use less water, we are continuing to track well against our water efficiency targets, though there wasn't much need to water gardens or get the sprinkler out for the kids last summer! However NIWA has signalled a hotter and drier spring and summer this year so our campaign on using water wisely has kicked off.

We have also created a webpage on the Watercare website providing information about desalination and other alternative sources of water, and will continue to keep abreast of developments in that field, though our focus remains on recycling water for our future.

More generally, Watercare's recycled water programme will need to align with our water and wastewater servicing strategies which are progressively being developed. A more detailed programme of works for direct recycled water will be available in 2024, as we work your recommendations into the broader work of planning water and wastewater services across the city.

We also wanted to let you know that our citizens' assembly project is a finalist for an international engagement award to be announced in October so we will let you know if we win!

Ngā mihi,

Amanda Singleton
Chief Customer Officer
Watercare Services Ltd