Tararua District Council

Assessment of communities' Access to drinking water

June 2026

Executive Summary

This assessment has been prepared to support Tararua District Council (TDC) in meeting its obligations under Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025. These provisions require territorial authorities to assess access to drinking water services, including adequacy, reliability, resilience, public health risks, and future service provision.

TDCs Council-operated reticulated drinking water supplies are generally fit-for-purpose and managed through established statutory, planning, and risk management frameworks, including the Long-Term Plan, Water Services Delivery Plan, Asset Management Plan, Drinking Water Safety Plans, compliance monitoring, and reporting to Taumata Arowai. Recent treatment infrastructure investment has strengthened performance, although some smaller or more isolated supplies remain constrained by redundancy, ageing assets, storage, source vulnerability, capacity, and operational optimisation requirements. Overall, Council-operated schemes are meeting, or progressing toward meeting, the expectations of Sections 69 and 70. Pahiatua and Woodville are assessed as meeting requirements; Dannevirke and Eketāhuna are largely meeting requirements, with known infrastructure and minor treatment performance matters being managed; and Akitio, Norsewood, and Pongaroa are partially meeting requirements due to treatment optimisation, capacity, resilience, or infrastructure constraints. These matters are understood by TDC and are being addressed through existing planning and capital works programmes.

The assessment also identified non-Council drinking water supplies across the district. A total of 81 sites were identified through the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register and desktop review, with 29 classified as in scope and 56 as out of scope. In-scope supplies include accommodation providers, camping grounds, community halls, food processing facilities, marae, and private supplies. These supplies are generally smaller, more dispersed, and less formally documented than Council-operated schemes, with variable information available on source water, treatment, monitoring, management, population served, and continuity of supply.

The non-Council supply assessment was desktop-based and has not been validated through direct supplier engagement or site visits. The findings should therefore be treated as an initial district-wide assessment rather than a definitive compliance or public health assessment. Key limitations include incomplete information, uncertainty about some supply statuses, and limited visibility of treatment, monitoring, reliability, and future demand arrangements.

The recommendations focus on strengthening TDCs district-wide visibility and support role for non-Council supplies. They include establishing a structured engagement and information framework and maintaining an up-to-date supply register, which will be used to conduct assessments of non-Council supplies over the next one to three years.

In summary, TDC has a robust understanding of its own drinking water systems and a clear pathway for managing known constraints through existing planning and investment frameworks. The main opportunity is to progressively improve understanding, engagement, and support for non-Council supplies, helping TDC meet its legislative obligations while maintaining a practical, risk-based approach to drinking water provision and public health protection across the district.

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Summary of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Term
TDC	Tararua District Council
TLA	Territorial Local Authority
HRC	Horizons Regional Council
LTP	Long Term Plan
WSDP	Water Services Delivery Plan
AMP	Asset Management Plan
DWSP	Drinking Water Safety Plan
SWRMP	Source Water Risk Management Plan
DWSNZ	Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022 - commonly referred to as the *Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand*
DWQAR	Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules 2022 (Revised 2024)
MAV	Maximum Acceptable Value
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
LGA 2002	Local Government Act 2002
LG(WS)A	Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025
WTP	Water Treatment Plant
GIS	Geographic Information System
UV	Ultraviolet
s69–70	Sections 69-70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025

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1. Background

The Tararua District Council (TDC), along with all Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs), are required to complete an assessment of the drinking water services provided in the district.

Under sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, territorial authorities must assess access to drinking water services across their districts.

This assessment includes the following key requirements:

- A primary focus on drinking water supplies owned and operated by TDC, including their ability to maintain service continuity and the potential consequences of supply disruption.
- An identification process that also extends to non-Council supplies, including self-supplied and non-reticulated communities.
- Public release of the completed assessment, provision to the Water Services Authority, and use of the findings to inform relevant strategic and planning documents.
- Consideration of all supply types, while recognising that more detailed analysis will generally focus on supplies with specific regulatory obligations under the Water Services Act 2021.

Territorial authorities such as TDC are required to complete their first assessment by 1 July 2026 and conduct subsequent assessments at least once every three years[1].

