Te Rautaki Wai ki Tāmaki Makaurau

Auckland Water Strategy

Auckland Council's strategy to protect and enhance te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of water.

2022 – 2050

aucklandcouncil.govt.nz


Te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of water, is protected and enhanced.

Mihi

Mihi Ka mihi ake ai ki ngā maunga here kōrero,

ki ngā pari whakarongo tai,

ki ngā awa tuku kiri o ōna manawhenua,

ōna mana ā-iwi taketake mai, tauiwi atu.

Tāmaki – makau a te rau, murau a te tini,

wenerau a te mano.

Kāhore tō rite i te ao.

I greet the mountains, repository of all that has been said of this place,

there I greet the cliffs that have heard the ebb and flow of the tides of time,

and the rivers that cleansed the forebears of all who came those born of this land and the newcomers among us all.

Auckland – beloved of hundreds, famed among the multitude, envy of thousands.

You are unique in the world.

Chairs' Forward

Our connection with water is part of what makes Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland so special. Water gives us life, shapes our environment, and contributes to the beauty of our region.

We cannot take the life-giving quality of water for granted, particularly in the face of a changing climate. We are already seeing longer dry spells, hotter conditions, and more extreme and unpredictable weather.

Auckland's Water Strategy builds on the Our Water Future - Tō Tātou Wai Ahu Ake Nei public discussion document which set a high-level vision for Auckland's waters: 'te Mauri o te Wai o Tāmaki Makaurau - the life-sustaining capacity of Auckland's water - is protected and enhanced'.

Aucklanders have been clear, we want an Auckland where:

- Life in and sustained by water is thriving across the region
- Aucklanders are able to swim in, and harvest from, our rivers, estuaries and harbours
- Everyone has access to enough water of the appropriate quality to meet their needs.

To achieve this vision, it's clear that many of council's current approaches need to change. By focusing on mauri, the life-sustaining capacity of water, the council acknowledges that partnership with mana whenua and recognition of te ao Māori is absolutely fundamental. For example, one way the strategy seeks to strengthen its relationships is through the development of a Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework for water outcomes, a world-first approach that reflects Tāmaki Makaurau.

How do we ensure we have enough water now and in the future? How can we ensure equitable access to water and affordability for all Aucklanders? How can we make room for water in our urban spaces where we live work and play? How do we empower Aucklanders to connect to local waterways and protect them? How can we protect and enhance the health of waterbodies and their ecosystems that are under increasing threat from growth and climate change?

These are important questions. To ensure we respond appropriately, this strategy will direct investment and activity across the council family over the next 30 years.

We invite you to join in the vision for Auckland's waters. With the **life-sustaining capacity of water at the centre of our decisions**, we can create a healthier, more resilient Auckland for all.

Richard Hills, Chair, and **Pippa Coom**, Deputy Chair,
of the Environment and Climate Change Committee.

Contents

Water in Tāmaki

Water has sustained communities in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland for centuries

Māori have occupied Tāmaki Makaurau for centuries. The mauri of water, its capacity to sustain life, made this possible. The Waitematā, Manukau and Kaipara Harbours, the Waikato Awa as well as the many bays, streams, creeks and other water bodies of the area are foundational to traditional ways of life in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and the rohe of iwi and hapū who whakapapa here.

Māori applied a sophisticated system of place-based resource management techniques to maintain and nourish their relationship with wai based on reciprocal relations between tangata whenua and taiao (flora and fauna and more-than-human beings including taniwha, tipua, kaitiaki). All parts of the world (harbours, wetlands, rivers, people etc) are seen as connected through relationships. Any actions that disrupted or diminished the mauri (life-sustaining capacity) of the environment and people were (and remain) undesirable.

Water bodies provided drinking water and could be sources of mahinga kai, hāngi stones and other cultural materials. They were also recognised as having their own intrinsic value. Some rivers were navigable, providing connection across the region. Others were wāhi tapu (restricted places).

The 19th and 20th Centuries

New people came to live in Tāmaki Makaurau and brought new ideas with them. Colonial settlers viewed landscapes (and waterscapes) as places that were rich in resources and in need of development. They thought of water as ‘drinking’, ‘waste’ and ‘storm’ water, which influenced how they managed it. These ideas replaced relationships based on kinship and were the basis of new approaches to water that transformed the region.

Over time, water for metropolitan supply was collected in the Auckland Domain, Western Springs, Lake Pupuke, dams in the Waitakere and Hunua ranges and later from the Waikato River. Reservoirs were built across the region. Streams were channelised, piped and disconnected from their headwaters and the coast. The coastline of the Waitematā was slowly modified to accommodate a working port. Wastewater was initially discharged untreated to waterways directly and then treatment schemes were developed. Māori were not generally involved in decision making.

These developments supported a dramatic increase in the region’s population which continues to this day. Aucklanders generally enjoyed a high quality of life with well-managed services. However, the transformative impact of a growing population had dramatic effects on the life-sustaining capacity of water in the region. Some streams and beaches became too toxic for people. Many became less hospitable for wildlife.

Auckland borough councils were amalgamated in 1989. Over time, this new arrangement enabled coordinated regional investment and further amalgamation enabled Watercare to provide consistent service and pricing across the region.

As the 20th century ended, general awareness of the detrimental impact of how water was managed rose. As a result, the way that water was managed slowly began to change. Between 1998 and 2005, Watercare carried out the biggest environmental restoration programme to be undertaken in New Zealand at Māngere treatment plant. The current Central Interceptor project now carries that title. It too will lead to significant environmental benefits by reducing wastewater overflows in the Central Auckland area.

Going forward, 2022+

The long history of this place and the accumulated decisions and investments of the past have created a complex tapestry. Together they create the characteristics, challenges and opportunities that are unique to our place in the world.

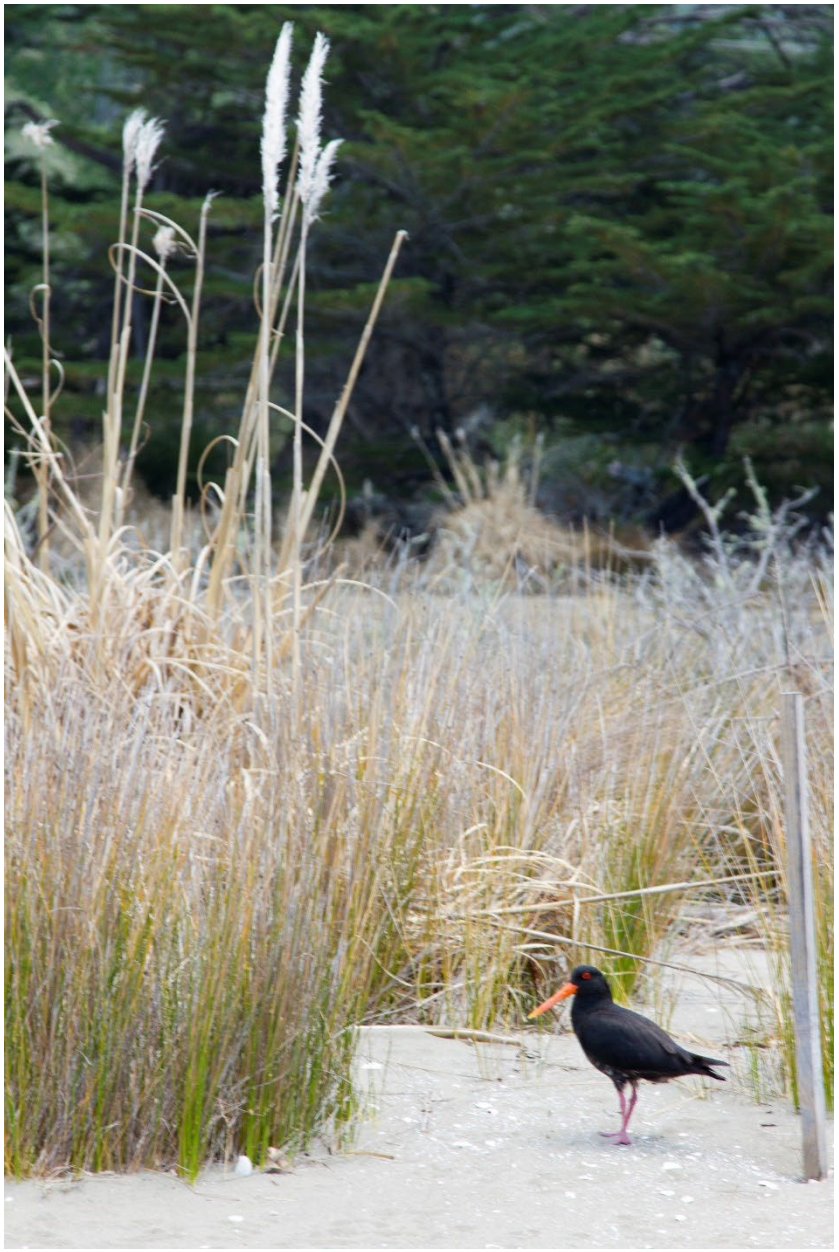
Auckland Council has the functions of both a regional and local council, providing for significant and integrated policy and investment across the region. The council is positioned to embed the vision and strategic intent of the Water Strategy into its activity across the region.

The council will work with mana whenua and mataawaka and strengthen the meaningful, effective relationships needed to enhance the mauri of water in Auckland.

Auckland is poised to prioritise a relationship with water that is centred on understanding and respecting the essential and a central place it has in our lives and the life of the world. This is the driving idea inside the Water Strategy's vision, **te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of Auckland's water, is protected and enhanced**.

