



Assessment of Communities' Access to Drinking Water

Requirement of Section 69 of the
Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025



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Executive Summary

This assessment has been prepared to meet Manawātū District Council’s obligations under Section 69 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, which requires Council to inform itself about the access each community in the district has to drinking water services. The assessment identifies communities across the district, describes the drinking water services they rely on, and considers whether those communities currently receive, and are likely to continue receiving, a sufficient quantity of safe and reliable drinking water.

Overall, the assessment indicates that most communities in the Manawātū District have access to sufficient and safe drinking water, particularly where they are connected to Council-operated reticulated supplies. Council-operated schemes include Feilding, Himatangi Beach, Rongotea, Sanson and Ohakea, Stanway-Halcombe, and Waituna West. These schemes are supported by a combination of groundwater and surface water sources, treatment processes, storage infrastructure, monitoring, and ongoing operational management.

The level of resilience varies across the district. Feilding, as the district’s largest urban supply, benefits from multiple water sources, substantial storage, and ongoing investment through the Manawātū Water Resilience project. Smaller and rural schemes generally have fewer sources and less redundancy, making them more exposed to risks such as single-source failure, asset condition issues, high-turbidity events, drought, natural hazards, seasonal demand pressures, and consent renewal requirements.

The assessment finds that none of the Council-owned or operated drinking water supplies are currently considered to have inadequate or vulnerable access. However, several matters require continued management to maintain safe and reliable access. These include treatment and compliance improvements in Feilding, storage resilience at Himatangi Beach, consent renewal for Waituna West and Rongotea, ongoing protection of the Stanway-Halcombe intake following Cyclone Gabrielle, and continued maintenance of key bore, treatment, storage, and reticulation assets across all schemes.

Communities outside Council’s reticulated water supply network face greater uncertainty. Many rural households, community buildings, schools, halls, marae, and reserves rely on roof water, private bores, springs, or other small supplies. These supplies may be more vulnerable to water quality issues, drought, poor maintenance, limited treatment, and reduced emergency access. Responsibility for managing these supplies depends on ownership, operation, and the nature of the supply. While Council is not generally responsible for privately owned and operated supplies, the assessment recognises that communities outside the reticulated network may experience greater variability in both the quality and reliability of drinking water access.

Public health risks across the district are primarily associated with microbiological contamination, chemical contamination, and insufficient or intermittent supply. These risks are greatest where supplies are untreated, privately managed, or lack adequate monitoring and treatment barriers. Loss of access to drinking water could affect public health, hygiene, sanitation, household wellbeing, schools, businesses, rural operations, emergency response, and wider community resilience.

Future demand is expected to increase in some areas, particularly Feilding and potentially Himatangi Beach, Sanson, and Rongotea, due to growth and development. Seasonal demand

also remains important for coastal and rural schemes, particularly where holiday populations or stock water use place additional pressure on supply. Continued monitoring of demand, growth, asset performance, water quality, and community feedback will be essential to ensure infrastructure and planning remain aligned with future needs.

The assessment will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if significant changes occur, such as new supplies, major incidents, emerging risks, or changes in legislation, demand, or water quality information. Overall, maintaining reliable and safe access to drinking water remains a core public health and infrastructure priority for Council, requiring continued investment in asset renewal, source protection, treatment performance, consent management, emergency planning, and engagement with communities, mana whenua, suppliers, and relevant agencies.

Introduction

Purpose of this assessment

This assessment has been prepared to meet Manawātū District Council's obligations under Section 69 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025. The Act requires territorial authorities to inform themselves about the access each community in their district has to drinking water services.

The assessment provides a district-wide overview of drinking water access across the Manawātū District. It identifies communities that receive drinking water services, describes the nature of those services, and considers matters such as sufficiency, safety, reliability, resilience, current and future demand, and public health risk.

The assessment includes Council-operated drinking water supplies, privately operated reticulated supplies where information is available, and communities or facilities that rely on self-supplied drinking water. It considers current access, reasonably foreseeable risks, current and future demand, the safety and quality of supply, public health risks, and the potential consequences of service loss or deficiency.

Where access is identified as inadequate or vulnerable, the assessment outlines key risks, gaps, public health implications, and actions to support ongoing access to drinking water services. The assessment provides an evidence base for Council's strategic and operational planning, including the Water Services Strategy, water services delivery planning, land use planning, risk management, and engagement with mana whenua, communities, suppliers, government agencies, and other relevant organisations.

This assessment is based on the best information reasonably available at the time of preparation including council records, Water Services Authority (Taumata Arowai) data, engagement with communities, suppliers and mana whenua, and other publicly available information. Inevitably, there are data gaps and uncertainties, particularly for very small or unregistered supplies, while some information provided by third parties may not be independently verified. The assessment should therefore be read as a strategic planning tool to inform Council's decisions, rather than as a compliance audit or design document. The assessment will need to be updated as new information becomes available.

Legislative context

Section 69 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 requires the following:

- (1) A territorial authority must inform itself about the access that each community in its district has to drinking water services by conducting an assessment of drinking water services in accordance with this section*
- (2) An assessment of drinking water services must –*
 - (a) Identify each community that receives a drinking water service; and*
 - (b) Describe the nature of existing drinking water services to the community; and*
 - (c) Describe the characteristics of the community; and*
 - (d) Assess the extent to which the community is currently receiving, and will continue to receive, a sufficient quantity of drinking water, including a consideration of –*
 - (i) The community’s existing access to drinking water services; and*
 - (ii) Any reasonably foreseeable risks to the community’s access to drinking water services in the future; and*
 - (iii) The current and estimated future demands for drinking water services within the community; and*
 - (e) Describe the safety and quality of drinking water currently being supplied to the community, using information collected and made available by the Water Services Authority and any other organisations that the territorial authority considers relevant; and*
 - (f) Identify and assess any other public health risks relating to the drinking water services supplied to the community; and*
 - (g) Based on the assessment under paragraphs (b) to (f) –*
 - (i) assess the consequences if the community loses access to drinking water services in the future, or is provided with drinking water services that are deficient in any way, including the implications for that community’s public health; and*
 - (ii) outline a plan to provide for the community’s ongoing access to drinking water services.*

This assessment sits alongside, and does not replace, the obligations that apply under the Water Services Act 2021 which sets detailed duties on all drinking water suppliers to provide safe and sufficient drinking water, to comply with drinking water standards, to register supplies, and to prepare and implement drinking water safety plans.

The Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, under which this assessment is prepared, focuses on the role of territorial authorities as water service providers. Information about compliance with the Water Services Act 2021 is a key input to this assessment, however the primary purpose is to provide a district-wide picture of access, sufficiency, safety and resilience to inform Council’s planning and decision making.

Levels of service for drinking water

Council ensures that there is a sufficient water supply for the district’s communities while undertaking water treatment to ensure it is safe to drink. Council works to maintain public health

through the provision of water that meets the Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) 2022.

The following levels of service apply to Council's reticulated urban and rural water schemes including Feilding, Himatangi Beach, Sanson & Ohakea, Rongotea, Stanway-Halcombe and Waituna West.

- 1. The provision of a safe water supply** – measured by the extent (% compliance) to which Council's drinking water supply complies with the Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022 and the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQARs) 2022 in relation to bacteria compliance criteria.
- 2. The provision of a safe water supply** – measured by the extent (% compliance) to which Council's drinking water supply complies with Part 5 of the NZ Drinking Water Standards. (protozoal compliance criteria).
- 3. The provision of a safe water supply** – measure by the extent (% compliance) to which Council's drinking water supply complies with the Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022 and the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules 2022 in relation to Microbiological Monitoring Compliance.
- 4. Water reticulation network is well maintained** – The estimated percentage of real water loss from Council's networked reticulation system using minimum night flow (MNF) analysis, measured per water supply scheme.
- 5. Faults are responded to and resolved in a timely manner** – measured by the median attendance and resolution times for urgent and non-urgent callouts (targets being <2 hours & <9 hours for urgent attendance and resolution, and <5 working days and a further <5 working days for non-urgent attendance and resolution)
- 6. The quality of the water service is satisfactory** – measured by the total number of complaints received on clarity, taste, odour, pressure or flow, continuity of supply, and Council's response to these (less than 20 complaints per 1,000 connections to the reticulated system)
- 7. The demand for domestic water supply will be managed appropriately** – measured by the average consumption of drinking water per day, per resident within Council's authority area (target of <1000 litres/person/day for Himatangi, Stanway-Halcombe, Waituna West, 7 Ohakea RWS, and <300 litres/person/day for Feilding, Rongotea & Sanson)

Council supplied communities

The following settled areas have been defined as 'communities' for the purposes of this assessment and have been divided into those with reticulated water services and those without reticulated water services.

Access to reticulated water service	No access to reticulated water service
Feilding (including Mount Taylor)	Colyton
Himatangi Beach	Tangimoana

Rongotea
Sanson & Ohakea
Halcombe (including Stanway)
Waituna West
Kiwitea Rural Water Scheme (Private)
Oroua No. 1 Rural Water Scheme (Stock water only)

Apiti
Pohangina
Rangiwahia
Hiwinui
Kairanga

The 2026 water connections data indicates that most recorded connections are associated with town and village supplies, which account for 62.8% of all connections. Rural supplies account for the remaining 37.2%. This indicates that while the majority of connections are concentrated in urban or village-based supply areas, a significant proportion of properties continue to be serviced through rural water schemes.