This document provides an overview of the drinking water supplies within the Tararua District based on information available to TDC. The assessment covers Council-operated drinking water supplies, including treatment and distribution systems, and extends to the identification of independent supplies in the district that are not connected to the TDC reticulated network.

This assessment will identify improvements to the provision of water supply in the district and will be recommended to be included as Long Term Plan/Water Services Delivery Plan projects[2] upon the commencement of Waitī Waters on 1 July 2027.

1.1 District Overview

The TDC area covers approximately 4,365 km² in the south-east of New Zealand's North Island and serves a population of approximately 19,000 people (2025 estimate). The district includes the main urban centres of Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Woodville, Ormondville and Eketāhuna, the coastal settlements of Herbertville and Akitio along with smaller rural settlements such as Norsewood, Pongaroa, and Alfredton.

The resident population was approximately 18,660 at the 2023 Census, reflecting relatively modest long-term growth following a period of historical decline, with recent estimates indicating gradual stabilisation. The district has a median age of approximately 42.9 years and a comparatively high proportion of residents aged over 65, indicating a distinctly ageing population profile relative to the national average. Population projections indicate low to modest growth over the long term, with demographic ageing expected to continue.

[1] As per the Section 69(5)(c) of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, the assessment may be performed on the Councils behalf by another appropriate organisation within the authority's district, including a water service provider (such as Waitī Waters).

[2] On 1 July 2027, TDCs water services will be transferred to a new entity "Waitī Waters" which is a regional water services organisation comprising the following Councils; Tararua, Masterton, Carterton, and South Wairarapa. Water services obligations of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 will transfer from TDC to Waitī Waters.

Land use across the district is predominantly pastoral, with extensive sheep and beef farming and significant areas of dairy farming, alongside forestry and smaller-scale horticulture. Large areas of grassland underpin agricultural production, supported by alluvial soils and catchments draining from the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges. These land use characteristics, combined with rainfall patterns and hill country terrain, contribute to surface runoff and present ongoing risks to source water quality, including microbial contamination, sediment load, and nutrient runoff pathways.

The Tararua District is overseen primarily by the Horizons Regional Council (HRC), whereby HRC manages the vast majority of the district's environmental and regional planning requirements under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Recent infrastructure investment has focused on upgrading and maintaining drinking water and wastewater assets to meet current regulatory expectations and improve system resilience. This has included upgrades to key water treatment plants in Dannevirke, Woodville, Eketāhuna, and Pahiatua, incorporating enhanced treatment processes such as improved filtration and treatment system upgrades to achieve compliance with drinking water standards. Additional capital works and planning initiatives have targeted ageing infrastructure, including reservoir renewal and network upgrades, alongside district-wide three waters master planning to address capacity constraints, inflow and infiltration, and climate resilience challenges.

Ongoing national reform under Local Water Done Well, and the establishment of the Wairarapa - Tararua regional water services entity called Waitī Waters, further influence the future provision, resilience, and funding of drinking water supplies within the district.

