

1 February 2023



Rt Hon Chris Hipkins
Prime Minister of New Zealand
By email: chris.hipkins@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Prime Minister

Congratulations on your appointment. You have taken on a great responsibility at a challenging time, but we are sure you will be up to the task.

We are writing to introduce you to the Mayors' Consensus on Three Waters Reform, a constructive way forward for water reform, and to ask for a meeting with you and Hon Kieran McAnulty, the new Minister of Local Government.

The Mayors' Consensus is a group of Mayors from across Aotearoa New Zealand (including the Mayors of Auckland and Christchurch) who are keen to work with central government to pivot to a refreshed three waters reform model that meets your Government's objectives, while preserving community ownership and voice.

We will shortly be releasing our declared principles that set out how Local and Central Government can work together to upgrade and enhance the three waters reform model.

This approach stems from a carefully developed alternative that we proposed, alongside the Mayors of our two largest cities, in October 2022. It was based on a substantial piece of considered policy and economic analysis presented to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee in August 2022. Since October, other Mayors from throughout the country have signed on to support our proposed alternative, representing 68% of the population.

We all accept that there must be positive, effective, and meaningful change to three waters policy settings, but we think there is a better way than the four-entity model proposed.

We do not want to waste the momentum for change, nor the significant amount of work and investment by Councils and the Government, by pressing ahead with reforms at real and substantial risk of being quickly unravelled, because community support for that model does not exist.

We are encouraged that you have signalled a policy review for the year ahead and think that the three waters reform programme is one area that requires review.

We are offering a meaningful opportunity to work together on a solution. That is why we would like to meet with you and Minister McAnulty on behalf of the Mayors' Consensus, at your earliest convenience. This is an opportunity for us to reset the debate and find consensus on a long-lasting reform to our nation's three waters network.

Congratulations again on your appointment, and we look forward to meeting with you soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Worboys'.

Mayor Helen Worboys
Manawatu District Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Gordon'.

Mayor Dan Gordon
Waimakariri District Council

cc – Hon Keiran McAnulty, Minister of Local Government