Scheme	Connections	Share of total
Feilding (including Mt Taylor)	7,269	56.3%
Kiwitea Rural Water Supply	1,636	12.7%
Stanway/Halcombe Rural Water Scheme	1,530	11.8%
Ohakea Rural Water Scheme	1,015	7.9%
Waituna West Rural Water Scheme	621	4.8%
Himatangi	452	3.5%
Sanson	286	2.2%
Rongotea	112	0.9%
Total	12,921	100%

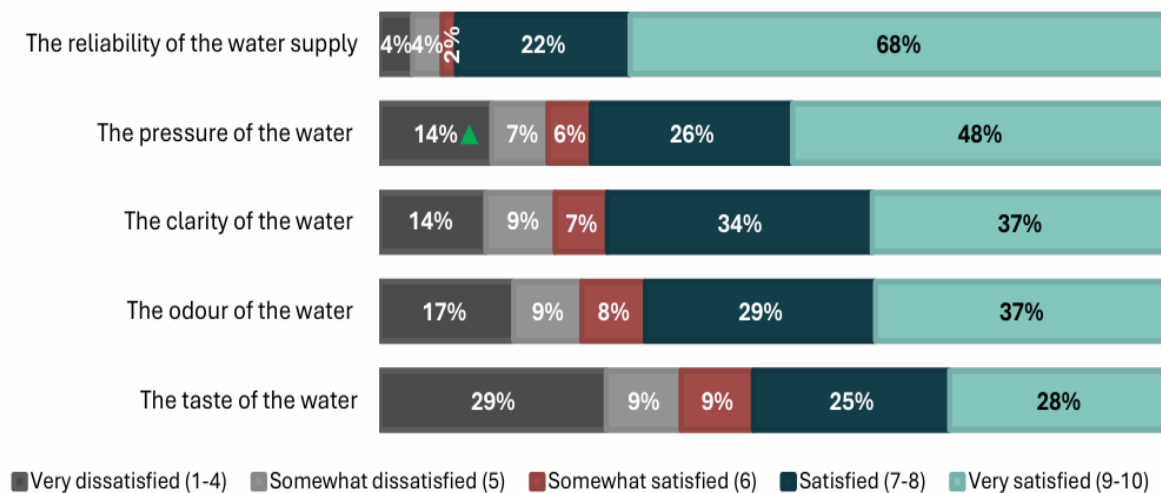
Of the connections in the table above, 89.1% are residential and 10.9% are non-residential. This reflects the predominantly residential nature of the district's water connections, while also recognising that rural schemes include a mix of household, farming and other non-residential uses.

The higher number of connections recorded for some rural schemes, such as Kiwitea, Stanway/Halcombe and Ohakea, reflects the large geographic areas covered by these schemes and the number of rural properties and farms connected to them. Unlike smaller village supplies, rural schemes often service dispersed farming properties across a much wider area, which can result in higher connection numbers even where there is no single large settlement.

Feilding, including Mt Taylor, remains the largest supply area by a significant margin, accounting for 56.3% of all connections. The next largest schemes are Kiwitea Rural Water Supply at 12.7%, Stanway/Halcombe Rural Water Scheme at 11.8%, and Ohakea Rural Water Scheme at 7.9%. Smaller town and village supplies, including Himatangi, Sanson and Rongotea, make up a smaller share of total connections.

The 2024/25 Residents' Survey indicates that Manawatū residents generally see the district's water supply as reliable, with 92% satisfied with reliability. However, satisfaction is lower for aesthetic aspects of drinking water, with 79% satisfied with pressure, 78% with clarity, 74% with

odour, and 62% with taste. Open-ended feedback shows the main concerns relate to taste and smell, dirty or cloudy water, chlorine taste/odour, the need to filter or boil water, bottled water use, hard water/scale build-up, and low pressure. Overall, the survey suggests that resident concerns are focused more on water quality perception and service experience than on reliability of supply.



Feilding

Characteristics of the community

Feilding is the largest community within the Manawātū District with a 2026 population of approximately 18,030 with 7,269 connections to the reticulated water supply.

Nature of existing drinking water services

Source, abstraction & treatment

Feilding's drinking water scheme includes a combination of three groundwater bores and one surface water take to increase the reliability of the scheme.

There are three groundwater bores which include Campbell Road, Newbury Line and Roots Street. Water from the Campbell and Newbury bores is treated at the Awa Street treatment plant while the Roots Street bore has its own onsite treatment plant. Drinking water from the Campbell and Newbury bores is treated with chlorine and fluoride while the Roots Street bore undergoes 5- and 1-micron cartridge filtration, continuous UV, chlorination, and fluoridation. Council plans to relocate the water treatment plant at Awa Street to the Campbell Road bore site prior to 1 July 2026 to ensure all connections along Campbell Road receive compliant water.

Surface water is abstracted from the Ōroua River near Barrows Road. The water is abstracted via two well heads where it is then pumped to a settling pond. From here water is then treated at the Almadale treatment plant where it undergoes the following treatment: coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, UV disinfection and fluoridation.

The abstraction for these four sources is covered under one integrated consent which allows for an overall water take of 27,813m³/day with each source having its own maximum rate of take corresponding to the capacity and effects of the individual abstraction. The consent has an expiry date of 1 July 2059. Council are committed to substantially reducing the water taken from the

Ōroua River to support iwi aspirations of ceasing takes during times of low flow for the betterment of the awa. This is reflected through the proposal to reduce the abstraction rate from the river in stages as follows:

- Stage 1 – abstract 6,240m³/day between 2025 – 2030
- Stage 2 – abstract 5,000m³/day between 2030 – 2035
- Stage 3 – abstract 2,000m³/day between 2035 – 2059

Along with this, at no time will the take from the Ōroua River be below low flow (when flow is less than 1,005m³/second at Almadale flow monitoring site), during these periods the surface water take is ceased, and the groundwater sources will be relied on.

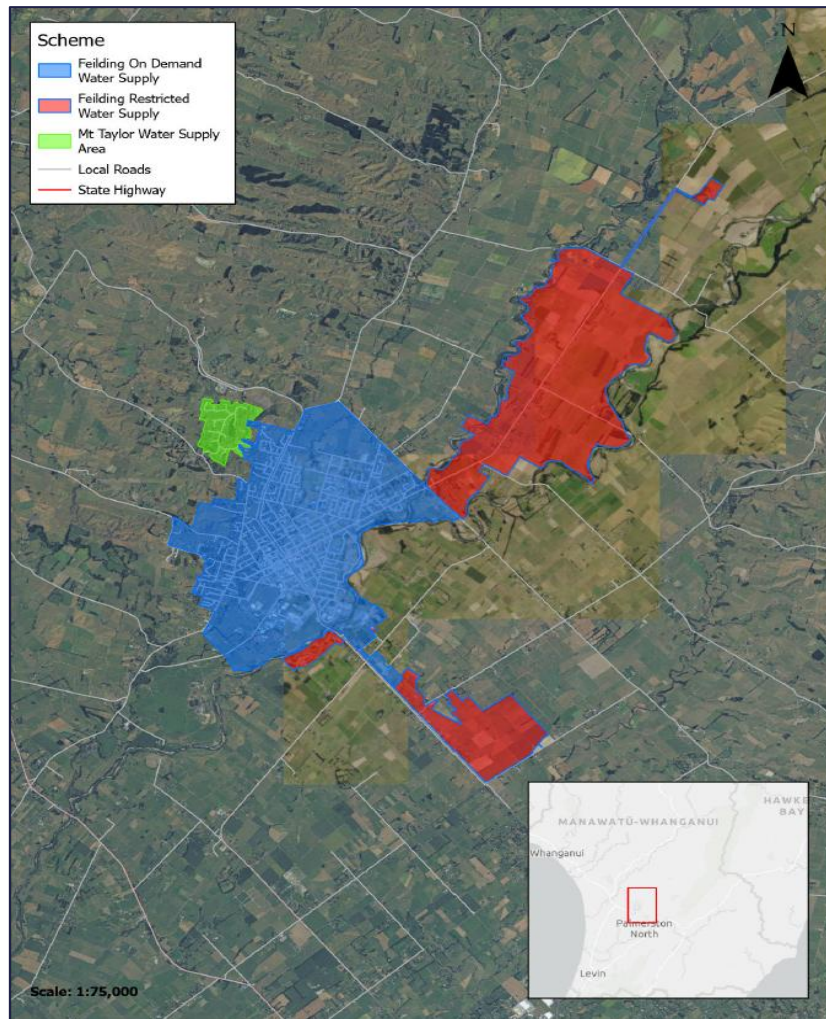
Delivery & storage

Feilding has the following drinking water storage available:

- Almadale large reservoir – 6,045m³
- Almadale small reservoir – 1,135m³
- MacDonald Heights reservoirs – 6,800m³x2
- Turners Road reservoir – 2,000m³ (The anticipated commissioning date of this reservoir is within the 2026/27 financial year).
- Roots Street reservoir – 500m³

Reticulation

The area of Feilding that is serviced for drinking water is shown in the image below.



Consumer issues

Results from Council's regular resident satisfaction surveys indicate that the main consumer issues raised in relation to the Feilding drinking water supply are aesthetic and service-related rather than any widespread indication of unsafe drinking water.

Reported concerns include poor taste and odour, with some residents describing the water as earthy, muddy, or over chlorinated, particularly during the summer months when low flows in the Ōroua River can affect source water quality and increase reliance on treatment processes. Some residents have reported purchasing bottled water or installing household filtration systems in response to these issues. Concerns have also been raised about water clarity, with occasional reports of discolouration where the water appears brown, yellow, or cloudy.