How we relate to water underpins the kinds of decisions we make. How we think is reflected in how problems are described, which solutions are designed and how they are implemented. By explicitly naming the protection and enhancement of mauri as the organising principle of the council's approach to water outcomes in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the council commits to the prioritisation of the life-sustaining capacity of water in decision-making and commits to strengthening its partnership with mana whenua to do so.

With the life-sustaining capacity of water at the centre of our decisions, Auckland can create a healthier, more resilient region for all.



The Council and Water

The Water Strategy commits the council to a bold new relationship with water to protect and enhance te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of water

The Auckland Water Strategy (the Water Strategy) sets a vision for Auckland's waters and provides strategic direction for investment and action across the Auckland Council Group.

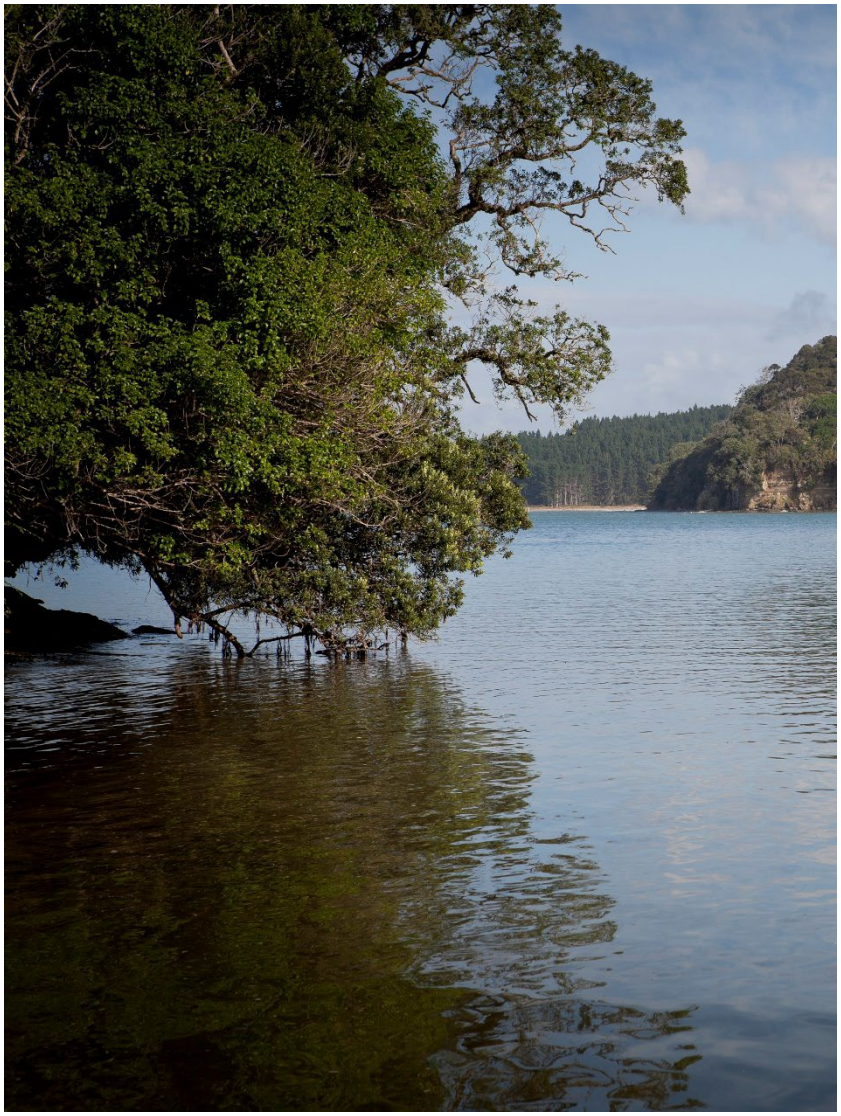
The council group has a broad role in delivering water outcomes:

Auckland Council delivers storm water infrastructure and services; resource management regulation, consenting, monitoring, and compliance for effects on fresh water and coastal water; and research, reporting, policy, and strategy functions.

Watercare provides drinking water and wastewater infrastructure and services.

Auckland Transport influences land use and the storm water network. The transport network is Auckland's largest public realm asset and investment.

Eke Panuku Development Auckland delivers urban regeneration in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) and is responsible for bringing water into place-making.



Auckland Council's governance is shared between the governing body (the mayor and 20 councillors) and 21 local boards

Governing Body focuses on the region-wide, strategic decisions. There are some decisions that only a governing body can make. These include setting rates, making bylaws or adopting the council's ten-year budget (the Long-term Plan). The governing body is organised into committees and the Water Strategy is in the Terms of Reference of one of those committees.

For the Water Strategy, the governing body has important responsibilities including:

1. articulating long-term desired outcomes and set strategic direction for the council
2. partnering with mana whenua to find agreed ways of working on shared goals and to ensure mātauranga Māori underpins the council's new ways of working
3. supporting embedding water-sensitivity into regional planning regulation
4. agreeing regional frameworks that can be used to organise and coordinate investment and action
5. providing clear direction to council-controlled organisations to embed the vision and strategic direction of the strategy
6. advocating to central government for changes to legislation and national frameworks that support the protection and enhancement of te mauri o te wai
7. undertake strategic initiatives and direct grant funding that furthers water outcomes at various inter-related scales (national, regional and local)
8. oversee regulatory responsibilities and instruments used to facilitate compliance by third parties
9. demonstrating leadership within its own operations and activities.

Local Boards represent their local communities and make decisions on local issues, activities and facilities. The 21 local boards have key responsibilities like adopting local board plans and developing and monitoring annual work plans, engaging with their communities, inputting into regional strategies (like the Water Strategy) and delivering delegated activities like regulatory decision-making.

For the Water Strategy, Auckland's local boards have important responsibilities including:

1. advocating for and funding action that supports the protection and enhancement of te mauri o te wai
2. fostering strong local partnerships with mana whenua and Māori communities
3. working with communities to understand their priorities and deliver water outcomes in Auckland
4. leading local initiatives that empower Aucklanders to strengthen their relationship to water
5. advocate to Council-Controlled Organisations to embed the vision and strategic direction of the strategy in local initiatives
6. advocating for local facilities to promote lower water use.

About this Strategy

Who is this Strategy for?

This document is designed for staff and elected members as well as the council's partners and interested community members.

A **summary version** of the Water Strategy is also available.

A 30-year document

The water strategy is designed to guide the council to 2050. The council has therefore considered Tāmaki Makaurau's broader context over the life of the strategy including:

1. land use change, in particular as driven by population growth
2. mitigating and adapting to climate change
3. partnership approach with mana whenua
4. growing iwi capacity and further settlements that will affect governance structures
5. technological change.

Given the timeframe the Water Strategy attempts to cover, the council has taken a prescriptive approach to the short-term and more illustrative into the long-term. The council will add necessary actions in the framework as progress is made.

Why do we need a strategy?

The Water Strategy provides an organising framework for the council group to guide decision-making. The framework can be used to understand how services the council provides and the functions it performs, contribute to a collective vision.

The strategy has been developed in recognition that many of the council's current approaches needs to change to enact a meaningful improvement to the mauri of water in Auckland. The Auckland Council has given strong political direction to coordinate water management. The Water Strategy and its Implementation Plan are reflective of this direction.

The Water Strategy will direct investment and activity across the council group. It is a 'tier two strategy' sitting underneath the Auckland Plan 2050, alongside Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan (for example) and directs other strategies, policies and plans across the council group.

With the Water Strategy in place, the council commits to showing how investment decisions align to the Water Strategy strategic framework.

For example, the council and its council-controlled organisations collaborate to produce asset management plans. These need to show how they prioritise the wellbeing of water and how the strategic direction of the Water Strategy is embedded in advice and decisions. This requires the council group to work together in an ongoing manner.

Development of the Strategy

The **Our Water Future - Tō Tātou Wai Ahu Ake Nei** discussion document was consulted on in 2019. This established a high-level vision for Auckland's waters, 'te Mauri o te Wai o Tāmaki Makaurau - the life-sustaining capacity of Auckland's water - is protected and enhanced', and presented key values, issues and principles that were designed to inform strategy development.

In developing the strategy, the council has taken direction from its core strategies and policies including the **Auckland Plan 2050** and **Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri – Auckland's Climate Action Plan.** In particular, the water strategy commits the council to prioritising the health of water in Auckland by adopting a te ao Māori approach to protecting our waters; adapting to a changing water future; developing Aucklanders' stewardship; restoring our damaged environments; protecting our significant water bodies; and using Auckland's growth to achieve better water outcomes.

The Water Strategy has been developed during a period of significant uncertainty for the council. Central government has indicated that participation in the proposed **Three Waters Reforms** will be mandated. The reforms would move management of three waters assets to a new inter-regional entity. Economic regulation is also planned.

Over the next few years, as the shape and impacts of proposed reform become clearer, the council would use the strategy in appropriate ways to provide direction to any processes that arise. This strategy would become council's position on the aims and outcomes sought from any new entity.

While the final form of the proposed structures is not known, the proposed reform would not affect all areas of delivery for the Water Strategy. Council would retain its:

1. core role as environmental regulator
2. core role as regulatory planning authority
3. core treaty partnership role for local government
4. core role to engage and be the voice for Auckland communities
5. management of the council group's own water consumption (towards consumption targets).