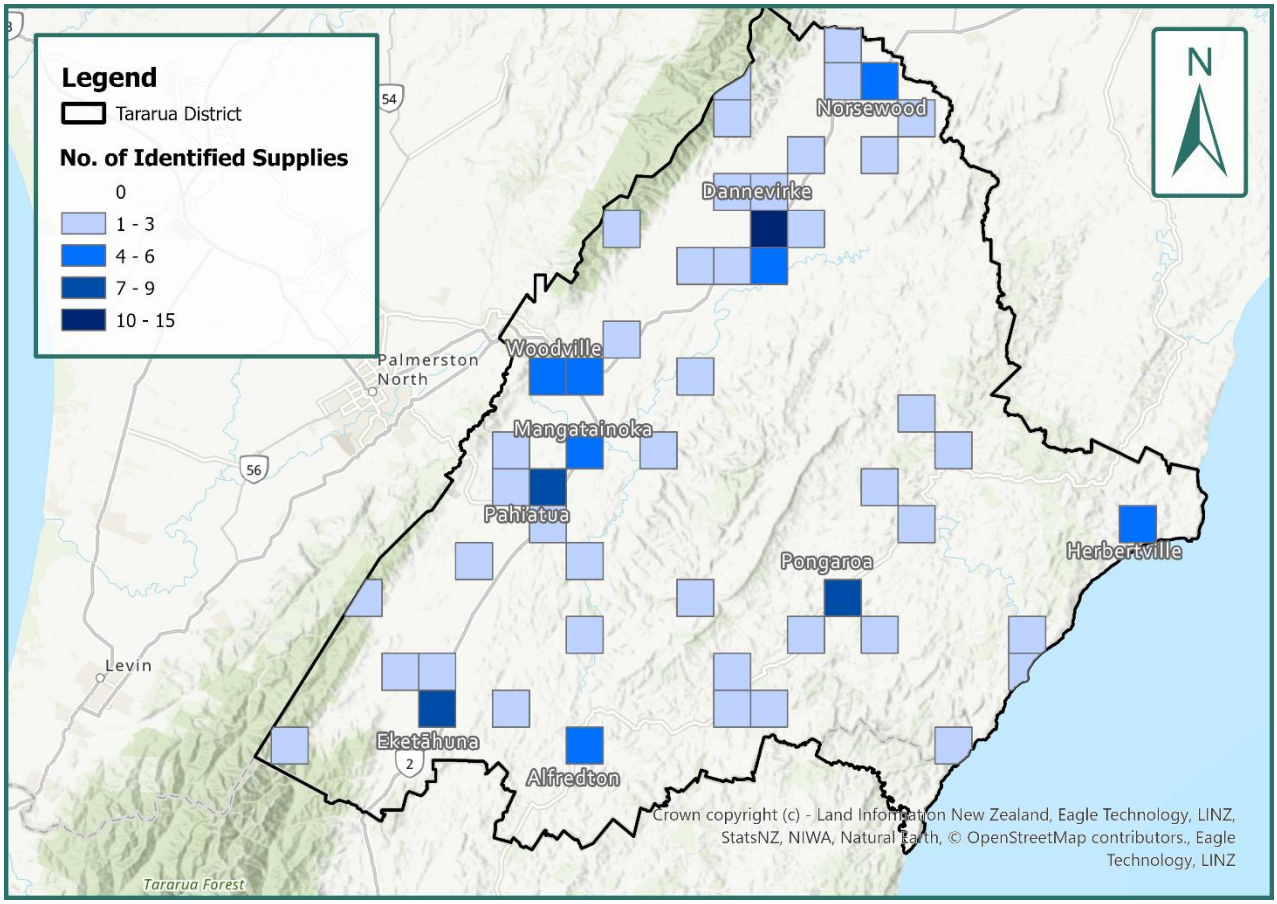


Figure 1. Map of Tararua District identifying areas of greatest community water supply density (by 5km^2)

1.2 Legislative Requirements

In providing drinking water services, the TDC is subject to numerous laws and standards. These impose direct duties (like delivering safe water and protecting water quality) and supporting responsibilities (like infrastructure management, source protection, emergency preparedness, and governance/accountability). Below, each relevant Act, regulation, rule, or standard is explained with a summary followed by bullet-pointed council obligations under that instrument.

1.2.1 Water Services Act 2021

The Water Services Act 2021 is the flagship law for drinking water regulation in New Zealand. It replaced previous health legislation, establishing a comprehensive regime that requires all drinking water suppliers (including councils) to ensure safe, adequate, and wholesome drinking water. The Act created Water Services Authority (Taumata Arowai) (the national water regulator) and sets out supplier duties such as meeting the Drinking Water Standards, registering supplies, managing risks through water safety planning, and protecting source waters.

The Water Services Act 2021 establishes a comprehensive regulatory framework for drinking water in New Zealand. It mandates that all drinking water suppliers, including local councils, ensure the safety and quality of the water they provide. Key requirements include registering their water supply, complying with drinking water standards, quality assurance rules, providing sufficient quantities of water, and maintaining a drinking water safety plan. Suppliers must also notify the Water Services Authority (Taumata Arowai), the new water services regulator of any risks or hazards to the water supply. Additionally, they must maintain records of supply, compliance, and monitoring through accredited labs. The Act aims to protect public health by ensuring consistent and reliable access to safe drinking water.

