

2. Future water use

This proposal aims to improve our resilience to climate change by making better use of the water we have to complement water storage.

Water is absolutely critical in our natural environment. It underpins the health of our people. In Hawke’s Bay, we’re grappling with the effects of climate change in a dry-and-drying region as we also face more intense and more frequent storms and floods. We have too much water at times of the year we don’t need it, and too little at the times of year that we do.

We also need reliable, climate-resilient supplies of freshwater so that our productive sectors of crops, orchards, vineyards and livestock can prosper.

So we need to develop ways to make better use of the water we have. For that reason, we’re proposing a focus on water conservation and water use efficiency. The Council will look for other funding partners to share the cost of this work.

Why now?

Many of our freshwater resources are already under pressure and the increasing effects of climate change mean we can’t wait to act. We have already mapped the Heretaunga and Central Hawke’s Bay aquifers to give an accurate picture of where the water is and a regional water assessment is under way to understand future demand and supply. We need to be ready to take advantage of the findings from the regional water assessment so that water conservation and efficiency measures can occur at the same time as the progress we make on initiatives to store water.

Water that is stored above or below-ground needs to be considered alongside a focus on conservation or efficiency to ensure we make the best choices to ease pressure on our freshwater.

OPTION 1 (preferred option)

Work with water users to drive more efficient and effective use to complement our focus on water storage.

Impact on levels of service: Improve water security through non-storage methods, like water conservation and efficiency measures.

Total cost: \$1.08 million over years 2, 3 and 4, funded from reserves.

Impact on rates: Nil

Impact on debt: No impact

OPTION 2

Status quo – do what we can now without the additional investment, and aim to set aside more funding in 2024 to develop non-storage solutions.

Impact on levels of service: No change

Total cost: Nil

Impact on rates: Nil

Impact on debt: No impact