Two other issues mentioned by a smaller number of residents include low water pressure in certain areas and effects from hard water including scale build-up in bathrooms, hot water systems and household appliances.

While these issues are generally aesthetic or operational in nature, they affect customer satisfaction and community perception of the quality of the drinking water supply.

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access in the future

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access to drinking water in Feilding include reduced reliability of the Ōroua River source during periods of low summer flow, deterioration of key storage infrastructure, flood impacts on the Ōroua River intake, and the vulnerability of water supply infrastructure associated with the Aorangi Bridge crossing. Increasing summer low flows in the Ōroua River can affect both the availability and aesthetic quality of the surface water supply, including taste and odour. However, reliance on this source is expected to reduce during summer now that the Roots Street bore is operational.

The Almadale large reservoir is nearing the end of its useful life. The reservoir is currently being assessed and if required will be isolated from the network. This risk is mitigated by the fact that a second 6,800m³ reservoir was constructed at MacDonald Heights in 2019, providing an additional 6.8 million litres of storage to the scheme resulting in a combined storage of 13.6 million litres at MacDonald Heights. The addition of this reservoir was to allow for the future decommissioning of the ageing Almadale reservoir, allowing Council to maintain supply during outages, peak demand periods and source water quality events.

The Ōroua River intake is also vulnerable during extreme flood events due to high sediment loads and possible physical damage to the intake structure, this risk is partially mitigated by the availability of Feilding's three groundwater sources. However, water from the Campbell and Newbury bores must cross the Ōroua River via the Aorangi Bridge to reach the Awa Street Water Treatment Plant and Feilding's reticulation network, meaning these supplies remain exposed to disruption from extreme weather or seismic events affecting the bridge. Overall, while Feilding has greater resilience than smaller schemes, the size and complexity of the supply means that several infrastructure and source-related risks must continue to be actively managed.

Current and estimated future demands for drinking water services in the community

Feilding currently has the highest drinking water demand of any community in the Manawātū District, reflecting both its population size and its role as the district's main urban centre. Current demand is met through a mix of groundwater and surface water sources, supported by substantial storage and multiple treatment facilities. This provides the scheme with a greater level of operational flexibility and resilience than is available in smaller communities.

Future demand for drinking water in Feilding is expected to increase as the town continues to experience residential and industrial growth. Based on the Infometrics high population projections, the population of Feilding is forecast to increase on average by 1.4% per annum between 2027-2037. As demand increases, pressure on source capacity, treatment infrastructure, storage, and reticulation will also increase. This will need to be managed alongside Council's planned staged reduction in abstraction from the Ōroua River. Continued investment in groundwater supply, storage, treatment, and network infrastructure will therefore remain important to ensure the scheme can continue to reliably meet current and future demand.

Safety and quality of drinking water

The Feilding water sources have the following water classes:

- Campbell Road bore = Interim Class 1
- Newbury Line bore = Class 1

- Roots Street bore = Class 2
- Ōroua River abstraction = Class 4

In January 2026, routine raw source water sampling detected total coliforms in the Campbell Road bore on one occasion, with a result of 1MPN/100mL. While this appears to have been an isolated event as subsequent daily sampling did not identify any further detections, it meant that the bore no longer met the bacterial criteria for a Class 1 source. Under the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQAR) a Class 1 source must have no detections of E. coli or total coliforms in untreated water. Where a positive result occurs, the source must assume Interim Class 1 status and undergo reclassification, which requires daily sampling for 36 days followed by weekly sampling until 52 weeks of negative results have been obtained. If a further positive result occurs during that period, the process must recommence. Campbell Road is therefore considered Interim Class 1 pending completion of the required sampling programme on 12 January 2027.

A separate compliance issue also affects the Feilding scheme. At present, water from the Campbell Road and Newbury Line bores is treated at the Awa Street Water Treatment Plant (WTP), located approximately 4km away on the opposite side of the Ōroua River. As a result, five connections located upstream of the treatment plant receive water prior to chlorination occurring and therefore receive untreated water. Along with this, the properties immediately following the treatment plant receive water that does not meet the required chlorine contact time. Council is working with Taumata Arowai to resolve this issue, with the planned solution being relocation of the treatment plant from Awa Street to Council owned land adjacent to the Campbell Road bore. This work is planned to be completed by the end of June 2026. It is noted that four of the affected connections are untreated supply connections and one is residential. This means the direct public health risk is more limited than it would be if the issue affected a larger number of household consumers.

A sanitary bore head assessment conducted in March 2026 confirmed that the Feilding bores generally continue to meet sanitary bore requirements. However, the Campbell Road and Newbury Line bores are beginning to show signs of age-related deterioration, including cracking to the annulus casing, which creates a potential pathway for water ingress if left unaddressed. Repair of these defects is planned within the next 12 months. Roots Street bore, although a Class 2 water source, achieved all ten sanitary bore head requirements.

Overall, the Feilding scheme provides drinking water from a mix of protected groundwater and treated surface water sources and is generally well placed to continue supplying safe drinking water. However, the Interim Class 1 status of the Campbell Road bore and the current non-compliance relating to the five untreated upstream connections mean the scheme is not yet fully without issue. These matters are being actively managed and should remain a focus until resolved.

Consequences if community loses access

If Feilding residents and businesses were to lose access to drinking water services, the consequences would be significant due to the size of the community and the town's role as the district's main urban centre. Loss of supply would affect access to safe water for drinking, food preparation, hygiene, and sanitation across a large population, with associated public health implications. It would also disrupt households, businesses, schools, aged care, and health services, and would have wider social and economic effects across the district.

While the Feilding scheme has greater resilience than smaller supplies through multiple sources, substantial storage, and alternative supply capacity, any prolonged or widespread loss of service would still have major consequences because of the number of people and services affected.

Provision of ongoing access

The Manawatu Water Resilience project was created to future proof Feilding's potable water supply via a coordinated approach to capital works, renewals, resource consenting, and land acquisition. As the district's largest water supply scheme, the ongoing provision of access depends on not only the reliability of the source water, but also on the resilience and capacity of the treatment, storage, and reticulation infrastructure that supports it.

A key driver for the project was to improve the natural hazard resilience of Feilding's water supply. Prior to the construction of the Roots Street bore, the groundwater sources supplying Feilding were vulnerable due to their location. The Campbell Road and Newbury Line bores are both located on the southern side of the Ōroua River, meaning that water from these bores must cross the Ōroua River via the Aorangi Bridge to reach the Awa Street WTP and Feilding's reticulation network. This created a critical vulnerability, as a major seismic event could damage the bridge and associated infrastructure, cutting off the town's primary groundwater supply. In this scenario, Feilding would have become largely dependent on the surface water intake from the Ōroua River at a time when the Almadale reservoir and trunk main were approaching the end of their useful life, significantly reducing the overall resilience of the scheme.

To strengthen this resilience, Council invested in a new bore and water treatment plant at Roots Street West and has purchased additional land around the existing Campbell Road bore site. This additional land will enable the construction of a new treatment facility so that water from Campbell Road and Newbury Line bores can be fully treated before reaching any customer connections. At present, there are five connections between the bores and the Awa Street WTP, meaning these properties receive untreated water, while properties immediately downstream of the treatment plant receive water that has not yet undergone the full treatment process (15min C.t). Addressing this issue will improve both compliance and the overall security of supply.

As mentioned above, the scheme also benefits from substantial storage capacity, which supports the ongoing provision of access during peak demand periods, operational interruptions, and emergency events. Storage is provided across six reservoirs within Feilding, with a total available storage of over 23,000m³. In combination with multiple water sources and treatment arrangements, this provides a greater level of redundancy and resilience than is available in smaller schemes.

Overall, the provision of ongoing access for Feilding's water supply is being actively strengthened through the Water Resilience project, although completion of the planned treatment improvements and continued renewal of key infrastructure remain important to ensure the scheme can continue to reliably meet current and future demand.

Himatangi Beach

Characteristics of the community

The Himatangi Beach community is located along the west coast and has a permanent population of around 590, however due to being a coastal holiday destination this population significantly increases during peak summer periods to over 2000.