The Act is underpinned by the following regulations and standards;

- Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022 (DWSNZ)
    - These regulations are secondary legislation under the Water Services Act that define maximum acceptable values (MAVs) for contaminants (microbial, chemical, radiological) in drinking water.
- Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules 2022 (DWQAR)
    - These Quality Assurance Rules are legally binding technical rules issued by Taumata Arowai under the Water Services Act. They provide detailed requirements on HOW suppliers must achieve and demonstrate compliance with the Act and Standards – covering aspects like treatment plant performance criteria, sampling locations, frequencies, methods, operator qualifications, and management of risks (e.g., chlorination, protozoa barriers, backflow prevention, distribution zones monitoring, etc.).

1.2.2 Local Government Act 2002

The Local Government Act 2002 lays out the general powers and duties of local councils in New Zealand. Drinking water supply (as well as wastewater and stormwater) is explicitly recognized as a core service of local government, meaning councils are expected to provide communities with this essential service.

Under the Local Government Act 2002, councils are required to prepare Long-Term Plans (LTP) that incorporate comprehensive planning for water services, including drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater. This is achieved through mandatory components such as the Infrastructure Strategy, which must address these core assets over a minimum 30-year horizon, as well as through requirements to define service

levels, performance measures, and funding arrangements. Collectively, these provisions ensure that water services are fully integrated into councils' strategic, asset, and financial planning frameworks, prior to the introduction of more recent sector-specific planning instruments under water services reform.

1.2.3 Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025

The Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 is a new law that reaffirms councils' responsibilities for water services (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater) after the repeal of the 2022–2023 Three Waters reform legislation. The Act provides updated frameworks for how councils (and water service providers) plan, fund, and deliver water services efficiently and transparently.

Under this legislation, the TDC has responsibilities relating to the following requirements:

Water Services Planning (Delivery Plans): Must prepare and adopt a Water Services Delivery Plan for their water, wastewater, and stormwater services, looking at a planning horizon of at least 10 years. This plan must outline how the council will maintain and improve its water services, ensure compliance with drinking water and environmental standards, provide for future growth, and manage assets sustainably. It also covers collaboration options (e.g. shared services or joint arrangements with other councils) and must be updated regularly.

Service Performance & Economic Efficiency: Must meet new service quality and efficiency requirements. The Act introduces (or enables) an economic regulation regime overseen by the Commerce Commission, meaning councils will likely be required to report on performance indicators (like cost efficiency, response times, customer satisfaction) and adhere to any service level codes or consumer protection measures established. Councils must also ensure that water charges or rates are applied fairly and transparently (affordability and equity are key themes).

Assessment of communities' access to drinking water services: The Act requires councils to undertake assessments of drinking water activities in its district, with the purpose of the assessment being;

- Determine any health risks to communities arising from any absence, or deficiencies in services, and
- Assess the quality of services currently available, and
- Consider and estimate future demands for services and outline a plan to provide ongoing access to drinking water for communities within the district for the future.

The first assessment must be conducted by 1 July 2026, and then at least once every three years following.

Facilitating Regional Cooperation: Must consider collaborative or aggregated delivery models if they offer efficiency or resilience gains. The Act encourages councils to work together and gives them the legal tools to create joint water service arrangements or council-owned water enterprises. Councils must examine such options (for instance, combining resources with neighbouring councils) where appropriate to improve outcomes for ratepayers.

Maintain Bylaws & Implement Powers: Must use updated bylaw-making powers under this Act (which supersede parts of the LGA 2002 bylaw provisions) to address local water service matters like water conservation, metering, or protection of assets. Councils are also empowered and expected to use new enforcement tools (e.g. infringement notices for breaches of water bylaws) to ensure compliance among users and protect the integrity of the water system.

1.2.4 Health Act

This piece of legislation requires Council to ensure safe sanitation through the improvement, promotion and protection of public health within its district. The Act also requires Council to inspect its district to ascertain if conditions exist which are likely to be injurious to health. If such conditions do exist, Councils are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that they are abated or removed.

1.2.5 Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991 aims to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. It mandates that resource use be authorised through regional or district plans, resource consent, or designation. Section 14 requires consent for damming, diverting, taking, or using natural water, except for domestic, stock-water, and fire-fighting needs, which may be exempt unless otherwise specified by a regional plan. The RMA provides the framework for resource utilisation in New Zealand, requiring an overview of the policy framework for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater management rather than detailed resource consent evaluations.

