

Waikato District Council

17 April 2025

Teena koe Mayor Paula and Hamilton City Councillors

**Submission on What's next for Water, including the Proposal to Form a Joint Waters Company with Waikato District Council.**

I am pleased to write on behalf of Waikato District Council, in support of your preferred option to form a joint waters company with Waikato District Council.

**Key messages**

Waikato District Council supports a joint approach with Hamilton City Council to form a joint CCO to deliver water services to our communities. Our communities need reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services—especially in the face of growth, climate pressures, and new regulatory requirements.

The Government's 'Local Water Done Well' reform is reshaping how councils deliver these services, and we've been asked to consider more efficient, effective and collaborative models.

After careful analysis, we support Hamilton's preferred option to establish a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) with Waikato District Council to manage drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater service delivery.

Waikato District Council is consulting with our communities on how we will deliver water services in future as part of our Long-Term Plan Consultation, with our preferred option being the joint CCO. We would welcome a submission from Hamilton City Council on our proposal. Council deliberations will take place on the 27 to 28 May at which stage council will make a final decision on the water service delivery option. Confirmation of the Long-Term Plan 2025-2034 is set for June 30 2025 (this does not affect the decision on water services delivery).

**The shared benefits of the joint CCO include:**

1. **Be more strategic in terms of investment in water.** A larger company is far better able to maximise scale and the benefit of streamlined and bundled procurement and integrated planning. Together, we will be a much stronger entity.
2. **Have more debt headroom.** That means we can borrow the money we need to build infrastructure and spread it more fairly over generations, given that water infrastructure is a multi-generational asset. This is fairer on today's ratepayers.
3. **Be better able to support growth.** A joint waters company will make it easier and more cost-effective to work and invest in critical waters infrastructure, across council boundaries. This will have city and regional benefits and will allow us to meet the government's growth obligations faster and more cost-effectively.

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4. **Be more affordable for ratepayers over the long term.** There is a much greater ability to smooth costs over a longer period of time (rather than costs being borne unfairly by today's ratepayers). In addition there will be procurement benefits and efficiencies.
5. **Be more transparent and accessible for customers.** End-use customers will have a dedicated and specialised water company to liaise with around water issues (rather than dealing with a council which has multiple responsibilities). That is something developers, in particular, may welcome.
6. **Be better for specialist waters staff.** Our workforce is in high demand and ageing. A larger organisation that specialises in water will offer water specialists better career opportunities and more peer support and ensure ongoing access to the critical water expertise our community needs.
7. **Be more resilient, including in natural disasters.** The company would operate independently, free of political cycles and decision-making. It would be solely focused on delivering water infrastructure services across boundaries, irrespective of political agendas, or the local government framework councils must currently work within.
8. **Be better for the Waikato River.** This option allows both councils to work together to protect 150km of the river, something we know is vitally important to both organisations.
9. **Be better able to respond to third parties.** The CCO will deal directly with government agencies and work closely with regional bodies to meet regional and national objectives.
10. **Te Ture Whaimana.** In line with protection of the awa, this option enables both councils to ensure decision making supports Te Ture Whaimana.

### Other matters

Waikato District Council values our strong and ongoing relationship with Hamilton City Council. As we navigate funding pressures and significant legislative change, working together across boundaries is more important than ever.

We're committed to exploring shared service opportunities and regional solutions that deliver better value for our communities. With government policies accelerating urban growth, coordinated planning—in transport, infrastructure, and service delivery—will be essential to supporting thriving, connected communities across our districts.

We wish you well with your consultation process and look forward to our continued partnership as we work towards delivering positive outcomes for our communities and environment.

Ngā mihi nui



**Jacqui Church**  
Mayor