



# Community Education

---

## What is the Issue?

Individuals and organisations within our communities could do more to reduce their water use and contribute to improved water quality such as reducing the amount of blockage-causing material flushed to the sewer, and reducing the level of contaminants entering stormwater drains which then discharge into waterways and the coastal environment.

Positive action may involve only a modest cost or effort, but can contribute to benefits that support key community priorities of value-for-money services and high-quality local environments. Currently, the community's knowledge about water services and perceptions of the barriers and benefits linked with changing personal behaviours are not driving widespread change in support of these benefits.

At present community education programmes are often specific to one council, or only part of the total area that we serve. They use different targets, tools and providers in response to city-specific drivers (for example consent requirements). Working with our communities at a regional scale could achieve cost efficiencies, standardise practices and lead to a higher-profile, comprehensive, whole-of-network approach to delivering education and other initiatives to support behaviour-change.

## What does Wellington Water want to achieve?

We want our communities to understand their impact on the three waters networks and the environment, and act with this in mind. This supports the delivery of our outcomes of respectful of the environment and resilient now and in the future. The potential benefits of increasingly engaged communities include improved river and harbour water quality, reduced water consumption, reduced network operating

costs and deferring the need for investment in new infrastructure. It will also support better relationships with property owners who are affected directly by our projects.

We want to drive a more regionally consistent, comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to drinking water, storm water and wastewater education programmes across our five council owners, so we can maximise benefits to their communities. This will include exploring and seeking agreement for how we prioritise initiatives and assess the effectiveness that resulting programmes deliver.

## How do we intend to achieve this?

We'll start by looking at what's already being done in community education in each city, who's delivering the programmes and where our knowledge gaps are. We'll also look at what's happening around New Zealand. This information will feed into a discussion paper that will form the basis for consultation with council officers. The finalised discussion paper will inform a draft community education strategy that we'll prepare in consultation with councils, before taking it to community stakeholder groups for their feedback. The strategy will include a draft work programme, including costs.

## What does this mean for our community?

Our aim is that people will gain better understanding of their water services and the most regionally-significant water use and water quality issues, so that they are motivated to 'do the right things' more often, to positively influence water use and quality.

By 2018, our communities will have an opportunity, through councils' annual plan processes, to identify the range and scale of initiatives used to promote changing habits that reflect their values and priorities.