


9 September 2024

OIA-738



Tēnā koe 

**Response to your information request - Salary and Severance Details for WW Chief Executive**

Thank you for your request of 13 August 2024 asking for information regarding the recent departure of Wellington Water's Chief Executive, Tonia Haskell.

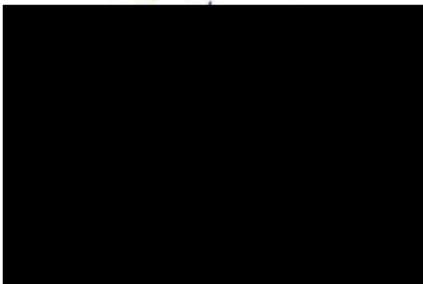
Some of the information you have requested is **enclosed**. However, some of the information has been withheld under s 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). The Appendix below sets out the information that has been disclosed and the information that has been withheld, including the reasons for withholding.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly at <https://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz/about-us/official-requests/official-information-act-responses/> with your personal information removed.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to email us at [official.information@wellingtonwater.co.nz](mailto:official.information@wellingtonwater.co.nz)

Nāku noa, nā



For the latest news and updates, follow us on our social channels:

 /wellingtonwater  @wgtwaternz & @wgtwateroutage  @wellington\_water

[www.wellingtonwater.co.nz](http://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz)

**Our water, our future.**

## APPENDIX

1. *The total annual salary, including any bonuses or additional benefits, paid to Tonia Haskell during her tenure as Chief Executive of Wellington Water.*

Tonia Haskell's total annual salary, including any bonuses or additional benefits, is \$466,122 per annum.

2. *Details of any severance payout or compensation provided to Tonia Haskell upon her resignation, including:*
  - a. *The total amount paid*
  - b. *The terms and conditions of any severance agreement*
  - c. *Any additional benefits or entitlements included in the severance package*

The information falling within the above request has been withheld under section 7(2)(c)(ii) of LGOIMA – protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest.

The information is confidential in nature, arose within the context of an employee-employer relationship which is imbued with expectations of confidentiality, and was communicated in confidence. There is therefore a strong obligation of confidence. Further, we consider disclosure would likely damage the public interest in encouraging parties to settle their disputes without resorting to litigation, through releasing details of confidential settlement negotiations, which the Ombudsman has previously accepted as relevant damage.<sup>1</sup>

We appreciate that there is public interest in Tonia Haskell's resignation given her role as chief-executive of a public entity and the recent media attention. However, we consider that the strength of the public interest is tempered by the fact that there is already a significant amount of information available to the public about the circumstances of her resignation, including a publicly available report that was the output of an independent review. We therefore consider that the public interest does not outweigh the good reasons for withholding the information.

3. *Any official documentation or communication explaining the reasons for Tonia Haskell's departure, particularly in relation to the findings of the recent report mentioned in the media.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Ombudsman A guide to section 9(2)(ba) of the OIA and section 7(2)(c) of the LGOIMA <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/sites/default/files/2022-07/Confidentiality%20%282%29.pdf> at 15.

Please refer to the **enclosed** email that was sent to all staff on 8 August 2024.

- 4. Information on who will be leading Wellington Water in the interim and any additional compensation provided to them for assuming these responsibilities.*

The Acting Chief Executive is Charles Barker.

The higher duties allowance provided to Charles Barker is \$146,812 per annum, pro-rated with the term of the acting arrangement.

**From:** [Nick Leggett](#)  
**To:** [\\* All Staff](#)  
**Subject:** Chief Executive resignation  
**Date:** Thursday, August 8, 2024 10:20:46 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[Media release - Wellington Water Chief Executive steps down - 8 August.pdf](#)

---

Kia ora koutou

I am writing to you all to announce Tonia Haskell has stepped down from her role as Chief Executive.

I'd like to thank Tonia for her hard mahi and commitment to Wellington Water over the years. As many of you know, Tonia joined Wellington Water a number of years ago as the Group Manager for the Network Development and Delivery Group, a position she held for five years before taking on the role as Chief Executive in 2023.

