

TAPPED IN

Bringing you news, updates and information from Watercare Summer 2022/23



Making every drop count

Another scorching summer is about to arrive and with it, the usual increase in water use – when paddling pools are filled, gardens are watered, and cars are washed.

Currently, weather forecasts are suggesting long dry spells with occasional downpours, which is the “feast or famine” rainfall pattern we’ve seen for the past couple of summers.

Thanks to a wet winter and our new water treatment plants in Pukekohe and Tuakau, we’re in a good position right now. But we need your help to stay that way.

Tāmaki Makaurau’s water demand can jump by more than 100 million litres a day when it’s hot, which puts pressure on our treatment plants and networks. So please remember to be mindful of your water use as the temperature rises.

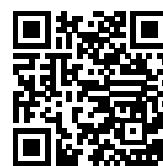
There are lots of simple ways to be water-efficient in your home and garden during summer – the easiest ways are to keep your showers short and attach a trigger nozzle to your hose.

Summer is also a good time to check your home for leaks. Even small leaks can waste lots of water over time. A dripping tap can waste 33 litres per day. Doing a leak test is simple – scan the QR code below for instructions.

Responding to leaks keeps our maintenance crews extremely busy over summer. That’s because the hot weather dries out the ground, which can make the soil retract from our pipes and lead to cracks. Read on to find out how we’re tackling leaks in our networks this summer and beyond.



**Water
efficiency
tips**



**How to
detect a
leak**

Beating leaks in the heat

Summer is a busy season for our maintenance crews, with dry ground creating more breaks in our pipes than in winter. Other factors that contribute to breaks and cracks year-round include wear and tear, vibration damage from heavy traffic and damage caused by a third party, like a company doing construction nearby.

We have 9584km of water pipes in our network and while we have a proactive leak detection programme, we need your help to find and report leaks.

Our chatbot makes it easy to report leaks through our website – just click on the live chat icon and follow the prompts to report a new fault. The chatbot asks a series of questions with multichoice answers, supported by photo examples to help you choose the most accurate answers.

Once you report a leak, our faults team gives it a priority level based on factors like the volume of water being lost, health and safety risks and the potential for property damage. The more information we have about a leak, the better we can prioritise it and prepare to repair it.

Leak repairs are not always straightforward – sometimes even finding the source of the leak can be a challenge, because water does not always come out of the ground at the exact spot of the pipe break. We might need specialist equipment to cut through concrete, or to get assistance from an Auckland Council arborist if we have to fix a leak close to a tree.

When we have fixed the leak, we will let you know by text, phone or email. So, please ensure we have your current contact details, by logging in to MyAccount on our website.



Waterwise water-play

This summer, we encourage our region's tamariki to head outdoors and have fun with water. This doesn't mean letting them run wild with the hose. It's easy to have hours of fun while using our most precious resource wisely. Check out our favourite kids' water-play activity below, then scan the QR code for further ideas by Smart Water in the Waikato.

Sponge water bombs

Sick of picking up all the burst water balloons after the fun's over? Spend a few minutes to make these sponge water bombs, they can be reused and save you from water balloon litter! They're great fun for all ages, even teenagers.

What you need:

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



How to do it:

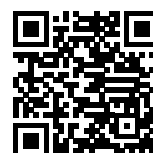
Cut your sponges into long fingers. Then use string/cable ties to secure in the middle. If using cable ties, make sure you trim the remainder off, to remove the risk of scratching. Place two buckets (half full) in different areas of your garden and let the children go wild! They can make rules, set home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

Why we love this activity:

This activity offers hours of fun while using water sparingly and reducing waste.



For more activities, scan the QR code:



A big thanks to Smart Water in the Waikato for letting us share their awesome resource. To see what else they have to offer, visit smartwater.org.nz

Hunting down leaks in our network

Our proactive leak detection continues, using acoustic leak detection to find unreported leaks in our pipes and then repair them.

Leaks create a distinctive sound because they are constantly running, and this sound can be picked up by a stick microphone. We aim to survey 6000km of watermain each financial year. From 1 July to the end of October, we surveyed 2100km of pipes and found 1068 leaks for our crews to fix.



Discover our not-so-hidden gems this summer

With water and wastewater infrastructure dotted throughout Tāmaki Makaurau, we have dozens of not-so-hidden gems that are well worth a quick visit or a day trip. Below are a few to give you an idea of what's on offer. Follow us on Facebook to receive more suggestions over the warmer months.

1 Feeling fit? Head to the Hūnua Ranges

Follow the Hūnua Suspension Bridge Path through lush vegetation as it climbs to a lookout platform offering stunning views of Wairoa Dam. This dam is one of four in the area and provides around four percent of our city's water. Pack a picnic and make a day trip of it!

Distance: 3.9km loop walk

Start: 164A Moumoukai Road. There is a carpark on Ottau Valley Road, a short walk to the start.



For more info,
scan the QR code:

*View of Wairoa Dam
from the lookout
platform.*

2 Show your pooch a good time! Visit Big King

Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta is a volcano in the central suburb of Three Kings. Years ago, it had three larger peaks and a few smaller peaks. Today, only one peak (Big King) remains after the others were quarried for red scoria. It was saved because of the water storage reservoir that was built on it at the start of last century. The reservoir is still in service today, supplying the suburbs of Mt Roskill, Three Kings and Mt Eden. Altogether, we have 87 reservoirs around Auckland – including a number on maunga such as Mt Albert, Mt Eden, Mt Hobson, and Mt Wellington.

