



4 March 2020

Louisa Wall
Committee Chairperson
Health Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Ms Wall

TAUMATA AROWAI – THE WATER SERVICES REGULATOR BILL

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Taumata Arowai – the Water Services Regulator Bill (the Bill), currently before the Health Committee.

We support the Bill and are pleased to see its progression through the House. We agree with the creation of a new regulatory body to oversee, administer and enforce the drinking water regulatory system. We have been concerned that, across New Zealand, compliance with standards has been unacceptably low and that the array of regulators involved in drinking water has meant dispersed accountability and obfuscated transparency. Where standards have been breached, action is not always taken. We note that no formal enforcement action has been taken by District Health Boards since the current drinking water regime was introduced in 2007. We support the introduction of a stand-alone Crown entity to drive change across the sector.

We are also pleased to see the Bill's objectives giving effect to Te Mana o te Wai, to the extent that Te Mana o te Wai applies to the functions and duties of Taumata Arowai. We support the establishment of the Māori Advisory Group.

Opportunity to strengthen the Bill

We foresee that the implementation of the Bill will not be without challenges in the current environment. We consider the Bill could be improved by the addition of further clarification on council responsibilities, including liabilities.

If we can be further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me by emailing susan.freeman-greene@engineeringnz.org or 04 474 8935.

Yours sincerely

Susan Freeman-Greene
Chief Executive