

29 April 2025

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Dunedin City Council
50 The Octagon
Dunedin 9058

Tēnā koutou

Public health advice on Local Water Done Well – Ōtepoti Dunedin

1. We are providing advice on the Dunedin City Council's proposal for Local Water Done Well. Health NZ has statutory obligations under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 and the Health Act 1956 to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities. This advice has been prepared by the National Public Health Service (NPHS) Southern of Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora. NPHS Southern provides public health services to the Southern region including Dunedin.
2. NPHS Southern does not have a view on the preferred option for the delivery of water services in the Dunedin. We acknowledge that the Plans are intended to encourage councils to examine how they can sustainably fund three waters infrastructure long into the future, including meeting regulatory requirements in terms of quantity and quality of water and supporting growth.

Advice

3. The following outlines our technical advice on Dunedin City Council's proposal for Local Water Done Well to protect communities from waterborne diseases, through the provision of drinking water supplies, sewerage and stormwater systems.
4. We support council's proposal to maintain or strengthen the delivery of three waters services and that allowance is made for population growth. We support Council continuing to operate its existing three waters infrastructure and not reduce or withdraw services. The provision of safe and adequate supplies of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage and wastewater protects public health.
5. Safe drinking water is crucial to public health. The well-publicised outbreak of gastroenteritis in Havelock North in August 2016 resulted in an estimated 5,500 of the town's 14,000 residents becoming ill with campylobacteriosis, and of these, 45 people required hospital treatment. It is possible that the outbreak contributed to three deaths, and an unknown number of residents developed long-term health complications.
6. The safe collection, treatment and disposal of sewage and wastewater also protects health. Human waste carries a wide range of pathogenic micro-

organisms, including *Giardia lamblia*, *Cryptosporidium parvum* cysts, *E. coli*, Hepatitis A virus, and *Entamoeba histolytica*. Many are still viable and virulent, even if sewage has been in the environment for some time. Other potential pathogens such as *S. typhi*, *V. cholera*, poliovirus, may become endemic in New Zealand. These organisms may pose a health risk when the environment is contaminated by sewage. Sewage and wastewater may also contain toxic chemicals, particularly from industrial and trade waste sources. Drinking and recreational water sources can pose a serious risk to human health if contaminated.

7. We support council's proposal to invest in drinking water and wastewater treatment plants to meet regulatory requirements.
8. We support council's proposal to invest in the renewal and maintenance of infrastructure to maintain levels of service in the medium and long term.
9. We note that council's chosen delivery model appears cost effective and will keep costs manageable for users, to protect people's health by ensuring access to safe drinking water and wastewater disposal is affordable.
10. We support council's proposal to ensure adequate resources are being allocated to higher risk communities, including those that are currently under-serviced or not serviced.
11. We support council's consideration of intergenerational equity, and that council has given consideration to the impacts of climate change and ensuring this essential public health infrastructure is protected from extreme weather events.
12. We support council's consideration of water metering and charging to ensure it is equitable, and there is provision for adequate water to be provided to meet health and sanitation requirements.
13. We are pleased to see evidence of discussions between local and regional councils on the interaction between the stormwater and flood protection systems so that stormwater ingress to sewers is managed, and will reduce the risk of sewage overflows, but also that flood risk from stormwater ponding is not increased.
14. We are pleased to see the separate arrangements for different water services (drinking water, wastewater or stormwater) are coordinated and aligned.
15. While there is no specific requirement in the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 for iwi Māori to be consulted, the NPHS supports consultation with iwi Māori on Local Water Done Well.

Conclusion

16. NPHS Southern does not wish to be heard with respect to this technical advice.

Nāku iti noa, nā



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