Council has also considered the government's ongoing development of spatial planning and resource management reform and the direction from central government to deliver management of freshwater, land use and development in catchments in an integrated and sustainable way to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects, including cumulative effects.

Benchmarking Our Progress

A world-first approach that reflects this place

One way that progress towards the vision of this strategy will be tracked is by benchmarking the region against two frameworks repeatedly over time. We call this our **dual benchmarking approach**. We'll score Auckland against both frameworks at agreed intervals and use the scores together to inform ongoing action.

The two benchmarking frameworks are:

Water Sensitive Cities (an international framework)

A Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework (in development)

Importantly, mana whenua and council do not share a worldview and must work to find areas of alignment. The dual benchmarking reflects a partnership approach between council and the Tāmaki Makaurau Mana Whenua Forum. It acknowledges and provides one way of navigating different worldviews and provides for recognition of Māori cultural values and perspectives alongside an international best-practice framework. It is the council's hope that the dual benchmarking tool will strengthen relationships by acknowledging identities and ways of understanding.

The benchmarking frameworks together describe *the destination* we are travelling to; the Water Strategy's vision of **te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of water**, is protected and enhanced. Each time we undertake the benchmarking assessment we gain an understanding of *how far away that destination remains*. The idea is that council is travelling towards that destination together with our treaty partners.

The Water Sensitive Cities benchmarking is undertaken by council group staff. The Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework benchmarking is designed to be undertaken by mana whenua, using council-funded and mana whenua-appointed facilitators. Should central government **Three Waters Reform** produce a new delivery entity, that entity will be invited to participate in the benchmarking process to maintain effectiveness of the benchmarking.

We intend to undertake the dual benchmarking at the same time as the State of the Environment Reporting (currently every five years). The results of the benchmarking must be presented together to track progress against the strategy and considered together to inform ongoing action development and delivery.

Note that this dual benchmarking approach is not meant to replace other topic-specific benchmarking Council participates in; for example, Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA), which benchmarks stormwater asset management every 4 years. Nor does the benchmarking replace the Statement of Intent or Long-Term Plan Level-of-Service reporting metrics. These metrics are in fact inputs to the regional benchmarking process.

Water Sensitive Cities

A water-sensitive cities or regions are liveable, resilient, sustainable and productive. Challenges are met by transforming the way we design, build and manage our cities and towns.

The **Water Sensitive Cities** Index was developed by the Co-operative Research Centre based at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. It was selected for its participatory approach and holistic set of criteria. The Index scores a city or region against 34 indicators, across seven thematic goals:

1. Governance and decision-making
2. Community capital
3. Sustainable use and equitable access
4. Productivity and resource efficiency
5. Integrated land use planning and quality urban spaces
6. Ecological health and restorative action
7. Adaptive, resilient infrastructure.

The council group completed the Water-Sensitive Cities benchmarking in 2021. The diagram alongside shows how Auckland performs against the requirements for each of the framework's 'city stages,' which are on a continuum from 'water supply city' to 'water sensitive city'.

Auckland performs very well against the criteria for 'water supply city' (red), 'sewered city' (orange) and 'waterway city' (light green) as defined by the framework. Auckland appears to have moved beyond 'drained city' (yellow) status without fully meeting its criteria. This likely reflects the change in flood management approach in recent years - away from channelisation as the default management response towards more integrated outcomes (including public amenity for example).

Progress against all goals and indicators of the framework will support future water sensitive city attainment. See **Water Sensitive Cities Benchmarking and Assessment Tāmaki Makaurau - Auckland Report** for more detail.

The council referred to the indicator framework and the benchmarking results as key inputs for the Water Strategy's development. The strategic shifts and associated aims and actions are designed to address areas where council can improve on its journey towards being a water-sensitive region.

Using the Index allows the council to track Auckland's journey towards a water-sensitive city over time. The index is used both nationally and internationally, so provides a comparison to other cities as well as opportunities to collaborate.

Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework

The council, through the Water Strategy project, partnered with Te Pou Taiao (the Environment Subcommittee of the Tāmaki Makaurau Mana Whenua Forum) to develop a mana whenua-led framework to be used together with, and on an equal basis as, the Water-Sensitive Cities.

The development of a **Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework** has been guided by the Forum's Te Ora ō Tāmaki Makaurau Wellbeing Framework and the concept of Kia Ora te Tātai – the sustaining and regeneration of trans-generational symbiotic relationships and connections between tangata-whenua-taiao (people-place-nature).

Development of the framework is ongoing, and the form and use of the framework will be decided by the Tāmaki Makaurau Mana Whenua Forum. The council is supporting that process at time of writing.

Auckland mana whenua groups will be invited to participate in a scoring session for the Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework in 2022. A report will then be produced and used alongside the Water-Sensitive Cities results to guide ongoing action. This report will be made available online alongside the Water Strategy and supporting documents once it is complete.

The draft Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework scores a city or region against 18 tohu (indicators) spread across five Whāinga (thematic goals) that contribute to and enable te mauri o te wai:

1. Mana Whakahaere – Leadership and Decision-making
2. Tūrangawaewae – Place to Stand / Sense of Place
3. Whanaungatanga – Strengthening Relationships
4. Taonga Tuku Iho – Treasures Handed On
5. Te Ao Tūroa – Relationships with the Natural World

The framework is designed using similar elements to the Water Sensitive Cities framework to allow for easier alignment of results. The participatory scoring approach is also similar. The council will support ongoing testing and development of the Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking Framework with iwi and its application.

The Whāinga reflect the Forum's Te Ora ō Tāmaki Makaurau Wellbeing Framework. They act as tuituia (bindings) that are aligned to the Water Sensitive Cities framework as shown below:

Tuituia (bindings) between the Mātauranga Māori Benchmarking and Water Sensitive Cities Frameworks	
Mana Whakahaere	Governance and decision making
Turangawaewae	Integrated land use planning and quality urban spaces
Whanaungatanga	Community capital Sustainable use and equitable access
Taonga Tuku Iho	Adaptive, resilient infrastructure
Te Ao Tūroa	Productivity and resource efficiency Ecological health and restorative action

Using the index allows the council to track Auckland's journey towards thriving mauri o te wai over time, calibrated to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and Te Ao Māori ways of thinking and knowing.

Our Strategic Framework

Auckland's context, challenges, aims, and required actions

The Water Strategy sets a vision for the future. The framework consists of:

1. **vision**
2. **treaty context**
3. **challenges**
4. **cross-cutting themes**
5. **strategic shifts and associated aims and actions**
6. **implementation.**

The **framework** is designed to make implementation steps clear for council to track progress towards that vision so that communities and partners can hold council accountable to progress over time. For more information see the accompanying **Implementation Plan.**

Water Strategy Strategic Framework

Our Vision	**Te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of Auckland's water, is protected and enhanced**
Our Treaty Context	The Council and mana whenua must take a partnership approach to the protection, management and enhancement of water
Our Over-arching Challenges	1. Protecting and enhancing the health of waterbodies and their ecosystems 2. Delivering 3-waters services at the right time, in the right place, at the right scale, as the city grows 3. Having enough water for people now and in the future 4. Reducing exposure to water-related natural hazard risk over time. 5. Affordability for Aucklanders 6. Improving how the council works with its treaty partners 7. Improving how the council organises itself
Our Cross-cutting Themes	**Equity and Affordability:** Equitable access to essential services and affordable investment **Climate Change:** Mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change

Our Strategic Shifts

1	**Te Tiriti Partnership** The council and mana whenua working together in agreed ways on agreed things	2	**Empowered Aucklanders** The council working with Aucklanders for better water outcomes
3	**Sustainable Allocation and Equitable Access** Prioritising mauri when using water, to sustain the environment and people in the long term	4	**Regenerative Water Infrastructure** Ensuring Auckland's water infrastructure is regenerative, resilient, low carbon, and increases the mauri of water. It should be seen and understood by Aucklanders
5	**Water Security** Creating water abundance and security for a growing population through efficient use and diverse sources	6	**Integrated Land Use and Water Planning** Integrating land use and water planning at a regional, catchment and site scale
7	**Restoring and Enhancing Water Ecosystems** Taking catchment-based approaches to the health of water ecosystems	8	**Pooling Knowledge** Fostering a shared understanding enabling better decisions for our water future

Our Implementation	Co-ordination, Capacity and Capability across the Council Group

Our Vision

Te mauri o te wai, the life-sustaining capacity of Auckland's water, is protected and enhanced

The Water Strategy vision describes Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's desired long-term future. The council commits to considering the protection and enhancement of water as a priority in all relevant decision making.

The mauri – the life sustaining capacity – of water is a fundamentally intuitive concept. It is something all Aucklanders can appreciate. There is a qualitative difference we feel when walking alongside a healthy waterbody compared to one that has been channelled, polluted, or piped, for example.

The vision outlines a future where the region's waters are healthy, thriving, and treasured. A future where the deep connections between water, the environment and people are recognised and valued. The vision recognises the mana whenua as kaitiaki within the region and represents values that can unify us in our actions. Best of all, the vision is special to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and its people.

How we relate to water underpins the kinds of decisions we make. How we think is reflected in how problems are described, which solutions are designed and how they are implemented. By explicitly naming the protection and enhancement of mauri as the organising principle of the council's approach to water outcomes in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the council commits to the prioritisation of the life-sustaining capacity of water in decision-making and commits to strengthening its partnership with mana whenua to do so.

With the life-sustaining capacity of water at the centre of our decisions, we can create a healthier, more resilient Auckland for all.