Nature of existing drinking water services

Source, abstraction & treatment

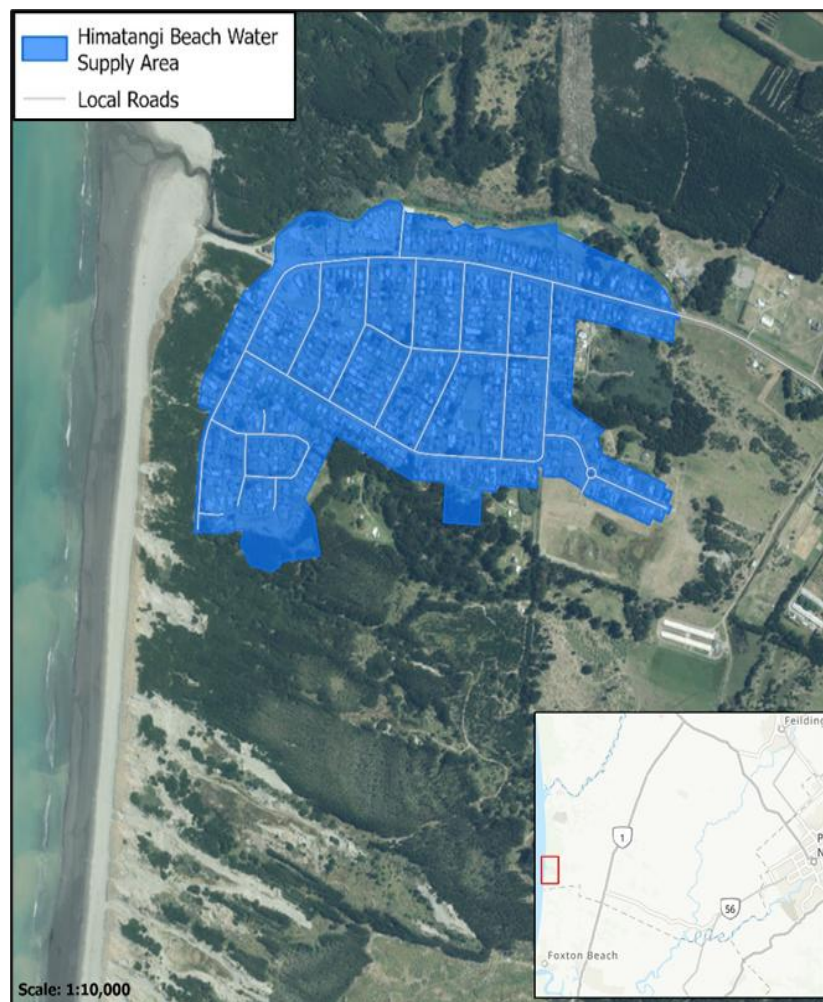
Drinking water for Himatangi Beach is sourced from a 168m deep sanitary bore that draws Class 1 water from a confined aquifer. The abstracted water is chlorinated to provide a residual disinfectant in the reticulation system and sufficient contact time prior to the first connection. The abstraction is authorised under consent 100537 which allows for up to 1,200m³/day. This consent expired in April 2024 and is currently operating under existing use rights while the replacement application is being processed by Horizons Regional Council (Horizons). The renewal consent retains the same overall activity, with proposed changes to the abstraction limits to better reflect peak demand and average annual use.

Delivery & storage

The Himatangi Beach WTP contains two steel reservoirs with storage capacities of 211m³ and 370m³.

Reticulation

The area of Himatangi Beach that is serviced for drinking water is shown in the image below.



Consumer issues

Historic issues with the supply included slipping of the break point resulting in high chlorine levels, creating an aesthetic issue.

Some consumers have notified Council of high silica levels in the water leaving residue and staining on internal surfaces and causing damage to their properties and vehicles when using hoses or sprinklers outside. Further concerns highlighted were around the possible effects of this on health. Council has explored options to resolve this issue such as treatment or the construction of a new bore; however, nothing has been confirmed to date.

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access in the future

At Himatangi Beach, reasonably foreseeable risks to continued access to drinking water include disruption associated with tsunami hazard, reduced storage resilience in the event of reservoir failure along with increased demand during peak summer and weekend periods. The bore and WTP are located just outside the orange tsunami evacuation zone which covers the majority of the township. The scheme also has limited combined storage and no identified alternative water source, meaning any loss of reservoir capacity could materially reduce supply resilience. These risks are compounded by seasonal, and weekend population increases which place additional pressure on water demand and supply capacity.

Current and estimated future demands for drinking water services in the community

Current drinking water demand at Himatangi Beach can be adequately supplied by the existing bore and storage infrastructure. However, future demand is expected to increase, particularly if the proposed subdivision extending from the recent Sandown Avenue development proceeds, which could create up to 174 additional lots, placing further pressure on the scheme by significantly increasing the permanent resident population. As this growth occurs, additional storage capacity may be required to maintain an appropriate level of service and provide resilience during emergency events and peak demand periods.

Demand at Himatangi Beach is also strongly influenced by seasonal population increases during summer and holiday periods with the average daily demand being 750m³/day in summer and just 171m³/day in winter. The consent renewal application lodged in 2023 responded to this by proposing an increase in the daily abstraction limit from 1,200m³/day to 1,943m³/day, consistent with the reasonable use calculations for the scheme. At the same time, the proposed annual abstraction limit was reduced from 438,000m³/year to 313,170m³/year, reflecting average demand adjusted for growth rather than continuous abstraction at the daily maximum. This approach allows the scheme to better manage short-term peak demand while reducing the total annual volume able to be taken.

Safety and quality of drinking water

The Himatangi Beach bore is a Class 1 water source abstracted from a sanitary bore head.

The safety and quality of drinking water supplied to Himatangi Beach is influenced by both the condition of the storage infrastructure and the protection of the groundwater source. The 211m³ reservoir constructed in 2013 has started to show signs of deterioration and has previously contributed to a turbidity compliance issue, resulting in the reservoir becoming unavailable for use April 2025. This has since been fixed, along with this, the steel roof of the reservoir at the Himatangi Beach Water Treatment Plant has been budgeted within the 2026/27 Annual Plan for replacement. This will be completed as a renewal project and will protect the safety and resilience of the water supply. Without replacement, the reservoir may need to be taken out of service to manage contamination risks, reducing storage capacity and increasing the risk of water

shortages, particularly during the summer months when the population increases significantly, increasing reliance on conservation measures. Replacing the roof now will maintain drinking water quality and protect supply resilience.

The proximity of the Himatangi Beach bore to the coast (approximately 1km) creates a potential risk of saltwater intrusion into the aquifer. However, monitoring indicates that this risk is low. Chloride sampling undertaken in 2021 recorded a concentration of 18.3g/m³, which is broadly consistent with historic sampling from 1998, where chloride concentrations ranged between 23g/m³ and 24g/m³. This suggests that abstraction to date has not resulted in any meaningful increase in salinity and that the effects of abstraction on saltwater intrusion are less than minor. Annual chloride monitoring and continuous conductivity monitoring will allow any future changes in groundwater quality to be identified early and responded to appropriately.

A sanitary bore head assessment of the Himatangi Beach bore was undertaken in February 2026, this assessment concluded that the bore satisfied all ten requirements with no changes required.

Overall, the Himatangi Beach scheme is capable of continuing to supply safe drinking water, however, this is not without constraints. The available monitoring indicates that saline intrusion is not currently a significant issue and that groundwater quality in general remains compliant and stable. However, the deteriorating condition of the reservoir creates an infrastructure risk that could affect the volume of safe water available during peak demand periods. Continued monitoring of source water quality, together with maintenance of storage infrastructure should remain a focus to support the ongoing safety and resilience of this scheme.

Consequences if community loses access

If the Himatangi Beach community were to lose access to the drinking water supply, the main consequences would include disruption to households and community activities including drinking, cooking and hygiene needs, and may require emergency supply measures to be introduced. These effects could be more pronounced during summer and weekend peaks when population and therefore demand is higher. However, the likely consequences will be less severe than in communities with major facilities that rely on continuous safe water supply to maintain critical services.

Provision of ongoing access

The provision of ongoing access to drinking water for Himatangi Beach is supported by a deep groundwater source, onsite chlorination, and two reservoirs that provide storage for the scheme. Council also owns the land on which the bore, water treatment plant, and reservoirs are located, removing risks associated with site access, control, and long-term security. However, the scheme has relatively limited storage and no identified alternative source of supply, meaning its resilience depends heavily on the continued performance of the existing bore and reservoir infrastructure. The proposed replacement consent, including revised daily and annual abstraction limits, is intended to better align the scheme with peak demand and future growth. On this basis, ongoing access appears able to be maintained, although additional storage may be required in the future as demand increases and existing infrastructure continues to age.

Rongotea

Characteristics of the community

The Rongotea community is located approximately 13km southwest of Feilding and has a population of around 700, with a total of 112 connections to the water supply scheme.

Nature of existing drinking water services

Source, abstraction & treatment

Drinking water for the Rongotea community is sourced from a 238m deep bore located within the township that abstracts Class 1 water. The bore provides water under artesian pressure and has a bore pump to provide greater flows when required. The water is chlorinated to provide a residual disinfectant in the reticulation system and sufficient contact time within the reservoir. A UV system is also installed at the WTP providing an additional bacteria and protozoal barrier.

The abstraction is authorised under consent 107252 which allows for up to 800m³/day, this consent expires in July 2029.

Delivery & storage

The Rongotea WTP has an 800m³ concrete reservoir which provides approximately 3.2 days of storage capacity, and from here it is distributed into the reticulation network.

Reticulation

The area of Rongotea that is serviced for drinking water is shown in the image below.



Consumer issues

There are no recurring consumer issues associated with the Rongotea water supply that Council are aware of.

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access in the future

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access to drinking water in Rongotea include failure or reduced performance of the single bore, pump, UV system, reservoir, or reticulation assets, as there is limited redundancy within the scheme. While the supply benefits from a large reservoir and a reliable artesian groundwater source, any significant mechanical failure, source water quality issue, or consent constraint could affect the scheme's ability to maintain supply. Continued asset maintenance and timely renewal of key components will therefore remain important to protecting the resilience of the supply.

Current and estimated future demands for drinking water services in the community

Current drinking water demand at Rongotea can be adequately supplied by the existing bore and storage infrastructure. The 800m³ reservoir provides a good level of resilience relative to the size of the community and supports continuity of supply during short-term outages or peak demand periods. At present there is no indication that demand is approaching the capacity of the source or storage infrastructure.