The Resource Management Act (RMA), 1991, provides the framework for all resource utilisation within New Zealand. The overriding purpose of the RMA "is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources". To utilise resources, an activity, can either be authorised by a rule in a regional plan or district plan, or through a resource consent or by granting a notice of requirement for a designation.

It is necessary to review the planning documents to determine the approvals required for drinking water activities.

For the purposes of this assessment, it is not necessary to identify whether resource consents are required for each individual supply; rather, an overview of the policy framework provides guidance.

Under this legislation, the TDC has responsibilities relating to the following requirements:

Water Abstraction Consents: Must hold and comply with resource consents for taking water from rivers, lakes, or aquifers. These consents typically set limits on how much water can be taken (daily/annual volume) and may impose minimum flows or water level conditions to protect aquatic ecosystems. Councils must manage their water takes within these limits and monitor usage, ensuring no over-abstraction that could harm the environment or other users.

Discharge & Environmental Protection Compliance: If water supply operations involve discharging water or wastes (e.g., discharging treatment plant sludge, filter backwash, or flush water), the council must obtain discharge consents and meet water quality standards to avoid environmental contamination. Essentially, water suppliers must not pollute water bodies through their activities. This aligns with the broader obligation under the Water Services Act 2021 to protect source water quality, ensuring that source streams and aquifers remain safe and are not degraded by the supplier's own operations or infrastructure.

Collaboration with Planning Authorities: Must work with regional councils (who implement the RMA at local level) to support source protection. For instance, regional and district plans under the RMA may designate water supply catchment areas or protection zones; councils operating water supplies should engage in these planning processes to advocate for rules that guard against land use activities which pose contamination risks (like intensive farming, forestry, or hazardous substance use near drinking water sources). This cooperation is

often part of the council's Source Water Risk Management Plan and is crucial for maintaining raw water quality.

1.3 Relationship with Council Plans

The management and delivery of drinking water services within the Tararua District is supported by a structured framework of statutory and non-statutory planning documents. These documents collectively establish the strategic direction, funding pathways, asset management approach, and risk management practices that underpin the provision of safe and reliable drinking water services.

At a governance level, the LTP sets the Council's overarching direction, priorities, and investment programme. This is complemented by the Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP), which provides a more detailed, water-specific framework to demonstrate how services will be delivered in a financially sustainable and compliant manner under current regulatory expectations. Supporting these strategic documents, the Asset Management Plan (AMP), and Infrastructure Strategy translates long-term objectives into operational and lifecycle asset planning, while Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSPs) focus specifically on identifying and managing risks to drinking water quality from source to tap.

Together, these documents form an integrated planning hierarchy that ensures alignment between strategic intent, infrastructure investment, operational delivery, and public health protection outcomes for drinking water services across the district. Their specific purpose is explained below.

1.3.1 Long Term Plan (LTP) and corresponding strategies

1.3.1.1 Long Term Plan (LTP)

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002) requires all councils to adopt a long-term plan every three years before the beginning of the financial year. The TDC LTP sets its long-term vision for the services it delivers. The LTP describes the Council's strategic direction and work programme for ten years, outlining the services it will provide, the projects it plans to undertake, the costs, how they will be paid for, and how performance will be measured. In each of the years between LTPs, TDC prepares an Annual Plan to review the budgets and work programme planned for the year, according to the LTP. If a significant or material change from the LTP is proposed, the community will be consulted. At the end of each financial year, the Council produces an Annual Report setting out how it performed compared with what it said it would do. It lets residents and ratepayers know what was delivered and analyses whether the Council met its budgets and performance targets.

The TDC LTP covers the period 2024-2034.

1.3.1.2 Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051

The Tararua District Council Infrastructure Strategy (2021–2051) sets out how the Council plans to manage and invest in its key infrastructure over the long term, ensuring that essential services continue to support safe, functioning, and connected communities. The Strategy focuses on core services including drinking water supply, wastewater, stormwater, and transport networks, recognising that these systems are critical to public health, economic activity, and environmental protection.