The vision encapsulates **five values for water**:

1. *ecosystems* – healthy water ecosystems nourish the natural environment and people
2. *water use* – we meet our everyday water needs safely, reliably, and efficiently
3. *recreation and amenity* – we enjoy being in, on and near the water
4. *culture* – water contributes to our identities and beliefs, as individuals and as part of communities
5. *resilience* – our communities, catchments and coastlines are resilient to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.

As we **progress towards our vision** Aucklanders will:

1. see a stronger partnership approach from the council with mana whenua
2. know that the council is prioritising water ecosystem wellbeing (mauri) in its decisions
3. be empowered to contribute to decision and action that drive wellbeing of water and people
4. be more efficient water users
5. have greater access to blue-green spaces at local and regional levels
6. experience more places that celebrate water as foundational to place-making.

Our Treaty Context

The Council and mana whenua must take a partnership approach to the protection, management and enhancement of water

Māori have enduring rights and interests related to water as a taonga affirmed under Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and as indigenous peoples under international law.

The treaty provides the context for a partnership between the council and mana whenua for the protection, management, and enhancement of water. Like the council, mana whenua are long-term contributors to water outcomes.

The council is committed to meeting its statutory responsibilities to both mana whenua and mataawaka in Auckland. The council recognises these are distinct from the Crown's Treaty obligations and fall within a local government Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland context.

Our Treaty context has informed the strategic direction of the Water Strategy, including a suite of actions designed to collectively strengthen the council's relationships with Māori.

In Auckland there are 19 mana whenua with historical and territorial rights over the land recognised by Council.

Ngaati Whanaunga
Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
Ngāti Manuhiri
Ngāti Maru
Ngāti Paoa
Ngāti Tamaoho
Ngāti Tamaterā
Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua
Ngāti Wai ki Ngāti Rehua
Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
Ngātiwai
Te Ahiwaru
Te Ākitai Waiohua
Te Kawerau ā Maki
Te Patukirikiri
Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua
Te Uri o Hau
Waikato-Tainui

For regional matters, the Tāmaki Makaurau Mana Whenua Forum can provide a collective view on appropriate region-wide matters. The Forum does not represent or act on behalf of individual mana whenua groups. Each group asserts and maintains its Mana Motuhake.

Whether through the Forum or on an individual basis, mana whenua participate in council activity on a wide range of matters for which council is responsible. Mana whenua have a wide range of interests in council's activities across issues and spatially (reflecting mana whenua rohe). Many mana whenua have environment and iwi management plans that detail their interests and values as they apply in resource management matters to guide resource management practitioners (including council in its role as regulator).

The mana whenua-Auckland Council relationship is not the only relationship mana whenua must navigate and the council will be mindful of the demands on time and resources engagement and partnership can require.

Our Challenges

Through the Water Strategy the council fulfils its obligations to identify and plan for future challenges across its broad range of functions that affect water outcomes.

Auckland faces several overarching challenges that inform the strategic direction set by the Water Strategy:

Protecting and enhancing the health of waterbodies and their ecosystems

The region's waters and healthy ecosystems are fundamental to the well-being of all Aucklanders. Healthy ecosystems provide multiple benefits that can be enjoyed by Aucklanders. For example, clean water, food, carbon sequestration, spiritual connection, and amenity and recreation.

Many of the region's freshwater ecosystems are in poor health, particularly in urban areas. Business-as-usual urban development and the impacts of climate change are the two greatest threats to ecosystem health into the future. Key drivers for poor ecosystem health are habitat removal resulting in no or low vegetation cover, increased temperature, nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, accumulation of heavy metals and harmful chemicals, rubbish, unmaintained onsite wastewater treatment systems, stream removal (piping) and channelisation, invasive species, and blocked fish passage.

Changing the way Aucklander's develop and redevelop the urban built form, changing the way rural land is managed, and finding innovative restoration approaches and funding mechanisms will all be necessary to move towards protecting and enhancing the health of waterbodies and their ecosystems.

Delivering 3-waters services at the right time, in the right place, at the right scale, as the city grows

The council group manages extensive drinking, wastewater and stormwater networks that contribute to public health and safety, property and infrastructure protection and environmental outcomes. Sustained investment has delivered high levels of service, particularly for drinking water supply and wastewater.

The council provides infrastructure to support sufficient development capacity. The three waters are lead infrastructure for development, particularly where that development is occurring on or near a flood plain.

Auckland is projected to build around 400,000 new dwellings by 2050. The infrastructure to support growth, while challenging to fund and deliver, is an opportunity to rethink how infrastructure is designed, delivered, and operated. 'Services' that the council previously provided through piped and underground solutions can be provided through regenerative, local and 'green' infrastructure solutions that come with additional benefits.

Having enough water for people now and in the future

The council group is responsible for ensuring that water is managed to support freshwater ecosystem health, people's drinking water/health needs, and people's economic activity.

Ensuring secure and sustainable drinking water supply requires careful planning as total water demand is projected to increase as Auckland's population grows to 2.3 million in 2050. Climate change is already impacting both water demand and water availability, which will continue to increase over the coming decades.

Auckland will experience more dry days, and more frequent and longer lasting drought, which drive higher water demand. Annual rainfall is projected to stay about the same, but that rain is expected to fall in less frequent, higher intensity rainfall events. Higher intensity rainfall events can cause higher sediment loads and result in Auckland's dams functioning at reduced capacity more frequently. Rural Aucklander's may experience longer periods between rain to top up their tanks.

Careful management of average and peak demand across a diverse portfolio of water sources, and sustainable water allocation will be required to increase water security.

Reducing exposure to water-related natural hazard risk over time

People, property, and infrastructure are exposed to water-related natural hazard risks including erosion, land instability, coastal inundation, and flooding. These risks are increasing as the climate changes. Exposure to that risk is also increasing as more people live, work and play in Auckland.

Current modelling indicates approximately 60,000 buildings in the region are within floodplains, of which 14,000 are at risk of flooding above floor level in a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) event. Some 62,000 buildings are predicted to be within a 1% AEP overland flow path, of which 7,000 are considered at risk of flooding above floor level. Approximately 10,000 buildings are within a 1% AEP coastal inundation area (including a 1m sea level rise).

Avoiding growth in exposure to water-related natural hazard risk and decreasing existing exposure over time will require stronger planning provisions, working with natural processes when developing, and having clear policy for limiting development in, and removing vulnerable structure/activities from, high risk water related natural hazard areas.

Affordability for Aucklanders

The council, on behalf of Aucklanders, invests in outcomes across the region. We have an obligation to have due regard for the total costs and benefits of an arrangement and how it contributes to the outcomes the council is trying to achieve. The Water Strategy articulates those outcomes as strategic shifts.

Funding is a persistent constraint for the council. However, in recent years Aucklanders have supported new funding streams for the continued protection and enhancement of the natural environment and native species through the Natural Environment and Water Quality targeted rates to 2030/31.

The principle of value for money means selecting the best possible outcome considering whole-of-life costs. This requires a sophisticated understanding of and frameworks that value multiple outcomes, long-term benefits, flexibility (avoiding 'system lock in'), and so on. The council's spending must be prudent and equitable across Auckland and across generations for positive environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing. Importantly, these means that 'affordable' and 'cheapest' are not synonymous. Improving investment frameworks is a key directive of this strategy.

Note that equity and affordability is a **cross-cutting theme** in the Water Strategy.

Improving how the council works with its treaty partners

To effectively deliver on its legal obligations, the council needs thriving relationships with mana whenua. Central government has provided direction to local government to enable Māori participation in decision-making processes; recognise Māori cultural values and perspectives; and consider opportunities for local government to promote Māori well-being and contribute to Māori capacity.

However, there are challenges to meaningful partnerships such as a lack of mechanisms for partnership decision-making; water practices and resource consents that contradict the input of mana whenua; and an increasing engagement load for mana whenua which is coupled with a persistent resourcing imbalance between the council and mana whenua. This must be addressed for relationships to thrive.

The council needs to see issues in new ways, listen and understand its treaty partner and reorient processes and action towards shared goals. And importantly, while water is a significant issue for mana whenua, partnership must improve across matters beyond water.

Improving how the council organises itself

Sustainable management of water requires a holistic approach to data collection, information management, knowledge generation and development of regulatory and non-regulatory responses (policy and infrastructure investment).

The council group is a large, complex organisation with several challenges to cohesive, coordinated approaches to achieving water outcomes. The council's responsibilities are wide-ranging, have over-lapping work programmes and competing priorities, and experience frequent central government direction or reform. This is exacerbated by difficulties sharing information internally and externally; poor translation of the council goals into work programmes; and high workloads, particularly in consents and compliance.

This Strategy commits the council to taking a consistent, sustained approach to putting te mauri o te wai at the centre of council group planning and investment decisions and action. The council will need a strong culture of holistic planning, action, reporting as well as post-implementation review to improve how we deliver for Auckland.

Our Cross-Cutting Themes

In addition to over-arching challenges (which have informed the strategic shifts and actions in the Water Strategy), two cross-cutting themes will inform the council's strategic approach in the Water Strategy.

Cross-cutting themes apply to **implementation** of the Water Strategy. This means that actions should be designed and delivered in ways that address both cross-cutting themes.

General **council resources are available** to guide advisors and decision-makers.

1. Equity and affordability

The **Auckland Plan 2050** recognises widespread inequity across the region. Investment and action aligned to the Water Strategy's strategic framework is a significant opportunity to address disparities and serve communities of greatest need.