Big King Reserve is a popular spot for dog lovers, with a large off-leash area. Climb to the top and snap a picture of your pooch with Dog from Footrot Flats. Dog was painted by artist Paul Walsh as a tribute to cartoonist Murray Ball in 2017.

Start: The main entrance and carpark is on Duke Street.



For more info,
scan the QR code:

*View of reservoir on
Big King.*

3 New bike for Christmas? Take it for a spin on the Watercare Coastal Walkway

The Watercare Coastal Walkway runs along the Manukau Harbour foreshore between Ambury Regional Park and Ōtūataua Stonefields. It's perfect for cycling as well as for walking and birdwatching – with more than 30,000 wading birds feeding on the harbour's mudflats each day.

The walkway was created in the early 2000s when we replaced 515 hectares of wastewater oxidation ponds with land-based treatment processes. The walkway runs past our Māngere Wastewater Treatment Plant and our largest Central Interceptor construction site. Each day, the plant treats around 300 million litres of wastewater.

Distance: 7km one way

Start: Ambury Regional Park



For more info,
scan the QR code:

*View of Manukau
Harbour from the
Watercare Coastal
Walkway.*

Our customer promise

“We promise to deliver water and wastewater services you can trust.”

This means we will always provide you with safe drinking water and treat your wastewater to protect the environment. Not only that, you can also expect us to treat you with respect and take your feedback seriously.

While this has always been our focus, we are keen for you to be aware of it and to hold us to account for delivering on it.

Our customer promise is informed by what our customers told us they expect from their water company. They said, for example, they understand that from time to time things may go wrong, but they measure us on how effectively and efficiently we respond to those situations. Also, customers made it very clear that they wanted to be kept informed of issues that impacted them, not just once, but throughout the process. You will see that our promise acknowledges these and many other customer expectations.

How we deliver on our promise

Safety

We will:

- 💧 Provide you with safe water that meets Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand
- 💧 Treat your wastewater to protect the environment
- 💧 Keep you safe when we're working in your neighbourhood.

Respect

We will:

- 💧 Respect your culture, values and time
- 💧 Support you in difficult times
- 💧 Protect your privacy.

Service

We will:

- 💧 Make it easy for you to contact us
- 💧 Listen and respond to your concerns
- 💧 Fix faults in our networks within committed timeframes.

Engage

We will:

- 💧 Involve you in decisions about how we deliver water and wastewater services
- 💧 Use your feedback to improve customer services
- 💧 Help you to value water as a taonga and to use it wisely.

What you can expect

Planned water outages

Sometimes, we turn off the water supply to upgrade our infrastructure.

You can expect:

- 💧 At least 5 working days' notice
- 💧 Water back on within 5 hours
- 💧 Outages to be outside of peak periods: morning (5am-9am) and evening (5pm-11pm).

Unplanned water outages

Sometimes, we turn off the water supply to fix something that has broken unexpectedly.

You can expect:

- 💧 Information on our website
- 💧 Water back on within 5 hours
- 💧 Emergency drinking water provided.

Wastewater overflows

Sometimes, our pipes become blocked or break, causing wastewater to overflow onto private property.

You can expect:

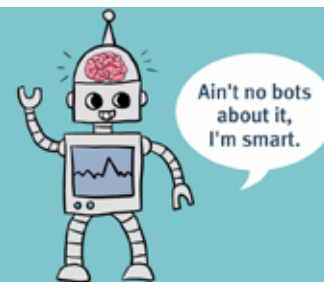
- 💧 Our crews to fix the issue and clean the area within 5 hours.

Complaints

Sometimes, we may not meet your expectations.

You can expect:

- 💧 When things go wrong, it is easy to make a complaint
- 💧 A fair and transparent process
- 💧 A response with a plan for resolution within 10 working days.



Need to report a water leak? Use our chatbot

It's quicker and easier than making a report over the phone.

If you spot a leak in our network this summer, please go to our website and click the 'LiveChat' icon that pops up on screen. Once you've had a conversation with the chatbot, that's it – you don't need to do anything. There's no need to phone us to check it has done its job; there's no need to email us either. The chatbot will send you a notification when your conversation is done, then you'll get another one when your job is logged. Easy as pie, right?

Go digital: make this your last paper bill!

There are lots of good reasons to receive your bills by email. You'll not only reduce waste and help the environment; you'll also be able to check your bills anytime, anywhere. And if there's a water supply or wastewater issue in your area, we can notify you quickly and easily.

Please note that from 1 January 2023, we will charge \$1.20 (inc GST) for bills delivered by post. This is to cover the cost of printing and postage.

It's easy to make the switch. Please scan the QR code and sign up in two steps.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Tapped In is your newsletter. If you would like to talk to us about any stories from this edition or your ideas for future issues, we'd love to hear from you. To get in touch, please email our communications team at communications@water.co.nz. You can learn more about what we do at waterforlife.org.nz