A private plan change in 2022 saw 20 hectares of rural zoned land being rezoned to village, creating the Rongotea South Development Area, following the identified need to provide for additional greenfield growth in the district. This development has the potential to create over 150 additional residential lots in Rongotea requiring a drinking water connection. The Rongotea bore is currently consented for a maximum abstraction of 800m³/day while the average daily use equates to approximately 89m³/day. Therefore, it can safely be assumed that the scheme will be able to provide for this expected growth.

Safety and quality of drinking water

The Rongotea bore is a Class 1 water source abstracted from a sanitary bore head. Routine sampling results have not identified any non-compliances or concerns with the quality of the drinking water.

A sanitary bore head inspection was conducted at the Rongotea bore in February 2026. This inspection identified two changes that would need to be made to the bore including replacement of the annulus casing due to the current one being cracked and concave and a new air vent although the current one is compliant with the requirements but has become unsecure. These changes will be made within 12 months.

Overall, there have been no indications that the safety and quality of the Rongotea drinking water supply is at risk.

Consequences if community loses access

If the Rongotea community were to lose access to the drinking water supply, the main consequences would include disruption to households, community facilities, and any connected businesses or services that rely on a continuous supply of safe water. Loss of supply may also require emergency water supply measures to be implemented until normal service is restored. While the scale of effects would depend on the duration of the outage, a loss of supply would have consequences for normal community functioning and public health once the reservoir storage had been exhausted.

Provision of ongoing access

The provision of ongoing access to drinking water for Rongotea is supported by a deep artesian groundwater source, onsite treatment including UV disinfection and chlorination, and an 800m³ reservoir that provides resilience during peak demand periods and temporary operational disruptions. Council also owns the land on which the bore, treatment plant, and reservoir are located, which removes risks associated with access, control, and long-term site security. The current abstraction consent expires in July 2029, meaning the continued provision of supply will also depend on securing a renewed or replacement consent in a timely manner. Ongoing access is therefore expected to be able to be maintained, provided that the existing assets continue to be effectively maintained and the sanitary bore head improvements identified in 2026 are completed in a timely manner.

Sanson & Ohakea

Characteristics of the community

Sanson is a small town in the Manawātū with a population of around 680, the Ohakea airbase and rural area sits north of this and has a population of around 170.

Nature of existing drinking water services

Source, abstraction & treatment

Drinking water for Sanson and Ohakea is sourced from a 623m deep bore located within Sanson. From here the water undergoes initial chlorination, iron and manganese exchange, green sand filtration, UV disinfection and final chlorination. The abstraction is authorised under consent ATH-2025207931 which allows for 2,774m³/day, this consent expires in July 2057.

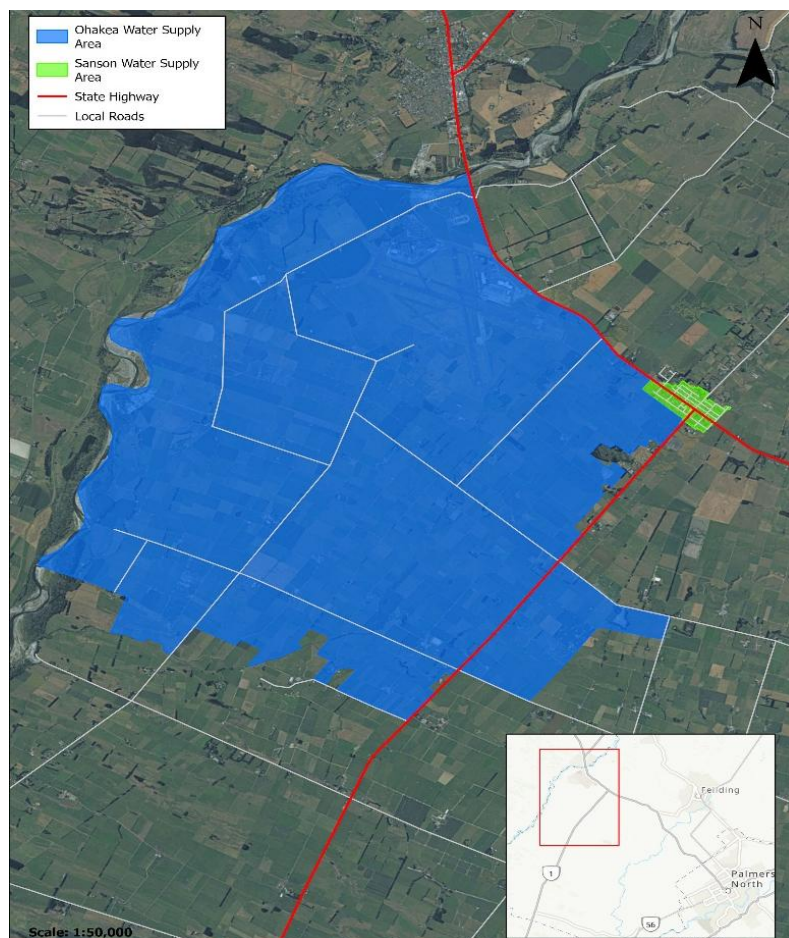
Delivery & storage

The scheme contains two reservoirs, the Ohakea reservoir with 1000m³ of storage and the Sanson reservoir with 420m³ of storage. Both reservoirs receive water from the same bore. Prior to the construction of the Ohakea bore in 2022 the Sanson had its own bore and reservoir, the bore is no longer utilised however there is a permanent connection between the two reservoirs to allow for the Ohakea bore to supply Sanson residents.

The Ohakea rural and Sanson communities utilise onsite storage tanks which the water supply is trickle-fed into while the water supply to the air base is managed by the New Zealand Defence Force.

Reticulation

The areas of Sanson and Ohakea that receive drinking water are shown in the image below.



Consumer issues

There are no recurring consumer issues associated with the Sanson & Ohakea water supply that Council are aware of.

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access in the future

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access to drinking water for the Sanson and Ohakea scheme include failure or reduced performance of the single bore or associated pumping and treatment infrastructure, power outages, and water quality issues affecting the raw water source. As both communities now rely on the Ohakea bore, there is greater dependence on the continued performance of a single source, although this is partly offset by the available storage and robust treatment process. Future increases in demand, including changes associated with Sanson growth or operational changes at Ohakea, may also place additional pressure on the scheme over time. Continued monitoring, maintenance, and renewal of the existing assets will therefore remain important to maintaining reliable access.

The Sanson water supply lacks firefighting capacity due to the size of the water reticulation pipes and the trickle-fed nature of the scheme.

Current and estimated future demands for drinking water services in the community

Current drinking water demand for Sanson and Ohakea can be adequately supplied by the existing bore, treatment plant, and storage infrastructure. The Ohakea bore was developed to provide a secure long-term supply for both the airbase and surrounding communities, and the available storage within the scheme provides additional resilience during peak demand periods and temporary interruptions. While a specific growth projection for Sanson has not yet been incorporated into this assessment, any future increase in residential demand or changes in operational demand associated with Ohakea may require further review of scheme capacity over time.

Safety and quality of drinking water

The Ohakea bore is a Class 2 water source with a sanitary bore head.

Total coliforms have been detected in the Ohakea Bore water on four occasions in the last three years, with all detections being less than 5MPN/100ml. As a result, the bacterial requirements for a Class 1 water source have not been met. Aside from these four total coliform detections, the remaining routine monitoring results over the previous three years showed no detection of *E. coli* or total coliforms since 8 March 2024, indicating that these detections were isolated events rather than representative of ongoing source water quality. As the required testing to gain Class 1 water source classification has not been completed the source remains as Class 2. This is not seen as an issue as the WTP has significant treatment processes in place including a UV system which provides a protozoa barrier. Properties connected to this scheme supplement their supply with roof tank water. However, the safety of privately supplemented supplies is not the responsibility of Council.

The Ohakea bore and WTP were constructed to provide a safe drinking water source to the Ohakea rural area outside the known PFAS contamination plume associated with historical firefighting foam use at RNZAF Base Ohakea. Given the bore depth and location outside the identified plume, the source is not currently expected to be affected. A sanitary bore assessment undertaken in February 2026 concluded that the bore satisfied all ten requirements, with no changes required.

Overall, the Ohakea and Sanson scheme is capable of continuing to supply safe drinking water. While the source remains Class 2 due to historic isolated total coliform detections, the available evidence indicates that source water quality is generally stable and that the treatment system provides a high level of protection.

Consequences if community loses access

If the Ohakea and Sanson community were to lose access to the drinking water supply, the main consequences would include disruption to households, businesses, and community facilities that rely on a continuous supply of safe drinking water. A loss of supply may also require emergency water supply measures to be implemented until normal service is restored.

The consequences are potentially more significant for this scheme because RNZAF Base Ohakea is connected to the supply, meaning an outage could also affect an important strategic facility. However, Council's responsibility is limited to the supply up to the boundary of the airbase, and any distribution or service issues within the base itself fall outside of Council's control. Overall, the loss of access would have immediate public health and service continuity implications, with the scale of effects depending on the duration of the outage and the availability of alternative supply arrangements.