Importantly, Auckland performs well against some international standards. For example, Auckland has equitable access to water supply and sanitation. However, there are areas for improvement captured in the strategy such as:

1. affordability of water for use
2. flood protection
3. access to blue-green space for recreation.

In addition to matters of equity, affordability is an essential concept to understand and apply to our decision-making. Importantly, 'affordable' and 'cheapest' are not synonymous. The principle of value for money means selecting the best possible outcome considering whole-of-life costs.

2. Climate change

Climate change will have wide-ranging implications for the issues raised in the Water Strategy, including influencing demand for water; affecting water availability of a given water source over time; and increasing flood, coastal inundation, erosion and land instability risks to life and property.

Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri – Auckland's Climate Action Plan provides strong direction for Auckland and the council:

1. *An overarching Tāmaki response* reflecting the uniqueness of Tāmaki Makaurau and the need to embed issues like equity, te ao Māori and a strong rangatahi voice into Auckland's climate mitigation and adaptation response.
2. *Focus on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets:* halving emissions by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050.
3. *Preparing for the impacts of climate change:* taking a precautionary approach where the potential consequence is severe or irreversible, including preparing for the prospect of 3.5 degrees warming Celsius or more of warming which may occur by 2110.

The twin challenges of mitigation and adaptation must be considered as action is taken to implement the Water Strategy. the council commits to progressing and incorporating up-to-date research into its planning.

Mitigation

progress has been made to reduce operational emissions associated with water services. Embodied carbon remains a challenge and an opportunity (carbon footprint of a building or infrastructure project before it becomes operational).

Watercare has a climate change strategy and have committed to a 50% reduction in operational emissions by 2030 and a 40% reduction in built emissions (from 2019 baseline) for the whole 10-year capital works programme. It is being updated at time of writing. (Watercare have adopted the council's target to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 and have committed to net-zero emissions by 2050).

Auckland Council is developing a 'carbon portal' for water infrastructure that will enable infrastructure providers to quickly understand the carbon footprint of projects and will lead to better design decisions being made.

Adaptation

The council's **30-year Infrastructure Strategy** states that climate change will lead to '*increasing demand on existing water assets to perform under higher demand and extreme weather conditions, requiring more frequent performance monitoring and maintenance*.'

It anticipates a likely '*acceleration of the move away from carbon heavy assets to carbon sequestering (green) assets*.' That strategic direction is reflected in the Water Strategy.

Our Strategic Shifts

The Water Strategy framework includes eight overarching strategic shifts. Each strategic shift represents long-term change in the council's approach towards a stated aim. To achieve this, each Strategic Shift has associated actions with indicative implementation timings identified. Strategic Shifts are designed so that the council can add actions to the framework as progress is made. For more detail, including action-owners, see the accompanying **Implementation Plan.**

Where applicable, targets are also identified. Over time, the council may design further targets and add these to the Water Strategy framework. Some actions provide for this explicitly such as a target for water literacy.

Note that actions identified in the Implementation Plan are the specific actions required to **create a foundation for a shift** in the council's approach. They are not the full extent of actions required to shift the council towards the vision of the water strategy. Other actions will be developed, and decisions taken on emerging issues over time (including Asset Management Plans and the Long-Term Plan) and the council group must work together to embed the strategic intent of the Water Strategy into these.

The strategic shifts were arrived at by considering the changes that the council must make to respond to the challenges and cross-cutting themes above, as well as responding to the water sensitive cities benchmarking undertaken. The Strategic Shifts represent new approaches and thoughtful, proactive, planning. Progress against each Strategic Shift will enable Auckland to better manage the challenges ahead.

The Strategic Shifts are designed as a package with clear interactions and interdependencies. For example, the Empowered Aucklanders Strategic Shift towards an **empowered community approach** to engagement is fundamental to community contribution to a **blue-green network** as part of the Integrated Land Use and Water Planning Strategic Shift.

Strategic Shifts

1. Te Tiriti Partnership

The council and mana whenua working together in agreed ways on agreed things

2. Empowered Aucklanders

The council working with Aucklanders for better water outcomes

3. Sustainable Allocation and Equitable Access

Prioritising mauri when using water, to sustain the environment and people in the long term

4. Regenerative Water Infrastructure

Ensuring Auckland's water infrastructure is regenerative, resilient, low carbon, and increases the mauri of water. It should be seen and understood by Aucklanders

5. Water Security

Creating water abundance and security for a growing population through efficient use and diverse sources

6. Integrated Land use and Water Planning

Integrating land use and water planning at a regional, catchment and site scale

7. Restoring and Enhancing Water Ecosystems

Taking catchment-based approaches to the health of water ecosystems

8. Pooling Knowledge

Fostering a shared understanding enabling better decisions for our water future

Strategic Shift 1

Te Tiriti Partnership

The council and mana whenua working together in agreed ways on agreed things

The council has made commitments to acknowledge and align to a Māori worldview, including in the Auckland Plan 2050 and the Our Water Future Public Discussion Document: 'Apply a Māori worldview to treasure and protect our natural environment (taonga tuku iho)' and protect and restore 'Te Mauri o Te Wai o Tāmaki Makaurau'.

To effectively deliver on its legal obligations and commitments made, the council needs to have enduring partnerships with its treaty partners and find ways to work together in agreed ways on agreed things. This will require **new ways of working towards shared goals.**

The vision of the Water Strategy is about mauri. Partnership with mana whenua is essential to working with this and related concepts. The council's approaches need to change, and relationships must strengthen over time to realise the aspiration of this Strategy.

Aim

The council and mana whenua are partners in the protection, management, and enhancement of water. This means:

1. partnership mechanisms support working together in agreed ways on agreed things.
2. mana whenua exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga and are meaningfully involved in decision-making roles across the water system.
3. the council's processes recognise different perspectives and ways of knowing. Mātauranga is part of water system planning.
4. mana whenua cultural associations with water systems are protected and enhanced.

Challenges

1. The council's norms and processes that can be difficult for mana whenua to navigate
2. Competing demands on time and resources for both mana whenua and the council
3. A significant, sustained resource imbalance between mana whenua and the council
4. Council staff understanding of and capability to deliver treaty commitments and statutory responsibilities
5. Council engagement with Māori on water issues is not centrally coordinated
6. The council's monitoring and reporting requirements are often at the regional level, whereas mana whenua are more directly concerned with a placed-based or rohe-level view
7. Partnership is affected by central government reform and policy direction, which can create uncertainty.

Te Tiriti Partnership Actions		YR
1.1	**Apply dual framework to benchmark water outcomes** (ongoing)	**1**
1.2	**Resource mana whenua to enable meaningful partnership relationships with the council** (ongoing)	**2-3**
1.3	**Report on te mauri o te wai** (ongoing)	**2-3**
1.4	**Resource mana whenua to lead environmental monitoring** (ongoing)	**2-10**
1.5	**Create further partnership mechanisms with mana whenua**	**4-10**
1.6	**Enable and support co-governance arrangements where appropriate**	**4-10**

Strategic Shift 2

Empowered Aucklanders

The council working with Aucklanders for better water outcomes

The vision of the Water Strategy is that Aucklanders enjoy a strengthened relationship with water.

The council will put greater emphasis on empowering Aucklanders to be active participants in the design and implementation of water outcomes for the region and in their local area. Local boards and community groups have a crucial role in empowering Aucklanders and localising decision making. Encouragement and support will be given to organisations focused on the care and protection of Auckland's waterways and harbours.

All Aucklanders are affected by the major decisions the council group makes about water. And **all Aucklanders have a role to play in achieving a resilient, liveable, productive, and sustainable future.** Planning for, adapting to and coping with the water-related challenges that Tāmaki Makaurau faces requires fundamental shifts in the way the council works in relation to water systems. Working with Aucklanders will be critical for the council's *social license* to enact the significant shifts required to transition to a water-sensitive region.

Aim

Aucklanders are empowered to shape decisions about, and are prepared for, our changing water future. This means:

1. Aucklanders are water-literate, understand te mauri o te wai, and want to be active in shaping Auckland's water future
2. Aucklanders have safe, equitable access and feel connected to healthy, protected blue and green spaces
3. Aucklanders work together to be resilient to the impacts of extreme water-related events and to a changing climate
4. Aucklanders have the opportunity to manage and/or own local water solutions
5. Aucklanders can readily access and contribute to the council's data, information, and knowledge.

Challenges

1. Achieving coordination of efforts and maximising community engagement processes to achieve multiple outcomes and benefits
2. Increasing the scale and reach of council engagement processes
3. Understanding and increasing water literacy
4. Supporting communities to protect and enhance waterbodies and their ecosystems
5. Overcoming barriers to community managed and/or owned water solutions.

Empowered Aucklanders Actions		YR
2.1	**Develop and deliver a framework for, and measure, water literacy at regular intervals** (ongoing)	1-3
2.2	**Grow council group's water literacy education programmes** (ongoing)	1-3
2.3	**Resource mana whenua to lead community engagement for water projects in catchments in their rohe** (ongoing)	1-3
2.4	**Align, coordinate, resource and evaluate the council group's community engagement on water**	1-3
2.5	**Develop a measure of Aucklanders' access to blue-green spaces; a programme to increase access over time; and track progress** (ongoing)	1-3
2.6	**Investigate community-based ownership models for water infrastructure and services**	1-3
2.7	**Set targets for and implement empowered communities' approach for water projects across the council group** (ongoing)	4-10
2.8	**Review the council group's resilience-building programmes for effectiveness, and define and measure community resilience overtime**	4-10

Strategic Shift 3

Sustainable Allocation and Equitable Access

Prioritising mauri when using water, to sustain the environment and people in the long term

The council is responsible for sustainable allocation of water that provides for social, economic, and cultural well-being now and in the future, while maintaining the life-sustaining capacity of our water sources.