Its primary purpose is to identify the main infrastructure challenges facing the district, such as ageing assets, affordability constraints, growth pressures, climate change impacts, and increasing regulatory requirements, and to outline how Council intends to respond to these over a 30-year period. This includes planning for asset

renewals, maintaining service levels, and ensuring infrastructure remains resilient and fit-for-purpose into the future.

The Strategy also explains how Council will balance investment needs with what the community can afford, placing emphasis on maintaining existing service levels while progressively improving asset condition, reliability, and compliance with standards.

Importantly, the Infrastructure Strategy sits alongside and supports other Council planning documents. It forms part of the LTP and provides a high-level framework that is implemented through more detailed annual budgets, and operational programmes. Together, these documents ensure that Council meets its statutory obligations under the Local Government Act 2002 while delivering infrastructure services that protect public health and support community wellbeing.

1.3.1.3 Asset Management Plan (AMP)

Council is responsible for the provision, operation, and management of three waters services (water supply, wastewater, and stormwater) across multiple schemes serving the Tararua District. These services support urban townships including Ormondville, Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Woodville, Eketāhuna, Norsewood, Pongaroa, and Akitio, and comprise a combination of treatment plants, reticulation networks, reservoirs, pump stations, and associated infrastructure. The (AMP) provides the primary framework for managing these assets and services, addressing current performance, future demand, and long-term investment requirements. The AMP integrates water supply, wastewater, and stormwater systems into a unified "three waters" approach, recognising the interrelated nature of these services and the need to respond to key drivers such as climate change, growth, regulatory compliance, and aging infrastructure.

The AMP underpins the LTP and associated strategic documents, including the Infrastructure Strategy and District Plan, and supports Council's responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002. It establishes the basis for service delivery, investment prioritisation, and engagement with stakeholders, including iwi, regulators, and the community.

Consistent with the AMP, key challenges influencing asset management include:

- increasing compliance requirements for drinking water and wastewater discharges
- aging assets and a backlog of renewals across all three waters networks
- climate change impacts, including more extreme rainfall and drought events
- population growth and increasing demand on existing infrastructure
- affordability and funding pressures associated with significant capital investment needs.

The key purposes of the AMP are to:

- establish a long-term strategy for the management of three waters assets and services
- define current and desired levels of service, including compliance with regulatory and consent requirements
- identify lifecycle costs and investment needed to sustain and improve service delivery
- forecast future demand, growth pressures, and associated infrastructure responses
- prioritise renewals, upgrades, and new capital works programmes
- manage risks to service delivery, including public health, environmental, and asset failure risks
- support integrated planning, funding, and decision-making across the three waters activities.

Consistent with the AMP, asset management planning is an ongoing process informed by asset condition assessments, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement of data quality and asset information systems. The AMP is updated to reflect changes in asset condition, regulatory requirements, and strategic direction, and is aligned with the Long-Term Plan cycle to ensure that investment decisions remain responsive to evolving service needs.

The AMP should be read in conjunction with the Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) and related statutory and strategic documents to provide a complete framework for three waters service delivery, compliance, and investment planning.

1.3.2 Water Services Planning (Delivery Plan)

The Tararua District Council Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) is a long-term plan that sets out how the Council will continue to provide safe, reliable, and compliant water services for its communities into the future. It explains the current state of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems, the challenges they face, and what needs to be done to maintain and improve them over the next 10 years.

In simple terms, the Plan shows that many of the Council's water assets are ageing, some are nearing the end of their life, and parts of the network are not meeting future needs, particularly for stormwater and wastewater systems. It also identifies issues such as water shortages during dry periods, high levels of water loss from pipes, treatment plants needing upgrades to meet standards, and infrastructure that is not resilient enough for population growth or climate change.

To address this, the WSDP outlines a significant programme of work and investment (around $150 million over 10 years) to fix and upgrade infrastructure. This includes replacing old pipelines and storage tanks, improving treatment systems, reducing leaks and water wastage, upgrading wastewater plants to meet environmental rules, and redesigning parts of the stormwater system to better manage flooding.

The Plan also explains how these works will be funded and delivered, noting that costs will increase over time and may impact affordability for the community. As a result, the Council intends to carefully prioritise essential work, focusing first on health, safety, and compliance and may adjust the timing of less critical projects to manage costs.