Provision of ongoing access

The provision of ongoing access to drinking water for the Ohakea and Sanson community is supported by a consented groundwater source, with the current abstraction consent in place until July 2057. This provides long-term security of access to source water, subject to the continued performance of the bore and associated infrastructure. Ongoing access is further supported by the scale of storage available within the scheme, including the 1,000m³ Ohakea reservoir and 420m³ Sanson reservoir, which provide resilience during peak demand periods and temporary disruptions. The treatment process also provides multiple barriers to protect drinking water quality. In addition, Council owns the land on which the bore, treatment plant, and reservoir are located, removing risks associated with site access, control, and long-term security. While the four total coliform detections in the last three years show that ongoing monitoring remains important, the scheme is otherwise well placed to continue providing reliable access to safe drinking water.

Stanway-Halcombe

Characteristics of the community

Stanway-Halcombe is a rural community which is located northeast of Feilding. There is a population of 501 with the water supply providing both drinking water and stock water.

The Stanway-Halcombe Rural Water Scheme was recognised nationally in 2026, winning New Zealand's best tasting tap water title at the IXOM National Water Taste Test. This achievement highlights the quality of the scheme's drinking water and the work undertaken to support safe, reliable and great-tasting water for the community.

Nature of existing drinking water services

Source, abstraction & treatment

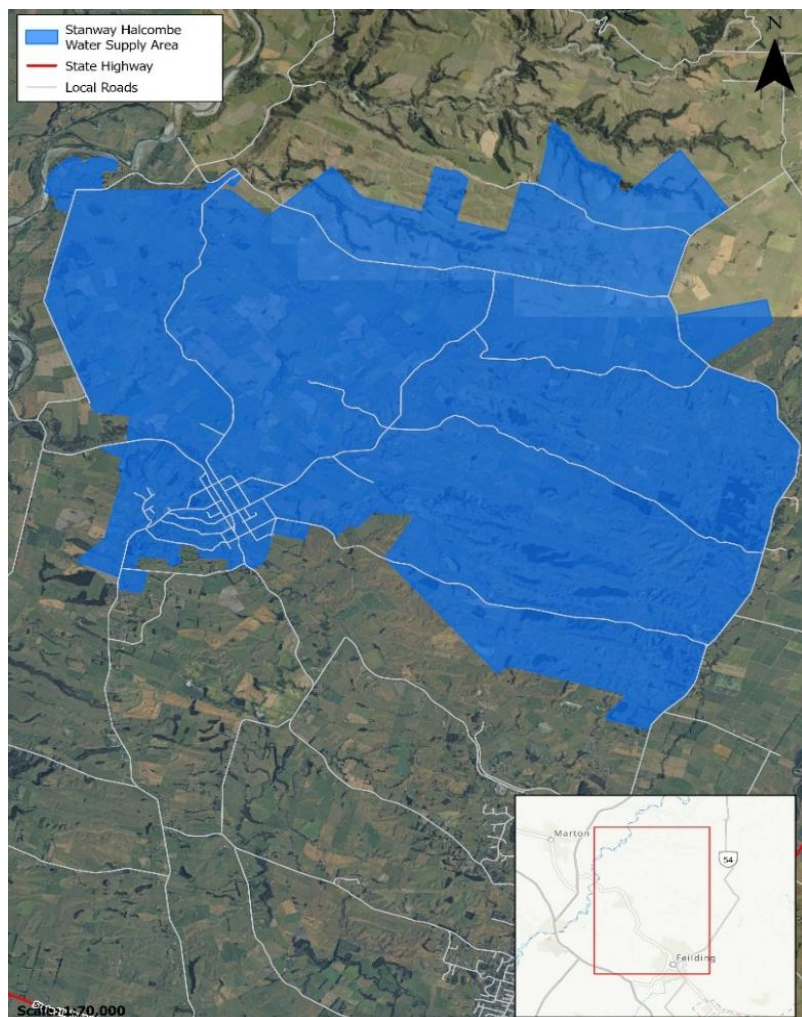
Drinking water for the Stanway-Halcombe supply is abstracted from shallow bores within the riparian gravels of the Rangitikei River, due to the depth and location within riparian gravels it is treated as being equivalent to a surface water abstraction rather than a typical deep groundwater abstraction. This water is then pumped to a containerised WTP where it undergoes 5-micron cartridge filtration, UV disinfection and chlorination.

Delivery & storage

The treated water is pumped from the treatment plant into three 30m³ storage tanks to ensure that chlorine contact time is achieved. It is likely that the chlorine contact time could be achieved within the distribution network however the storage tanks provide certainty of this. It is then pumped to a 4,000m³ concrete reservoir located on Makino Road.

Reticulation

The scheme is constant flow, with each property connected having its own individual restrictor and storage tank. Council has responsibility up to the tank and the landowner is responsible from the tank onwards.



Consumer issues

Following the treatment upgrades, there are no recurring consumer issues associated with the Stanway-Halcombe water supply that Council are aware of.

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access in the future

The Stanway-Halcombe community is vulnerable to source water quality changes during storm events and therefore Council identifies this scheme as one of two affected by dirty water during high-turbidity events. Measures currently in place to reduce the impact of these events on the scheme include a turbidity cut-off of 3 NTU, alarm systems, cartridge filtration, and 4,090m³ of combined storage.

Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023 illustrates this vulnerability. Heavy rainfall in the upper catchment of the Rangitikei River caused approximately 100m of riverbank adjacent to the schemes intake to be washed away. The loss of bank material reduced the natural filtration previously provided by the fine gravels, increasing turbidity and impacting Council's ability to effectively treat the water in accordance with the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQAR). This resulted in a boil water notice remaining in place until March 2025. Following the event, Council upgraded the treatment system and worked alongside Horizons Regional Council to install rock armoring along the riverbank to protect the intake from further erosion.

This scheme is the only one that is wholly reliant on a surface water source. While the size of the Rangitikei River provides some resilience during dry periods, the source could still become compromised during a prolonged severe drought or if minimum flow requirements were decreased without specific provision for potable water supplies required to maintain public health.

For the purposes of this assessment, a community is considered to have inadequate or vulnerable access to drinking water where it does not reliably receive a sufficient quantity for normal domestic and community needs, or where reasonably foreseeable events are likely to result in a loss or significant reduction of access and there are limited practical alternatives. Prior to the significant infrastructure upgrades the Stanway-Halcombe supply would likely have fallen into this category. However, the improvements made to the treatment system and intake protection have increased the resilience of the scheme and reduced its vulnerability to future high-turbidity events.

Current and estimated future demands for drinking water services in the community

Current drinking water demand within the Stanway-Halcombe scheme can generally be met by the existing source, treatment plant, and storage infrastructure. The scheme is designed as a constant-flow rural supply, with onsite storage tanks at individual properties providing an additional level of resilience for end users. Because the scheme also supplies stock water, demand is influenced not only by household use but also by rural land use and seasonal conditions. At present there is no indication that demand exceeds the available capacity of the upgraded scheme, although prolonged dry periods, high stock demand, or future changes in land use may increase pressure on the supply over time.

Safety and quality of drinking water

The Stanway-Halcombe water source is a Class 4 as the abstraction is from two shallow riparian bores within the Rangitikei River riparian margin and is treated as equivalent to a surface water source. Prior to Cyclone Gabrielle the source had been considered Class 3, however changes to the river alignment and the resulting reduction in natural filtration increased the source water risk and required a minimum of 4 log credits to meet the protozoa requirements.

The safety and quality of drinking water supplied to the Stanway-Halcombe community is influenced by the condition of the intake, the effectiveness of the treatment system, and the ability of the scheme to manage high-turbidity events. Since completion of the treatment upgrades and lifting of the boil water notice in March 2025, the focus has shifted to maintaining the performance of the upgraded treatment plant and ensuring the intake remains protected from further erosion. The scheme now benefits from cartridge filtration, UV disinfection, chlorination, alarm systems, a turbidity cut-off, and substantial storage capacity, which collectively improve the ability of Council to maintain safe supply during variable source water conditions.

Many properties connected to the scheme also supplement their supply with roof water. However, the safety of those privately supplemented supplies is not the responsibility of Council. Overall, the safety and quality of the reticulated Stanway-Halcombe supply have improved significantly following the post-Cyclone Gabrielle upgrades, although the scheme remains inherently more vulnerable to source water quality fluctuations than groundwater-based supplies.

Consequences if community loses access

If the Stanway-Halcombe community were to lose access to the drinking water supply, the consequences would include disruption to households and rural properties that rely on the scheme for drinking water and stock water, with associated effects on public health, hygiene, and day-to-day rural operations. The effects may be partially reduced for some properties where roof water is available as a supplementary source, although the reliability and safety of those alternative supplies vary and is not controlled by Council. Because the scheme also supports stock water demand, a prolonged loss of supply could have wider impacts on farming operations in addition to domestic use. Emergency water supply arrangements may therefore be required if a significant outage were to occur.

Provision of ongoing access

The provision of ongoing access to drinking water for the Stanway-Halcombe community has been strengthened following the significant upgrades undertaken after Cyclone Gabrielle. The scheme now benefits from a new containerised treatment plant, improved intake protection including rock armoring, and approximately 4,090m³ of combined storage, including a 4,000m³ concrete reservoir within the network. These improvements have materially increased the resilience of the scheme and provide greater ability to maintain supply during periods when abstraction must temporarily cease due to poor source water quality. However, because the scheme remains wholly reliant on a surface water source, ongoing access will continue to depend on the performance of the treatment system, the protection of the intake, and Council's ability to respond effectively to future storm and turbidity events.

Waituna West

Characteristics of the community

Waituna West is a small rural community located approximately 24km northeast of Feilding. The community has a population of approximately 226 with a total of 621 residential and farm connections to the scheme.

