

Submission by



to the
Finance and Expenditure Committee
on the
Water Services Legislation Bill

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New Zealand IoT Alliance

NZ IoT Alliance Submission – Water Services Legislation Bill

SUMMARY:

1. NZ IoT Alliance thanks the Finance and Expenditure Committee for the opportunity to submit on the Water Services Legislation Bill. This submission is in response to section 389 and the power for the Chief Executive to authorise persons to read water meters, and to bring forth consideration to emerging technology and the implementation of a data strategy.
2. In response to the proposed bill, NZ IoT Alliance are pleased that the Finance and Expenditure Committee are considering to reform the water services delivery in New Zealand and support the single broad policy for this bill in its intent to establish and empower water services entities by setting out their functions, powers, obligations and oversight arrangements.
3. NZ IoT Alliance is happy to engage further with the Finance and Expenditure Committee to discuss our submission in detail and provide further assistance as part of developing the Water Services Legislation Bill.

BACKGROUND:

4. NZ IoT Alliance is a member of the New Zealand Tech Alliance. The NZ Tech Alliance is a group of independent technology associations from across New Zealand that work together with a common purpose to connect, promote, and advance technology ecosystems in New Zealand to create a prosperous digital nation.
5. NZ IoT Alliance is an association of organisations and individuals that represent the industries that utilise the internet of things technology and smart technology. Our key purpose is to actively contribute to the acceleration and adoption of IoT innovation by promoting collaboration across industry and government to create a connected New Zealand.

COMMENT:

6. We commend the government for introducing and progressing the long overdue reforms of the three waters sector, which in our view, will deliver considerable benefits to current and future generations. We consider the benefits will include:

- a. Improved public health outcomes for the people of New Zealand, who will have equitable access to similar levels of service from their water services provider;
 - b. Better environmental outcomes for our natural waterways and coastal marine waters;
 - c. Improved partnerships and relationships with tangata whenua through co-governance arrangements and the implementation of Te mana o te wai;
 - d. Economic benefits from the economies of scale that will be achieved and wider collaboration across communities;
 - e. Long overdue and sustainable infrastructure investment that will have the effect of reducing ongoing routine and reactive maintenance costs;
 - f. The removal of politics from water investment decisions while retaining democratic principles of sound water management.
7. Given the scale and importance of water for the well-being of all New Zealanders and our land, we endorse the reform of water service delivery in New Zealand. However, we wish to reinforce that the role of digital and other tech is so intertwined with the successful transformation of the water sector.

Comments relating to Section 389:

8. This section of the Bill empowers the Chief Executive to authorise persons to read water meters. While this is not logical, it does not recognise smart metering and automated meter reading (AMR) technologies that utilise wireless networks to collect data using services such as LoraWan, NB-IoT, Bluetooth, 5G, amongst others. We submit that the right of the entity to utilise smart meter technology is provided for in the Bill.

Data Strategy Consideration:

9. Having reviewed the bill in some detail, we note, however, that there is no direction given in relation to water data management and note the term “data” is absent within the bill. It is submitted that this is a significant omission. Sound water management relies heavily on having accurate and reliable data, which should be available to all. To quote Peter Drucker, “If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it”. We advocate for an independent body (possibly the water services regulator) that is custodian of the Big-Data from all water entities to ensure its validity and completeness.
10. It is imperative that there is a comprehensive consideration of the technology available to assist with water data management and to establish a water data strategy. Technologies to consider as part of a data strategy could include the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence/machine learning, blockchain (decentralised ledger technology), and location intelligence.

CONCLUSION:

11. We thank the Finance and Expenditure Committee for the opportunity to submit and provide feedback on the Water Services Legislation Bill. NZ IoT Alliance is happy to engage further to discuss our submission and provide any further assistance to the development of a water data strategy.
12. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me or our team.

Yours sincerely,

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