Central government policy programmes indicate that the council will need to prepare for **new ways of allocating and recognising interests in water in the future**. Importantly, the council must embed a hierarchy into decision making that prioritises first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems; second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water); and third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.

Aim

When the council allocates water from the natural environment, water use is sustainable, and considers the health and wellbeing of ecosystems and people. This means:

1. natural water ecosystems are protected, restored, or enhanced to levels where they are abundant and harvesting practices are possible
2. water allocation and use are responsive to environmental flows and resilient to a changing climate
3. allocation decisions apply a hierarchy of considerations specific to Tāmaki Makaurau that embeds mauri, equity, and climate sensitivity
4. regulatory and financial incentives are designed to encourage actions and activities that protect and enhance te mauri o te wai.

Challenges

1. Increasing demand on water sources, for example, some aquifer management areas are at or nearing full allocation
2. Information gaps in monitoring data
3. Equity is not currently specifically required to be considered in how we allocate water into the future
4. Existing allocation limits and consent conditions do not adequately account for how climate change will affect water availability of a given water source over time
5. Although the council is conservative when setting take limits for sources, this does not adequately account for or measure the mauri of water in water resource management decision-making
6. Auckland's ecosystems are degraded and therefore the mauri of those water systems is reduced.

Sustainable Allocation and Equitable Access Actions		YR
3.1	**Develop indicators based on mauri to define allocation limits, in partnership with mana whenua**	1-3
3.2	**Assess Auckland's water resources and availability across the region using a Tāmaki expression of the Te Mana o Te Wai hierarchy** (ongoing)	1-3
3.3	**Develop a dynamic water availability model and use it to plan for the future** (ongoing model development)	1-5
3.4	**Set take limits and review allocation rules for the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management using the Tāmaki expression of the Te Mana o Te Wai hierarchy**	1-5
3.5	**Understand the mauri of existing water sources where water is extracted for use, in partnership with mana whenua**	4-10
3.6	**Create a smart allocation system through increased monitoring and data analysis**	4-10

Strategic Shift 4

Regenerative Water Infrastructure

Ensuring Auckland's water infrastructure is regenerative, resilient, low carbon, and increases the mauri of water. It should be seen and understood by Aucklanders

Auckland's sustained investment in infrastructure has delivered high levels of service, particularly for drinking water supply and wastewater.

However, the mauri of waterbodies has been degraded over time because of the historical approaches taken to infrastructure design and delivery. Auckland needs long-term (generational) change to water infrastructure systems through new approaches that align with the council's aspirations for climate positive and resilient infrastructure.

Water infrastructure can and must enhance wellbeing: for example, Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek) and Awakeri wetlands have improved 'services' that were previously provided through piped and underground solutions. These projects are regenerative, 'green' infrastructure solutions that come with additional environmental, cultural, social, and economic benefits. Setting the aspiration now to ensure our infrastructure is mauri-enhancing, rather than mauri-diminishing, means the council's practices will change over time.

In time, the council will only invest in mauri-enhancing water infrastructure. This journey will take time:

2025 the council has guidance, assessment methods and tools for regenerative and mauri-enhancing water infrastructure.

2030 existing and new water infrastructure is assessed for its impact on mauri.

2030-2050 new infrastructure and replacement or renewals of existing infrastructure is regenerative and mauri-enhancing.

2050-2080 the operation of water infrastructure is regenerative and mauri-enhancing.

Aim

Regenerative infrastructure systems enhance the life-sustaining capacity of water (mauri). This means:

1. three waters infrastructure is well-planned, maintained and has the necessary level of investment while ensuring overall affordability for Aucklanders
2. the council uses its significant role in regulating, designing, delivering, renewing and managing water infrastructure to enhance the life-sustaining capacity of water
3. Auckland takes an adaptive planning approach to water infrastructure including staged, small-scale solutions
4. infrastructure solutions across Auckland are nature-based, regenerative, resilient, low or zero-emissions, circular in resource use, and built so that Aucklanders can connect with water
5. water-sensitive infrastructure is consistently maintained to a high standard by all asset owners
6. Auckland prioritises multipurpose infrastructure, including enabling public access.

Challenges

1. An existing large, centralised infrastructure system – the product of 150 years of investment – that achieves economic efficiency, sometimes at the expense of other outcomes
2. Coordination across multiple infrastructure delivery and operational departments & organisations with different organisational drivers
3. Projects that achieve multiple outcomes require us to measure costs and benefits differently
4. A large amount of infrastructure is delivered by third parties (i.e., developers) that are not incentivised to seek or maximise multiple outcomes with their investment
5. While mauri is an intuitive concept, it is place-based and requires mātauranga to fully understand. Existing framework and approaches are often a barrier.

Regenerative Water Infrastructure Actions		YR
4.1	**Collate case studies to increase understanding of resilient, conspicuous, and mauri-enhancing water infrastructure solutions** (complete)	✓
4.2	**Review emissions reductions for water infrastructure against those required by Te-Tāruke-a-Tāwhiri and develop an emissions plan if required**	1-3
4.3	**Resource mana whenua to develop guidance and assessment methods for mauri-enhancing infrastructure**	2-3
4.4	**Assess and map impacts of existing water infrastructure on te mauri o te wai, in partnership with mana whenua**	2-3
4.5	**Evaluate and map resilience of the council's water infrastructure systems**	2-3
4.6	**Partner with mana whenua to pilot water infrastructure projects that enhance te mauri o te wai** (ongoing)	2-3
4.7	**Include mauri in the council's investment prioritisation process for the Annual Budget and Long-Term Plan in partnership with mana whenua** (ongoing)	2-3

Strategic Shift 5

Water Security

Creating water abundance and security for a growing population through efficient use and diverse sources

Auckland's population growth is forecast to increase the total demand for water supply. Climate change will affect demand too, and also water availability over the life of the strategy. We will experience more dry days, and more frequent and longer lasting drought. Careful management of average and peak demand, as well as a diverse source portfolio, are required for sustainable water security.

The council will meet community expectations to make the most of the water that falls and to protect Auckland's water security. Water abundance can be created through water efficiency and diverse sources.

The Waikato River will continue to play a vital role in Auckland's water supply now and in the future. The council therefore commits to strengthening its relationship with Waikato River iwi to recognise their connection to the river and rights and interests related to it. In 2022 a 20-year consent to take up to 150 million litres a day from the river was granted. This built on an existing consent for 150 million litres that is still active (300 million litres available a day once additional treatment capacity is built to cater to population growth). Over the life of the Water Strategy, demand-reduction measures and alternative sources are essential parts of Auckland's water supply solutions. Through these, Auckland will increase its water security to balance its reliance on the river with its growth over time. Additional water source investigations are underway, including pilot projects for wastewater recycling for non-drinking water uses.

To reduce demand, the **council has set targets to reduce gross water consumption per person** in 2050 to less than 225 litres per day. The council has invested in smart meters and changed policy applying to rainwater tanks to accelerate reduction in network water use. Aucklanders are on track to reach this target and interim targets set for 2025 and 2030.

Aim

Auckland captures, uses, and recycles water efficiently so that everyone has access to enough water of the appropriate quality to meet their needs. This means:

1. Auckland maximises rainwater capture and invests in recycled water at all scales
2. Aucklanders have equitable access to enough water of the appropriate quality to meet their needs (i.e. residential and commercial)
3. Aucklanders are efficient users of water and can manage their own water security; they are resilient to changes in water availability and a changing climate
4. peak demand is managed to operate within source capacity.

YR	Water Security Targets
Consumption (demand)	
2025	**≤253 litres consumption per person per day** (gross PCC, network)
2030	**≤247 litres consumption per person per day** (gross PCC, network)
2050	**≤225 litres consumption per person per day** (gross PCC, network)
Collection (supply)	
2030	**20 million litres per day (non-dam) rainwater and recycled water capacity for beneficial use**
2050	**100 million litres per day (non-dam) rainwater and recycled water capacity for beneficial use**
2050	**30% of urban roof area to collect rainwater for use**

Challenges

1. The risks of scarcity (including droughts) and inadequate quality (lack of water of suitable quality for a particular purpose or use)
2. The resource, environmental and cultural impacts of supplying water
3. Climate change will affect water availability and demand
4. Large-scale dam sources will likely have reduced capacity at times, due to higher sediment loads associated with more intense rainfall events (water is also more expensive to treat at these times)
5. Increasing the types and distribution of source water Auckland uses, increases resilience against change in rainfall patterns, and against larger-scale natural disasters
6. Watercare's commitment to reducing reliance on the Waikato awa by reducing the contribution that the awa [river] makes to Auckland's total water used
7. National policy settings do not yet support increased water efficiency
8. The data and insights from smart-meters and direct-customer communications are important to making informed future decisions
9. The role leak management across a large, reticulated network plays in conserving water.