Nature of existing drinking water services

Source, abstraction & treatment

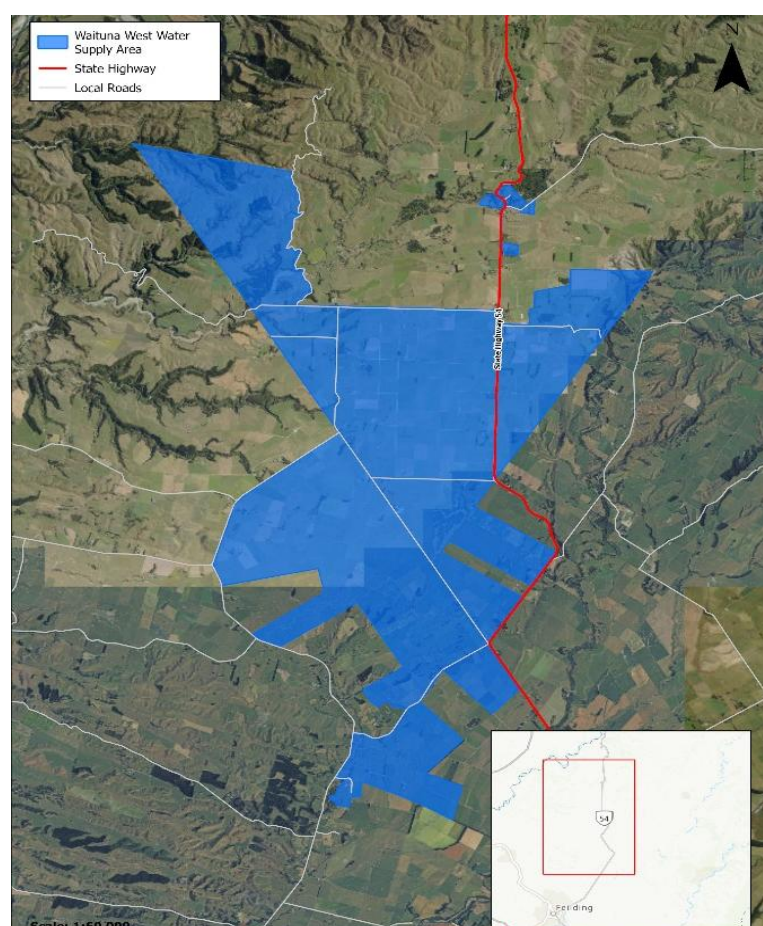
Drinking water for the Waituna West supply is abstracted from a 234m deep non-artesian bore located on Williamson Road East. The water is treated with chlorine on site at the treatment plant

Delivery & storage

Following treatment, the water is pumped to a 450m³ timber reservoir at the end of Williamson Road East to achieve the required contact time. From the reservoir the water is distributed to the rural and urban zones to onsite tanks.

Reticulation

The area of Waituna West that is serviced for drinking water is shown in the image below.



Consumer issues

There are no recurring consumer issues associated with the Waituna West water supply that Council are aware of.

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access in the future

Reasonably foreseeable risks to community access to drinking water in Waituna West include reduced performance or failure of the single bore, chlorination system, reservoir, or reticulation infrastructure, as there is limited redundancy within the scheme. A further foreseeable risk is that the current abstraction consent expires on 31 December 2027, meaning the continued provision of supply will depend on that consent being renewed or replaced in time. The scheme also supplies both domestic and stock water, which can increase demand pressures during dry periods. As properties are supplied via onsite tanks that are fed from the reticulated network, the effects of any outage may vary depending on the storage available at each property. Continued asset maintenance and timely renewal of the abstraction consent will therefore remain important to support reliable access.

Current and estimated future demands for drinking water services in the community

Current drinking water demand at Waituna West can be adequately supplied by the existing bore and storage infrastructure. The scheme supplies both domestic and stock water and is distributed to onsite property tanks, which provides some additional resilience at the household level. At present there is no indication that demand is approaching the current capacity of the scheme, and significant future growth in population or water demand is unlikely. However, seasonal stock water demand and dry period pressures may still affect how the scheme is used over time.

Safety and quality of drinking water

The Waituna West bore is a Class 1 water source abstracted from a sanitary bore head. No bacterial detections have been identified in the source water over the last three years, which indicates that raw water quality has remained stable during that period. A sanitary bore head assessment undertaken in March 2026 found that the bore satisfied all required standards, with no issues identified. The safety and quality of drinking water supplied to Waituna West is therefore primarily dependent on the continued protection of the bore, the performance of the chlorination system, and the condition of the storage and reticulation infrastructure. Overall, there are no current indications that the safety and quality of the Waituna West drinking water supply is at risk.

Consequences if community loses access

If the Waituna West community were to lose access to the drinking water supply, the main consequences would include disruption to households and rural properties that rely on the scheme for drinking, cooking, sanitation, hygiene, and stock water. Because the scheme is supplied to onsite tanks, the immediate effects of an outage may vary depending on how much water is stored at each property. However, a prolonged loss of supply would still create public health and service continuity issues and may require emergency water supply arrangements to be implemented until normal service is restored.

Provision of ongoing access

The provision of ongoing access to drinking water for Waituna West is supported by a deep groundwater source, chlorination treatment, and a 450m³ reservoir that provides resilience during short-term outages and peak demand periods. In September 2024 Council purchased the land surrounding the bore and treatment plant, removing risks associated with third-party

ownership and improving long-term security of access to the key assets. However, the current abstraction consent expires on 31 December 2027, which means the long-term continuity of the supply will also depend on securing a renewed or replacement consent. On this basis, ongoing access appears able to be maintained, provided the consent position is addressed in a timely manner and the existing bore, treatment, and storage assets continue to be effectively maintained.

Other drinking water services and communities outside the Council network

Privately operated reticulated water supplies

In general, less information is available on privately operated drinking water supplies than on Council-operated schemes, including the populations served, the extent of reticulation, treatment arrangements, and ongoing monitoring or sampling performance.

Oroua No.1 Rural Water Supply

The Ōroua No. 1 Rural Water Supply Scheme is managed under a delegated arrangement between Council and the Executive of the Oroua No. 1 Rural Water Scheme Committee Incorporated. Under this arrangement, Council has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day management, operation, water abstraction, treatment processes, and distribution maintenance associated with the scheme to the Committee Executive.

This means the Committee Executive is responsible for ensuring the scheme continues to operate effectively, including managing the practical requirements of taking water from the source, treating it as required, maintaining the distribution network, and overseeing operational matters necessary to supply water to connected users.

While Council has delegated these operational and management responsibilities, ownership of the scheme itself remains with the scheme committee. The delegation does not transfer ownership of the assets or the scheme to Council. Instead, the scheme continues to be owned by the committee, with the Committee Executive carrying out the delegated functions on behalf of the scheme.

Kiwitea Rural Water Supply

The Kiwitea Rural Water Scheme is a privately operated drinking water supply that services the communities of Kimbolton, Kiwitea, and Cheltenham. Water is sourced from two locations including surface water from the Ōroua River at London's Ford, and groundwater from a bore in Kiwitea. From these sources, around 1,000m³/day of water is abstracted and pumped to reservoirs on London's Ford Road and then up to Rangiwahia Road. The water supply is used for the purpose of stock drinking water, dairy shed washdown and domestic water supply. There are 1,636 connections which include residential and farm connections to the scheme. According to the Hinekorako portal the surface water take supplies a population of 500 while the bore supplies a population of 230.

Available information on the detailed operation and performance of the scheme is limited when compared with Council-operated supplies. However, a water scheme newsletter dated May 2024

indicated that the bore had the necessary treatment equipment while additional treatment equipment for the surface water supply was on track to being installed by the end of the year, including filtration, UV treatment and monitoring equipment. These upgrades were implemented to support the ongoing provision of safe drinking water from both sources as per the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards.

Although the scheme is independently managed, it is owned by Council and operated under a lease agreement. Under this agreement, the Kiwitea Water Scheme trust is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and all associated costs of the scheme, while Council collects rates on behalf of the Trust to fund these costs.

Scheme users participated in an engagement and satisfaction survey in 2018. The survey identified concerns about the consistency of communication, including a strong preference for more regular updates, particularly when issues arose or decisions were being made. It also raised concerns about the quality of the water supplied. However, as this feedback was received prior to the notification of the treatment upgrades referenced in the May 2024 newsletter, it is not currently clear whether these water quality concerns have been resolved following the installation of the upgraded treatment systems.

On that basis, the scheme appears to have had steps taken to improve drinking water safety, but the information currently available to Council does not allow the same level of detailed assessment as for Council-operated supplies.

Self-supplied buildings

In addition to reticulated scheme, a number of community buildings, schools, halls, and reserves within the Manawatu District rely on self-supplied drinking water, predominantly from roof water systems and, in one case, a bore. These supplies are generally small and intermittently used, but they still present potential public health risks where treatment, maintenance, or monitoring is inadequate.

