

PUBLIC ALERT

THREE(3) WATERS AFFECTS YOU

BACKGROUND

Are you aware the Labour Government is proposing to transfer the water assets owned by ratepayers from our local councils to one of four mega water authorities? That's the water you drink, waste water (sewage), and stormwater runoff. These are known as the ThreeWaters which is the elephant in the room

The Government wants to take your Three Waters assets without paying we think fair value for them. That includes all water reservoirs, treatment plants, and infrastructure networks.

Your assets will then be controlled by a 12-member mega water authority governing board. Half of the board will be appointed by iwi. The Government says that's to honour the "partnership" they have with Maori. The other 6 seats will be taken by the local authorities that are transferring their water assets, in proportion to the value of their assets, so the bigger councils will have more influence on the mega water authorities.

Those 12 unelected people and they alone will have total control over the water that flows in and out of your property, and how much you pay. At the present time, the elected representatives of your local council

make decisions about water. If your council joins the Government scheme, the mega water authority will be the only water provider so you will have no option but pay whatever they charge you.

Labour Cabinet papers reveal that the Government has had 60 consultation meetings with Maori interests about the Three Waters proposals. However there has been no community consultation on the proposal, despite the Local Government Act 2002 requiring councils to consult when making decisions about strategic assets like water.

Labour Cabinet papers also show the Government is considering changing the law to remove the requirement for Councils to consult with their community over the Three Waters scheme. In other words, they want your Council to transfer your assets without you having any say whatsoever. In plain English that is called compulsory acquisition.

WATER DEFINITION: Water is the most renewable of all the earth's natural resources it falls from the sky as rain it surrounds us in the oceans that covers 75% of the earth's surface and in the polar ice caps and mountain glaciers it is the source of earths life (mauri). It is a natural resource that no one owns yet



everyone does, it is everyone's resource in reality and the NZ Government must administer this resource for all Kiwi citizens.

Frankly, in VET's view, anyone who thinks that Central Government can do infrastructure cheaper or better than Councils and the local communities would be extremely foolish

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What is Three Waters?

"Three Waters" is a proposal by central Labour Government to take control of your water assets that are currently owned and managed by your local council on your behalf; -Drinking water, wastewater(sewage) and stormwater.

Who will control those water assets if the Three Waters proposal goes ahead?

Four unelected mega water agencies will be created three in the North Island and one in the South Island, which will together control all New Zealand's water assets and infrastructure.

How will water proposals effect you ?

It affects you because the new mega water agencies will be the ones billing you, not your local council. They will decide how well pipes are maintained, how quickly repairs are done, and where new infrastructure will be built.

Who will control the mega water agencies?

Each agency will be controlled by an unelected 12-member board. Six will be appointed by local iwi. The other six will be appointed by the local councils that provided the assets. For example, the 22 local authorities in the mega entity that includes Bay of Plenty will have only six seats in total. Three-quarters of the board must agree before a decision can be passed so as VET sees it iwi will have the final say and that is a power of veto.

It is understood that the mega authorities boards will be based in Auckland, Hamilton Wellington and Christchurch.

Will the board members be accountable to you as a resident and ratepayer

NO. Unlike your local councillors, they are not elected and are not answerable to you.

Will councils be paid fair value for your water assets they are handing over?

NO. Councils will only receive a payment to cover any debt they may have relating to the water assets, but that is only cents in the dollar. Billions of dollars of assets paid for by generations of ratepayers will be handed over to the new mega agencies without any fair compensation.

THIS IS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT THE CALL FOR A NZ WIDE REFERENDUM

The Government plan is based on deeply flawed ideology. The Government needs to back off and consider the opposition to the Plan because this reform process is not the Kiwi way of doing things. Write to your local MP's, the Prime Minister and Ms. Mahuta demanding a New Zealand wide binding Referendum on the inane water plan. Encourage others to do likewise - copy these pages, deliver into letterboxes and email to others, plus use social media to post a backlash against this try on.

Are Councils in favour of Three Waters?

Councils had until the end of September 2021 give Government their feedback on the proposal. It looks like only 7 councils have tentatively opted into the scheme (it seems even they have reservations) and 60 are firmly against or sitting on the fence including Tauranga City Council Commissioners.

Local Government New Zealand headed by Stuart Crosby signed a Heads of Agreement with the government in July 2021 without a mandate from its membership to do so. Some councils are unhappy about this Timaru has already resigned its membership and Christchurch City Council is considering this.

It seems even LGNZ Chairman Crosby is now calling for a pause to the project and for meaningful consultation

ARE THE LABOUR GOVERNMENTS FIGURES RELIABLE?

NO. The Government has said water charges will reduce if Three Waters goes ahead, but experts who have reviewed the figures say they are "founded on unsound evidence and faulty analysis" (Castalia) and "should not be relied on to project actual expenditure, revenue and pricing outcomes." (Farrier). In VET's view, the Government's figures are not reliable and should not be believed without tangible evidence.

Do councils have to consult with their community about this?

YES. The Local Government Act 2002 requires councils to consult with ratepayers over major decisions regarding water.

Minister Mahuta states she intends to introduce legislation into Parliament to make the reforms mandatory and that, in VET's view is draconian and a dark day for democracy. VET sees the removal of the Council's 'opt out' option and the ability for Councils to hold a referendum and consultation with ratepayers and the community is a denial of democracy as Kiwis know it. VET believes it is an unconscionable seizure of assets that have been built up by generations of Kiwi ratepayers. Government inspectorates to check on each council three monthly at minimal cost would have done the trick. Of course there are and will be towns and cities with water not up to scratch and Govt needs to step in and fund these-but VET thinks possibly only several \$ billion dollars is required not hundreds of \$billions.

Initial staff numbers for this behemoth are estimated to be 9000 plus and projected total cost will be a staggering

\$185 billion over the next 30 years by 2050. How can this be justified, cost effective and cheaper than now?