

Kōrero Wai

Number 2

Nau mai haere mai Waikato Waters Ltd



John Bishara (Tūwharetoa), Susan O'Regan (Mayor, Waipā), Jon Lamonte (Establishment Board member), Samuel Mikaere (Te Nehenehenui), Jaydene Kana (Establishment Board member), Max Baxter (Mayor, Ōtorohanga), Adrienne Wilcock (Mayor, Matamata-Piako), John Robertson (Mayor, Waitomo), Manaaki Nepia (Waikato Tainui), Gary Petley (Mayor, South Waikato)

Pōwhiri to welcome Establishment Board for Waikato Waters Ltd

Iwi representatives from Waikato Tainui, Ngāti Korokī Kahukura, Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa, Maniapoto, Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Hinerangi hosted a Whakatau and Pōwhiri to officially and warmly welcome Board members and kaimahi of the Establishment Team for Waikato Waters Ltd.

John Bishara (Tūwharetoa) Iwi Chairs Forum member was one of the Iwi representatives, who noted the significance of this occasion, and acknowledged the steadfastness that Councils have shown on this journey.

Bishara said the councils' collective commitment to partnership had been essential to delivering a new waters entity that will be able to deliver the expectations being placed on it.

"As we say, we have come too far to turn back. Together, we are setting an example — not only for other rohe, but for the world — as we make our wai our first priority."

Against the backdrop of the Waikato River, acknowledgements were made to Nga wai hono i te po - Te Arikinui Kuini Māori, as each of the speakers welcomed Waikato Waters and the new Board members. Jaydene Kana (Waikato), on behalf of the three Establishment Board members, said it is a privilege to have been appointed to govern Waikato Waters Limited.

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Kana noted that Waikato Waters Limited is nationally significant for two reasons:

- all the company's water sources are subject to special Treaty settlement and co-management arrangements that have expectations of improved water management
- Waikato Waters Limited is the largest and most complex grouping of councils that has emerged under Local Water Done Well.

Kana acknowledged the Iwi partners for their part in this journey – “your voices, the voices of the taiao (environment), whenua (land) and wai (water) are essential to the success of Waikato Waters Limited for current and future generations – thank you all for sharing all these voices and for staying with us as we move ahead”.

To the shareholding councils Kana was direct. “You have made your expectations clear in the vision that you have given us: Te Mana o Te Wai, Te Mana o Te Tangata | Healthy water, Healthy people. Setting up a new entity that is going to transform water and wastewater services across the Waikato, will be no easy task but we are up for it”.

Mayor Susan O'Regan, speaking on behalf of the seven shareholding councils, reminded those gathered that this journey began in mid-2023 with a hui between the mayors and Iwi chairs.

O'Regan said this hui was a turning point – “an invitation to come together, to think differently and to lead the way in managing water in a way that respects both our people and our environment.”



Larn Wilsonson (Iwi Liaison Waikato Waters Ltd),
Tuatahi Nightingale (Ngāti Hauā), Ngira Simmonds
(Kaihautu - Strategic Māori Partnerships Director, Waipā)

The question posed at that time was: would we work together to craft a Waikato water solution that truly reflects our values, or would we continue reacting to changes imposed from the outside?

“Every Mayor responded with a clear and positive commitment,” O'Regan said.

She noted that since then much has been done and although it has not always been easy, it has always been grounded in the spirit of partnership and respect.

“We knew this journey required more than goodwill; it required the mandate and trust of our communities, the backing of our councils and the courage to do things differently.

Today that courage and commitment are realised in the Establishment Board of Waikato Waters Ltd.”

Meet our new Establishment board – page 4



Waikato Water Services Delivery Plans get the tick of approval

The seven Waikato Waters Ltd shareholding councils received unanimous approval for their Water Services Delivery Plans (WSDPs) from the Secretary for Local Government.

Independent chair of the Shareholders Representative Forum (SRF) Don McLeod said the WSDPs were a significant requirement under Local Water Done Well, requiring councils to clarify how they would proceed to deliver water and wastewater services into the future.

"The tick of approval of our whanau council WSDPs is more than just a milestone – it is a celebration of passing through the gateway to the establishment of a successful water services entity," McLeod said.

"The WSDPs are a signal of the shift from council delivery of water and wastewater services as part of a range of things they do, to being a member of a shared entity that is entirely focused on water and wastewater service delivery as its one and only core business."