The Taumata Arowai Hinekōrako portal shows the following self-supplied building supplies within the Manawātū District:

Supply Name	Population supplied	Supply type
Apiti Domain	25	Roof
Apiti Hall	25	Roof
Apiti School	20	Roof
Awahou School	45	Roof
Awahuri Hall	25	Roof
Bainesse School	47	Roof
Beaconsfield Memorial Hall	25	Roof
Colyton Hall	25	Roof
Colyton School	105	Roof
Country Kindy	35	Roof
Feilding Secret Garden Daycare	38	Roof
Glen Oroua Hall	25	Roof
Glen Oroua School	90	Roof
Hiwinui School	70	Roof
Kopane School	55	Roof

Mount Biggs School	100	Roof
Newbury Hall	25	Roof
Newbury School	200	Roof
Oroua Downs Hall	25	Roof
Oroua Downs School	100	Roof
Pohangina Hall	25	Roof
Pohangina School Reserve	25	Roof
Rangiotu & Districts Hall	25	Roof
Rangiwahia Hall & Domain	25	Roof
St Dominics Centre	50	Roof
Tangimoana School	12	Roof
Taonui School	46	Roof
Totara Reserve Regional Park	100	Bore

Community hall supplies are used intermittently for events, providing water for sometimes over 100 people at a time. The halls in the table above are within the Manawatū District however they are owned and operated by community committees.

Council staff have been working alongside the community halls to ensure that the treatment and monitoring requirements of the Very Small Community rules are being met or on track to doing so.

Communities without access reticulated water service

A large proportion of the rural dwellings within the Manawatū District rely upon roof water, private shallow bores, springs or stream sources for their supply of drinking water. For the majority of these unserviced areas their remote locations and low density of housing mean that a reticulated supply is not feasible. It is not practicable to undertake a full assessment of each of those households without access to a reticulated supply.

While Council is not responsible for managing these supplies, the pressure on Council managed schemes is expected to increase during periods of drought as people look for alternative water sources. To help manage this demand, Council provide a dedicated potable (non-fluoridated) water filling station outside Rimu Park on Roots Street West in Feilding. This allows the wider community to access potable water when required.

These communities are therefore likely to face greater variability in both the quality and reliability of drinking water access than communities connected to reticulated supplies, particularly during drought conditions or where private systems are poorly maintained.

Community awareness and future service opportunities

How communities may alert Manawatū Water Services to concerns about access to drinking water

All customers who receive a drinking water service from Council can report any issues or concerns about their supply to Council via multiple avenues including the following:

- Council call centre

- Antenno app – a free mobile app that allows residents to report and inform council of what is going on in their neighbourhood
- Council website
- In person at the Council administration building in Feilding.

Feasibility studies

Council is also supporting long-term resilience in areas without reliable drinking water access by investigating the feasibility of new or extended rural water schemes. Two examples of recent feasibility studies for rural water schemes are provided below.

Te Reureu Water Supply Scheme

Council has been working with local iwi representatives in the Te Reureu Valley on the eastern banks of the Rangitikei River north of Halcombe to develop a feasibility assessment for either a potential extension of the existing Stanway-Halcombe Rural Water Supply, a new standalone scheme for Te Reureu or a combination of the two options. Council staff are providing technical and engineering advice and support to the local iwi and if one of the options is deemed to be feasible, it could service up to 1,200 hectares of fertile river terrace farmland with safe and clean water for the whanau, where and when. This project has been considered through previous Long Term Plans and Annual Plans; however, funding has not been allocated due to the associated costs. External funding opportunities will be explored in the coming years, subject to the final feasibility assessment.

At present those living in the Te Reureu Valley do not have access to water and therefore the marae is unable to operate at full capacity, often running out of water in the summer months. The local iwi views this lack of potable water as a barrier to the people being able to return home to their whenua to live and allowing for the creation of agribusiness ventures to occur on the whenua.

Vinegar Hill Community Stock Water Scheme

Following funding being received from the Provincial Growth Fund a feasibility study was produced for a potential stock watering scheme in the very northern part of the Manawātū District to support agricultural production by providing stock drinking water to around 40,000 hectares of hill country farmland. If the scheme is deemed feasible, Council's project team will seek external capital funding to allow for construction.

District wide findings

The following sections draw together the main themes arising from the community-level assessments and identify the key district-wide issues affecting ongoing access to drinking water.

Communities with inadequate or vulnerable access

For the purposes of this assessment, a community is considered to have inadequate or vulnerable access to drinking water where it does not reliably receive a sufficient quantity for normal domestic and community needs, or where reasonably foreseeable events are likely to result in a loss or significant reduction of access and there are limited practical alternatives. In practice, this includes communities that:

- experience frequent or prolonged water restrictions or supply interruptions
- have recurring water quality or boil water issues
- rely on sources or infrastructure with little redundancy and high exposure to natural hazards
- depend on untreated or marginal supplies
- have few realistic options to obtain safe water if their primary source fails.

At present, none of the Council owned or operated supplies fall into the inadequate or vulnerable category.

Current and future demand

Demand for drinking water varies considerably across the district depending on the size of the community, whether the scheme is urban or rural, and whether stock water is also supplied. Urban schemes such as Feilding have the highest overall demand due to population size, while smaller schemes such as Himatangi Beach experience strong seasonal peaks associated with holiday populations. Rural schemes such as Stanway-Halcombe and Waituna West can also experience elevated demand due to stock water use and dry weather conditions. Future demand pressures are expected to be greatest in communities experiencing residential growth, including Feilding and potentially Himatangi Beach and Sanson. Continued monitoring of water use trends will be important to ensure source, treatment, storage, and network capacity remain aligned with both current and future needs.

Council sets targets around the average consumption of drinking water. The target is set at <300 litres per resident per day for urban drinking water schemes and <1000 litres per resident per day for rural drinking water schemes to reflect stock use.

Public health risks related to drinking water

Key public health risks from drinking water in the district arise primarily from microbiological contamination, chemical contamination, and intermittent or insufficient supply.

Microbiological and chemical risks are most closely linked to supplies that lack adequate treatment barriers which in the Manawatū District is predominantly those self-supplied households and facilities that rely on untreated roof water or shallow private bores. This can be due to:

- private bores not undergoing routine testing;
- chemicals and nutrients from nearby effluent fields leaching into groundwater, particularly in sandy or gravelly soils, or those without sufficient setbacks;
- exposure to agrichemicals, fuel, oils or solvents entering groundwater; and
- naturally occurring dissolved minerals or metals that can be hard or corrosive.

While roof-collected rainwater can be exposed to contaminants from:

- the roof itself leaching;
- the roof becoming contaminated with spray drift, ash, dust, or vehicle emission residues;
- poor quality tanks that can deteriorate and allow contaminated soil or water to enter; and
- backflow.

For those not connected to the Council reticulated network quantity can also become an issue in summer months when there are prolonged periods without rain. The impact of this is most severe for those who cannot easily have water transported to them due to access restrictions and those with limited on-site storage capacity, and households or businesses that are particularly reliant on rainwater collection.

Consequences of loss of access or service delivery

The loss of access to drinking water, or the provision of drinking water services that are deficient in quantity, quality, or reliability, can have significant consequences for communities across the Manawātū District. The most immediate impacts relate to public health, as households may be unable to access safe water for drinking, food preparation, hygiene, sanitation, and basic daily needs. Where water is unsafe, intermittent, or unavailable, the risk of waterborne illness and other health impacts increases, particularly for vulnerable people such as young children, older people, and those with existing health conditions.

A loss of access or service deficiency can also disrupt normal community functioning. Households, schools, community facilities, and businesses may be unable to operate as usual, while rural properties may also be affected through the loss of stock water or water for on-site domestic storage. Where outages are prolonged, emergency response measures such as water cartage, bottled water distribution, or alternative collection points may be required. Reduced water availability can also affect firefighting capability, place pressure on Council and health services, and increase financial and social stress for affected communities.

It is noted that some of Councils village water schemes are not able to provide access to firefighting water due to being trickle feed schemes and a lack of hydrants within the trunk mains. These villages include Sanson, Ohakea and Stanway-Halcombe.

The consequences of service failure are not evenly distributed across the district. Larger communities such as Feilding would experience more widespread disruption because of the number of people, businesses, and services affected, while smaller or rural communities may face greater difficulties because they often have fewer alternative options and may be more exposed to single-source failures, drought, or isolation. Communities outside the reticulated network, and those relying on self-supplied roof water, shallow bores, or very small supplies, are also likely to be more vulnerable to prolonged disruption or water quality issues.

Overall, the consequences of losing access to drinking water, or receiving a deficient drinking water service, can extend well beyond inconvenience. They may affect public health, community wellbeing, economic activity, emergency response, and the resilience of the district as a whole. For this reason, maintaining reliable and safe access to drinking water remains a core public health and infrastructure priority for Council.

Monitoring, review and update of the assessment

This assessment will be reviewed at least every three years, as required under the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025. Monitoring inputs will include:

- Drinking water compliance and performance data.
- Asset condition and resilience assessments.
- Updated population, growth and demand information.

- Feedback from communities, mana whenua and stakeholders.

Updates will be made sooner where significant changes occur, such as new supplies, major incidents or emerging risks.

Conclusion

Overall, this assessment indicates that most communities in the Manawatū District currently have access to sufficient and generally safe drinking water, particularly where they are connected to Council-operated reticulated supplies. However, the level of resilience varies across the district. Larger schemes such as Feilding benefit from multiple sources, substantial storage, and ongoing capital investment, while smaller or single-source schemes remain more exposed to asset failure, natural hazards, seasonal demand pressures, or consent renewal requirements. Communities outside the reticulated network, and those relying on private or self-supplied systems, continue to face greater uncertainty in relation to water quality, reliability, and emergency access. Continued monitoring, asset renewal, source protection, consent management, and planning for growth and climate resilience will therefore remain important to supporting ongoing access to drinking water across the district.