Water Security Actions		YR
5.1	**Adopt a council position to address affordable water access**	1
5.2	**Develop a plan to address affordable water access in Auckland**	1
5.3	**Add a level of service for and develop a plan to proactively manage both peak demand and drought response**	1-3
5.4	**Model climate change scenarios to understand impacts on water sources** (ongoing)	1-3
5.5	**Develop a smart demand management system to predict and manage peak demand using smart meter data and associated communication tools to engage Aucklanders** (ongoing)	2-5
5.6	**Support central government to set targets for water efficient homes** (ongoing)	2-3
5.7	**Develop an investment plan for diverse sources to meet 2030 and 2050 targets, guided by te mauri o te wai for 2024 Long-Term Plan**	2-3
5.8	**Develop policy to achieve target of 30% of urban roof area to collect rainwater for use 2050** (ongoing)	2-5
5.9	**Develop regulations and targeted information to support Aucklanders to increase water capture for reuse (homes and businesses)**	2-5
5.10	**Monitor investments to meet water consumption reduction targets. Review targets in 2024** (ongoing)	4-10
5.11	**Pursue pilots, community engagement, technology, and regulations to enable purified wastewater reuse** (ongoing)	4-10

Strategic Shift 6

Integrated Land Use and Water Planning

Integrating land use and water planning at a regional, catchment and site scale

The council has a critical role to play in delivering water outcomes for the region through its role as the regulator of land use activities. This Strategic Shift sets the direction for Auckland Council to prioritise natural water systems and the health of waterbodies as Auckland grows and redevelops.

Auckland's population growth drives urban growth and land use activity, which puts pressure on the health of our freshwater and coastal environments. Streams have been piped, soils modified, natural wetlands buried, floodplains encroached on, and impervious surfaces increased. This alters the way water naturally flows and contributes to adverse environmental outcomes.

Past and current rural land management practices and land use activities, such as forestry, farming and horticulture also significantly impact the health of water and water ecosystems.

National legislative and policy changes will have a significant impact on future land use planning systems. Resource management reform and the council's response to various National Policy Statements present key opportunities to improve the impact of land uses on the health and wellbeing of water.

The council commits to continuously improving regulatory and non-regulatory instruments to **ensure that water is a central principle** in land management practices and land use planning decision-making, including:

- working proactively with central government to develop new legislative and policy directions and implementing these effectively in Auckland
- improving council strategy, policy and planning instruments
- improving internal processes, and
- working proactively with industry to deliver good practice outcomes in urban development and rural land management.

Aim

Water and its life-sustaining capacity is a central principle in land management and planning decisions. This means:

1. water is recognised as a major determinant in sense of place in Tāmaki Makaurau
2. spatial planning integrates land use, water and infrastructure decision-making
3. the cumulative effects of land use within catchments are understood and managed to protect and enhance mauri
4. avoiding pollutants entering Auckland's waterbodies as a result of land use activities
5. Aucklanders have safe, equitable access and feel connected to healthy, protected blue and green spaces
6. exposure to water-related natural hazard risk decreases over time; growth occurs outside of natural hazard areas and provides appropriate mitigation where this is not practicable, and risks are low
7. Auckland's urban development framework delivers water-sensitive outcomes
8. water-sensitive infrastructure is consistently maintained to a high standard by all asset owners.

Challenges

1. Capability, capacity, and coordination to implement the Essential Freshwater Package effectively
2. Competing priorities (enabling growth *and* ensuring development protects and enhances ecosystem health)
3. Inconsistencies in how spatial plans treat blue-green areas and water related natural hazards
4. Spatial plans and strategies lack influence in regulatory processes
5. Water related natural hazard risk continues to increase in the existing urban area
6. Ongoing challenges in understanding and managing the cumulative effects of land use activities
7. Growth tends to be developer-led, which coupled with competing priorities and a lack of prescriptive rules, can make it challenging for council to influence the use of holistic water sensitive design processes in urban development
8. The added social, health and environmental values of water sensitive design and life-cycle costs of green infrastructure are not consistently recognised
9. Inconsistent on-ground maintenance of green infrastructure and stormwater assets, particularly when in private ownership

Integrated Land Use and Water Planning Actions		YR
6.1	**Embed te mana o te wai as a central consideration in all plan change processes, including the development of council-initiated plan changes and when providing evidence on private plan changes**	1-3
6.2	**Resource and enhance the council's capability to effectively implement the Essential Freshwater Package**	1-3
6.3	**Review and improve spatial planning processes to consider water consistently and advocate for statutory weight for structure plans**	1-3
6.4	**Develop a regional blue-green network spatial plan**	1-3
6.5	**Develop a position to limit development in, and remove vulnerable structures from, high risk water related natural hazard areas**	1-3
6.6	**Review, develop and grow the council's Strategic Approach to Sediment Programme** (ongoing)	1-3
6.7	**Investigate and continuously improve the council's understanding and management of cumulative effects to protect and enhance mauri** (ongoing)	1-5
6.8	**Avoid further development in water-related natural hazard areas in all plan change processes and ensure regulations take a precautionary and risk-based approach** (ongoing)	1-5
6.9	**Deliver a package of non-regulatory and regulatory interventions to support the uptake of water-sensitive design processes and ongoing management of devices** (ongoing)	1-10

Strategic Shift 7

Restoring and Enhancing Water Ecosystems

Taking catchment-based approaches to the health of water ecosystems

Heathy water ecosystems are vital to our health and wellbeing; if our water is healthy, then our environment and we, the people, are healthy. Our ecosystems give us life, provide and sustain us, and help us connect with nature and our wellbeing.

Many of Auckland's freshwater ecosystems are in poor health, particularly in urban areas. Habitat removal, increased temperature, nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, accumulation of heavy metals and harmful chemicals, rubbish, unmaintained onsite wastewater treatment systems, stream modification, invasive species, and blocked fish passage are among the key drivers of poor ecosystem health in freshwater and coastal ecosystems across the region. Delivering urban development, growth and managing land use without degrading ecosystems is an ongoing and long-standing challenge.

The value of healthy ecosystems is often highly supported in feedback from mana whenua and communities, including in the feedback **Our Water Future - Tō Tātou Wai Ahu Ake Nei** discussion document and support for both the **Water Quality** and **Natural Environment Targeted Rates**.

To deliver on community expectations and restore and enhance the region's water ecosystems, the council needs to transform how it prioritises and takes action. Currently, projects are not always coordinated within catchments, focusing on improving environmental outcomes at a particular site rather than considering the wider benefits across the catchment. Showcase projects such as Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley creek), Te Ara Awataha (Northcote) and now Puhinui stream regeneration are already demonstrating key lessons and opportunities provided by previous restoration projects.

Auckland needs to build on these types of projects and co-ordinate restoration activities on a wider scale to direct investment to areas of greatest need and ensure their long-term ecological stability and success.

Central government directs councils to establish 'freshwater management units' as part of the **National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management.** These are spatial units used for setting policy and taking action. These units represent a key opportunity for the council and its partners – they are a useful organising structure for our collective efforts.

This Strategic Shift commits the council to taking catchment-based approaches to managing water that leverages the new freshwater management units. This means taking a holistic ki uta ki tai / mountains-to-sea approach to freshwater management that aligns with Te Ao Māori and puts te mauri o te wai at the heart of restoring and enhancing water ecosystems.

Aim

Auckland has thriving and sustainable natural water ecosystems that support life, food gathering and recreation. This means:

1. natural water ecosystems are protected, restored, or enhanced so that life is abundant and harvesting practices are possible
2. Auckland takes a catchment-based approach to understanding and improving water ecosystem wellbeing
3. understanding of mauri determines how we prioritise action for freshwater ecosystems
4. funding and incentive frameworks deliver effective restoration and enhancement of water bodies and their ecosystems.

Challenges

1. Competing priorities of growth and environmental outcomes often result in poor ecosystem outcomes
2. Aligning mātauranga māori and science to improve the health of Auckland's water
3. Improving knowledge of the ecological state and pressures affecting our water bodies
4. Coordination and alignment of restoration and enhancement projects across the council
5. Financial constraints impacting the success of restoration opportunities.

Restoring and Enhancing Water Ecosystems Actions		YR
7.1	**Develop methods to assess mauri for Auckland's freshwater ecosystems, in partnership with mana whenua**	1-3
7.2	**Develop targets and priorities to improve the mauri of freshwater ecosystems, in partnership with mana whenua**	3-5
7.3	**Improve our understanding of freshwater ecosystems and pressures** (ongoing)	2-5
7.4	**Develop an investment framework and strategic investment plan to guide funding and incentive opportunities** (ongoing)	4-10
7.5	**Take a catchment-based approach to management of waterways protection and enhancement** (ongoing)	4-10

Strategic Shift 8

Pooling Knowledge

Fostering a shared understanding enabling better decisions for our water future

The challenges of the next 30-years require improved water knowledge stewardship by the council family. The council has a legislated responsibility to manage the health of the region's waterbodies in partnership with mana whenua and through consultation with the community. Sustainable management of water relies on the evidence base that the council develops and shares. The council and communities need fit-for-purpose information to make the right decisions and investments for our changing water future.

The council needs a wide-ranging, well-linked, knowledge base that enables evaluation of the health of the region's waterbodies and the council's regulatory and non-regulatory actions to continuously assess whether management approaches and investments are achieving water outcomes over the long term.

The council needs better coordinated data collection, information management and knowledge creation so that the evidence base for future decision making is robust. The council needs to actively coordinate information generation and sharing to drive improved outcomes.

Aim

Auckland has the knowledge about water to make good quality, timely, and strategic decisions about water. This means:

1. Aucklanders can readily access and contribute to the council's data, information, and knowledge
2. the council values, understands, and aligns with Te Ao Māori knowledge for Auckland's waters
3. the council is a future-focused leader in innovation in the delivery of water outcomes.
4. the council is a collaborative organisation with a strong culture of holistic planning, action, reporting and post-implementation review cycles.