The WSDPs each reflect the decisions made by each council to transfer their water and wastewater assets and services to Waikato Waters Ltd – Waipā, Waitomo and South Waikato from 1 July 2026, Matamata-Piako on 1 October 2026 and Ōtorohanga and Hauraki on 1 July 2027.

Taupō District Council will initially establish a stand-alone business unit under its WSDP and will remain a shareholder of Waikato Waters Ltd. Their WSDP will be reviewed in two years.

Water Services Delivery Plans (Plans) are a legislative requirement for councils, requiring them to show how they are going to meet regulatory requirements, support growth and urban development, and be financially sustainable in delivery of waters services.

The process required each council to complete a WSDP by 3 September and then submit it to DIA for review before being formally approved.

WSDPs can be viewed on each council's website.

Recognition to the Waikato Waters Ltd councils

"Accepted today, the Waikato Water Done Well plan will combine water services for over 130,000 people in the Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Ōtorohanga, South Waikato, Waipā and Waitomo District Council areas. This is an unprecedented and impressive collaborative effort between councils.

With Taupō District Council as a shareholder in Waikato Water Done Well, there is an opportunity to achieve efficiencies for a further 40,000+ people in the coming years. I'm encouraged Taupō is taking advantage of shared services and is open to joining the CCO as benefits are realised."

Local Government Minister
Simon Watts
18 September 2025

Talking water assets and operations...

During September, members of the Waikato Waters Establishment Team are catching up with water and wastewater treatment and reticulation operators from Waipā, Waitomo, and South Waikato District Councils.

These are the first of the councils that will move into the Waikato Waters entity from 1 July 2026 with the next four moving across by 1 July 2027.

These meetings provided a valuable platform for Council staff to discuss and identify critical elements necessary for operational readiness by July 1, 2026. The focus areas included infrastructure development, equipment maintenance, regulatory compliance, administrative processes, resource allocation, and emergency preparedness planning. These discussions underscored the significance of comprehensive processes, such as delivering quality customer service, ensuring accurate compliance reporting, and managing contractor services effectively.

As a continuation of these initial engagements, Waikato Water Limited (WWL) staff will organise additional meetings aimed at further understanding and documenting these essential processes.

A site visit to Matamata-Piako District is scheduled for the 24th of September to facilitate further collaboration and assessment of operational requirements.



Establishment Board for Waikato Waters Ltd

The Waikato Waters Ltd (WWL) Shareholders Representative Forum announced its Establishment Board in late August welcoming chair Elena Trout and directors Jon Lamonte and Jaydene Kana to oversee the largest grouping of councils forming a waters entity in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Elena Trout (Chair)

Elena brings extensive experience as a company director and professional civil engineer who has held a number of leadership positions in the transport, infrastructure and energy sectors over the past 30 years.

Elena brings a wealth of knowledge of being a company director and chair for both private and public organisations. She is currently an independent director or chair of several boards including Citycare, Callaghan Innovation, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, LGFA, WorkSafe, and Contact Energy. Elena is a fellow of the Institute of Directors and a past president and distinguished fellow of Engineering NZ.



Jaydene Kana (Waikato)

Ko Taupiri me Orangiwhao ngaa maunga, ko Waikato te awa, ko Tahaaroa ngaa roto, ko Tainui te waka, ko Waikato te iwi, ko Ngaati Mahuta te haapu, ko Te Kooraha te marae. Jaydene is a Chartered Accountant with extensive public and private sector commercial and leadership experience. She has served in a variety of iwi, not-for-profit, public sector and private sector governance and leadership roles including eight years with the United Nations in Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, and the United States.

Jaydene has governance roles at Hamilton City Council, Matamata-Piako District Council and Waitomo District Council, Community Law Waikato, the Public Service Association, Te Waananga o Aotearoa and Te Whakakitenga o Waikato. Jaydene is a member of the Institute of Directors and holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration from Victoria University.



Jon Lamonte

Jon has extensive experience in water services leadership, including being a former CEO of Watercare, and the Auckland/Northland Water Services Entity. He was also CEO of Sydney Metro, Transport for Greater Manchester, and Tube Lines Ltd (London).

Jon is a Chartered Director and Fellow of the Institute of Directors, a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

Jon was also formerly an Air Vice-Marshal in the Royal Air Force, with director-level positions in defence procurement, logistics, and strategy.

The role of the Establishment Board is to set up Waikato Waters Limited for success in accordance with an Establishment Strategy that has been agreed to by shareholding councils, the Shareholders' Agreement and each Council transfer agreement.

Waikato Waters Ltd is a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) incorporated in July 2025. You can find out more [here](#)

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