Tonia has led the organisation during a time of change and uncertainty. At the beginning of 2023, she took up the mantle of Chief Executive to provide the organisation with stability as we headed into what was then anticipated to be a new water entity under the previous Government's Affordable Water Reform Programme.

Tonia not only provided a steady hand on the till but has also led the organisation to deliver some significant milestones.

In the last financial year, we delivered a \$330M capital programme for councils in the region.

The Wellington Water team successfully raised the risk and managed a tricky summer period last year where the region was facing heightened risk of tighter water restrictions and increasing water loss through leaks. This led to our councils increasing their investment into our continued efforts to find and fix more leaks, resulting in a significant reduction in the backlog in recent months.

Tonia's willingness to front difficult issues in the media as well as her personal commitment to the safety of frontline staff will also leave a positive legacy in the organisation.

On behalf of the Board, I'd like to wish Tonia well in her future endeavours.

Tonia's last day is tomorrow Friday 9 August.

I realise that this news can be unsettling for some of you, off the back of what has already been a tough time recently and many of you will have questions around next steps. I want to assure you all that the Board is deeply aware of this. We are working through a process to provide you all with certainty around leadership and the right person to see us through this next phase of the Wellington Water journey.

The Board will begin to consider options for a more permanent appointment to the role. In the meantime, we have asked Charles Barker to act as Chief Executive. While we undertake this process, Charles has the Board's full confidence to act.

We will be issuing the attached media release soon.

Ngā mihi nui

Nick Leggett

**Nick Leggett** Board Chair



Private Bag 39804, Wellington Mail Centre 5045  
Level 4, 25 Victoria Street, Petone, Lower Hutt

[www.wellingtonwater.co.nz](http://www.wellingtonwater.co.nz)

## Media release

Embargoed until 10:30am 8 August 2024

### Wellington Water Chief Executive steps down

Wellington Water Board Chair, Nick Leggett, has announced that Wellington Water Chief Executive Tonia is stepping down from her role.

Nick thanked Tonia for her hard work and leadership over the past five and a half years with Wellington Water.

Nick said Tonia had a track record of delivery in her various leadership roles at Wellington Water.

“In her time at Wellington Water, the capital programme delivering water assets for the region had grown from \$60m to \$330m in the last financial year.”

Nick said many Wellingtonians had also admired Tonia’s willingness to front difficult issues in the media and be up front in discussing both challenges and solutions.

“Working for Wellington Water has been a privilege.” said Tonia. “The team at Wellington Water, its supplier whānau and partners are incredibly smart, hard-working and dedicated to improving water outcomes for the region. I am proud to have been part of that.”

Tonia joined Wellington Water as its Group Manager Network Development and Delivery in 2019. She has been in the Chief Executive role since early 2023.

“During my time as Chief Executive we have delivered major projects such as the Omāroro Reservoir and the Kaitoke Flume bridge and delivered a record level of pipe renewals. We have also lifted the operating performance of the organisation and navigated a long dry summer, reduced the backlog of leaks and are finally seeing a reduction in water usage and loss for the first time in five years.”

“With our operational performance now in good shape, now is a good time for me to move on, with the entity facing a different strategic future,” Tonia said.

From this Friday 9 August, Tonia will step down from the Chief Executive role.

The Board will begin a process over the coming weeks to appoint a new Chief Executive for Wellington Water.

### ENDS

For media enquiries contact [media@wellingtonwater.co.nz](mailto:media@wellingtonwater.co.nz)

### *About Wellington Water*

*Wellington Water is owned and fully funded by Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, and Upper Hutt City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and South Wairarapa District Council. All six councils are equal shareholders.*

*Our councils own the water infrastructure in the region, and they task us to manage the infrastructure and deliver water services to our communities.*

*Wellington Water is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board and our organisation receive overall leadership and direction from the Wellington Water Committee, which are also responsible for appointing members to the Board.*

*The Wellington Water Committee is made up of representatives from our council owners and mana whenua.*