Challenges

1. Adequately addressing iwi rights and interests in a post-settlement era through strengthened knowledge sharing
2. Public expectations about the quality and effectiveness of local government planning, monitoring and enforcement, to achieve improved environmental outcomes
3. Tensions over how water resources are allocated, used, and conserved, and conflicts between values for resource uses
4. Increasing expectations for the council to rapidly respond to needs for water body health assessments
5. Internal barriers to knowledge sharing across the council group when increased data sharing and digestible insights are required.

Pooling Knowledge Actions		YR
8.1	**Implement a council group knowledge governance framework for water** (ongoing)	1-3
8.2	**Build a robust evidence base to support the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management plan change in 2024.**	1-3
8.3	**Develop a consistent council approach to working with treaty partners and their mātauranga**	1-3
8.4	**Evaluate and where required improve 'whole of policy cycle' environmental management across the council group** (ongoing)	4-10
8.5	**Enable Aucklanders' ability to readily access and contribute to water data, information, and knowledge** (ongoing)	4-10
8.6	**Develop external partnerships for innovation, research, and development** (ongoing)	4-10

Implementation

Improving co-ordination, capacity and capability across the council group

Successfully delivering on the vision and integrated aims of the Water Strategy will require a coordinated and sustained approach to delivery across the council group. Delivery will also depend upon and should strengthen relationships with treaty partners and community.

To implement the Water Strategy, the council will need:

1. to take a consistent, sustained approach to putting te mauri o te wai at the centre of council group planning and investment decisions and action
2. the skills and capacity to deliver on the water strategy, legislative requirements, and partnership relationships
3. a strong culture of holistic planning, action, reporting and post-implementation review that feeds back into adaptive planning processes
4. clarity of the roles and responsibilities across the council group, with all teams directed and accountable for their role and function
5. to enable mana whenua participation in the council's work on water.

Implementation Actions		YR
IMP1	**Appoint Executive Lead Team Water Lead** (complete)	✓
IMP2	**Water Strategy programme implementation coordinator**	1
IMP3	**Coordinated workforce planning to fill gaps and changing needs** (ongoing)	1-3
IMP4	**Update investment prioritisation criteria to reflect the Water Strategy**	1-3
IMP5	**Council reporting on te mauri o te wai**	1-3
IMP6	**integrated Asset Investment and Asset Management Planning, with an independent audit process.**	3

Monitoring and Reporting

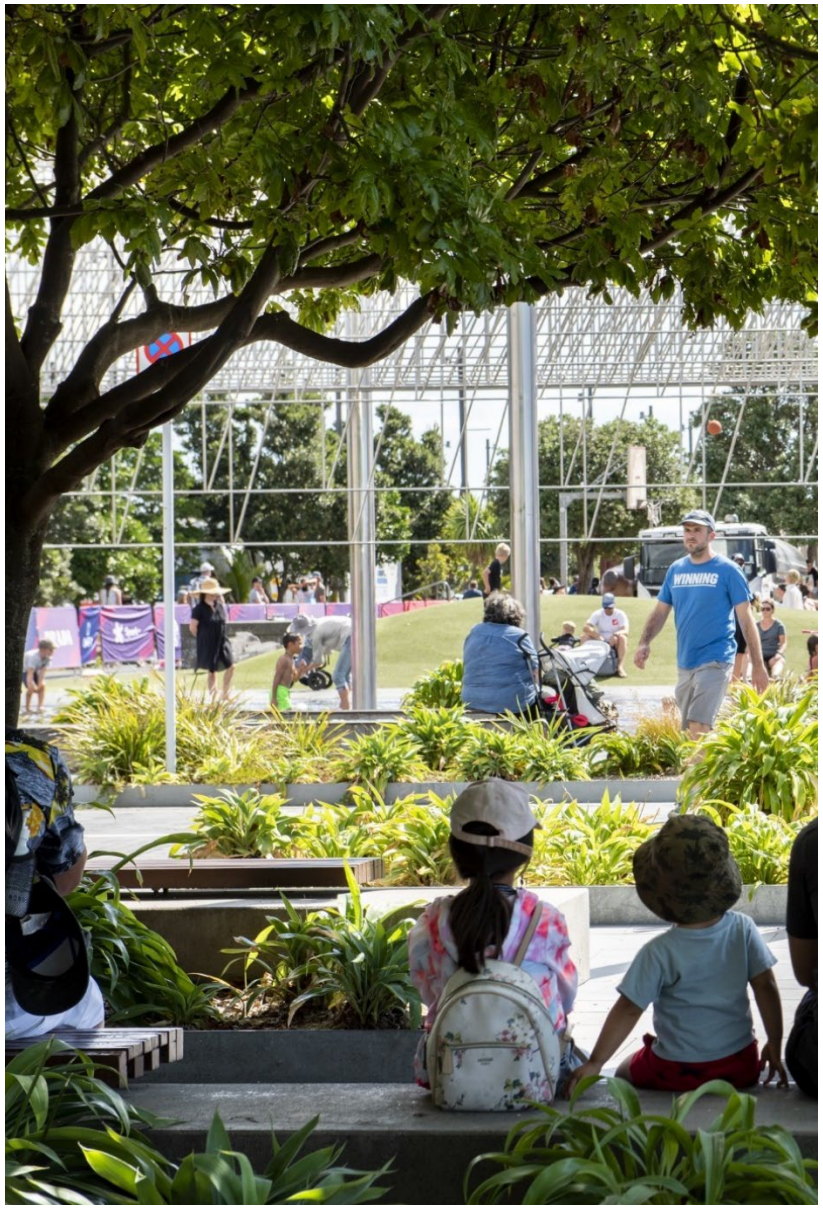
Progress against the Water Strategy's vision will be monitored and reported against in three ways:

1. **Delivery of Actions** will be reported annually. Each strategic shift has associated actions with indicative implementation timings identified. Strategic Shifts are designed so that the council can add actions to the framework as progress is made. Actions are concentrated on years 1-3 and so generally represent short-term delivery. For more detail, including action-owners, please see the accompanying **Implementation Plan.** Actions identified in the Implementation Plan are not the full extent of actions required to shift the council towards the vision of the water strategy.

   Costs for all actions have not been identified. In many cases, actions are underway or already planned as part of council group work programmes. Other actions can be accommodated without significant additional resources. Some actions may require additional resourcing, and these will be prioritised through normal council group funding processes.

2. **Dual Benchmarking** at agreed intervals provides a way to assess our journey to the realisation of the vision of the Water Strategy. Scores from both the Water Sensitive Cities and Mātauranga Māori frameworks will inform future decisions and action.

3. **Water Strategy Targets** are long-term measures of success. Over time, the council may design further targets and add these to the Water Strategy framework. Targets will be reflected in the council's instructions to its Council Controlled Organisations and its Long-Term Plan.



Glossary

Te Reo Māori

Word or Term	Explanation
Awa	River
Iwi	Tribe
Kaitiaki	Guardian
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship
Mahinga Kai	Generally refers to freshwater species that have traditionally been used as food, tools or other resources. It can also refer to the places those species are found and to the act of catching them.
Mana Motuhake	Self-determination, autonomy and control.
Mana whenua	Māori with ancestral relationships in certain areas in Tāmaki Makaurau where they exercise customary authority. Mana whenua hold a special and unique place in the identity and life of Tāmaki Makaurau.
Mataawaka	Māori living in Tāmaki Makaurau (the Auckland region) who do not form part of a mana whenua group, and whose ancestral links lie outside of Tāmaki Makaurau.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge, including the Māori worldview.
Mauri	Life force, the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity. It is also the life-sustaining capacity of an entity.
Rohe	Territory
Taiao	The natural world, environment, nature.
Tangata whenua	People of the land (Māori).
Taniwha	Water spirit, powerful creature. They are often regarded as guardians by the people who live in their territory, but may also have a malign influence on human beings.
Tipua	Supernatural creature or spirit.
Wai	Water. Wai also refers to stream, creek, river.
Whakapapa	An important concept that establishes kinship and status, and confers rights and responsibilities.

English

Term	Explanation
Drinking Water	One of the 'three waters'; refers to water supply that is treated and safe for human consumption. The water supply system is an interconnected system of built water network, treatment plants, natural environments and sources.
Wastewater	One of the 'three waters'; refers to water that has been used in the home, in a business, or as part of an industrial process. The wastewater system is a piped network and treatment plants.
Stormwater	One of the 'three waters'; refers to surface runoff which is water that accumulates on the ground when it rains and flows downhill. Urban run-off, such as from roads, is channeled into the 'open network' stormwater drainage system. the stormwater 'system' includes the built stormwater network, natural waterways, overland flow paths, and coastal receiving environments.

Term	Explanation
Demand management	A suite of policies or measures to reduce water consumption by both residential and non-residential customers.
Non-potable water	Water that is not safe for humans to drink.
Potable water	Water treated to a standard that is suitable for human consumption; it is often referred to as 'drinking water'.
Regenerative infrastructure	Infrastructure that responds to, works with, and enhances natural systems.
Smart-meter	A 'new generation' water meter that communicates water consumption to a computerised reader.
Water recycling	The retreatment of water already used for one purpose to a standard that is fit for one or more subsequent purposes. Where the purpose does not require potable-standard water, such as industrial cooling or irrigation, the use of recycled water reduces demand on the potable water supply.

Auckland Water Strategy 2022-2050

March 2022

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