



**Submission to the
Department of Internal Affairs**

**Taumata Arowai – the Water Services
Regulator Bill**

February 2020

Introduction

1. Tauranga City Council (TCC) welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Health Committee on Taumata Arowai – the Water Services Regulator Bill. We are happy to discuss our submission further with you or provide additional information and evidence that would be of assistance. Enquires should be directed to:

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2. TCC supports the submission provided by Water New Zealand and the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM).

TCC supports in principle the intent of the Taumata Arowai – the Water Services Regulator Bill

3. TCC supports the general intent of the Water Services Regulatory Bill. We welcome legislation that will lead to clarification on regulatory controls in the three waters sector.

Local Government Perspectives and Board Representation

4. TCC supports the Objectives of Taumata Arowai (s10) and the formation of a Board (s12).
5. The objectives allow for significant work to be done that includes administration of regulations, advice on management of networks and promotion of public understanding. Many local authorities have expertise and experience in these tasks and the perspectives of local government will be very important in the formation of these requirements. Further, most three waters assets and services, but not all, are owned and delivered by local councils. As most of the financial implications will be carried by local authorities, it would be advantageous for the perspectives of Local Government to be considered within the Board.

Recommendation

6. TCC strongly suggests the following addition to Section 12 of the Bill:

12 Board

- (1) The board consists of not fewer than 5, and not more than 7, members.
- (2) The responsible Minister must appoint members to the board who, collectively, have knowledge and experience of, and capability in,—
 - (a) the compliance, monitoring, and enforcement activities of regulatory agencies; and
 - (b) public health, particularly in relation to the objectives and functions of Taumata Arowai; and
 - (c) the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) and its principles; and
 - (d) perspectives of Māori and tikanga Māori; and
 - (e) performance monitoring and governance.

(f) **perspectives of Local Government**

Uncertainty and financial implications

7. Taumata Arowai will be responsible for the development of standards, regulations and other statutory requirements. The lack of detail on the standards and regulations creates uncertainty for TCC and other local authorities three waters services. Any reform of three waters legislation may have financial implications, for example, council's levels of service or flood control measures. This will require councils to adjust their annual or long-term budgets. As such, a

deadline for developing standards and regulation should be included either in this or future legislation.

Recommendation

8. TCC requests that an indication of when any new standards and /or regulatory controls will be introduced be included in this formative legislation to enable councils to appropriately plan for implementation.

Maori Advisory Group and source control.

9. The establishment of a Māori Advisory Group to advise Taumata Arowai is likely to strengthen the use of source control in the management of water supply catchments. This would likely have benefits for the management of council's water supply catchments by acknowledging that the provision of safe drinking water is more than treatment and pipe networks and extends to environmental protection and stream health as well.

Recommendation

10. TCC supports the formation of the Maori Advisory Group and their potential involvement in source control in the management of water supply catchments.