The WSDP sets out a staged transition where the Council's water services, including assets, staff, funding, and operations are transferred to a new regional entity - Waitī Waters. More information regarding Waitī Waters can be found here (https://www.tararuadc.govt.nz/services/water-and-wastewater/wairarapa-tararua-waters).

Overall, the purpose of the WSDP is to give a clear and realistic picture of what needs to be done to keep water services safe and sustainable, while balancing the need for investment with what the community can afford.

1.3.3 Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSP)

Drinking Water Safety Plans specifically relate to water supplies. TDC is required to produce a DWSP for its water supplies to identify and manage risks associated with the provision of drinking water. TDC has produced DWSPs for all its respective water supplies. This Report draws on information contained in the current DWSPs.

1.4 Ongoing External Performance and Evaluation

TDC is subject to a comprehensive framework of external review, audit, and regulatory oversight, ensuring accountability for the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water services. On an annual basis, Council performance and financial planning - through the LTP and associated Annual Report processes - are independently audited, providing assurance that infrastructure investment and service delivery commitments are appropriate, transparent, and financially sustainable. In parallel, TDC fulfils its obligations under the Water Services Act 2021 by actively monitoring and reporting each water supply's compliance against the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQAR) to the Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai.

The intention of this report is not to duplicate or extend beyond these established regulatory and audit requirements, but rather to provide a high-level overview of the current position of each supply in relation to Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, and how these requirements are already being addressed through existing planning, monitoring, and assurance processes.

Collectively, these mechanisms demonstrate that TDCs drinking water services are subject to ongoing scrutiny, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement, providing confidence that water supplies are being managed in a manner that protects public health, maintains compliance, and aligns with legislative expectations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 How drinking water supplies were identified

A structured and iterative approach was undertaken to identify all community drinking water supplies within the Tararua District. The methodology was designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of both Council-operated and non-Council supplies, including community, rural, and self-supplied systems.

2.1.1 Desktop Review of Existing Information

The identification process commenced with a desktop review of existing publicly available information. This included:

- Council-held datasets, registers, and core policies (e.g., LTP, AMPs and WSDMP), *and*
- Supporting central and local government documentation relevant to drinking water supplies, *and*
- Spatial information (where available publicly).

This stage aimed to establish a baseline understanding of known drinking water supplies across the district and to assess the completeness and reliability of the available data. It also enabled the identification of data gaps, inconsistencies, and limitations relevant to the Community Drinking Water Supply Assessment requirements.

2.1.2 Data Collation and Development of a Supply Register

Following the desktop review, all identified supplies were consolidated into a standardised supply register. This process involved:

- Collation of known water supplies into a unified dataset, *and*
- Standardisation of key data fields (e.g. location, supply type, source where information is available), *and*
- Preparation of the dataset to support further validation and analysis.

The development of this register provided a centralised reference point for all identified supplies and formed the basis for subsequent stages of the assessment.

2.1.3 Consideration of Broader Community Supply Types

The identification process encompassed a wide range of supply types to ensure that all relevant community drinking water systems were considered. This included:

- Council-operated reticulated supplies, *and*
- Community shared supplies (e.g. marae, community facilities, camps), *and*
- Semi-rural and rural settlements, *and*
- Domestic and non-domestic self-supplies.

This broader scope ensured that small, dispersed, and historically unregistered supplies were captured within the assessment, including those that may not be formally recognised within existing registers.

2.2 Assessment of Section 69 Applicability

Following identification and validation of potential drinking water supplies, each site was assessed to determine whether it fell within the scope of Section 69 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025. The purpose of this step was to distinguish community drinking water supplies requiring further consideration from those that are specifically excluded from the assessment requirements. Where a supply's status was

uncertain, such as whether it was connected to an existing Council reticulated supply, it was retained 'in-scope' pending further investigation.

As mentioned previously, supplies were generally classified as out-of-scope where they were:

- Domestic self-supplied buildings as described under Section 68 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, *or*
- Drinking water services owned or operated by government departments, including educational facilities (e.g., schools), and Department of Conservation facilities, *or*
- Supplied directly by an existing TDC reticulated water supply and were therefore already considered through the assessment of Council-operated schemes, *or*
- Determined to not provide drinking water at all.

The outcome of this process was the development of a refined register of drinking water supplies categorised as either 'in-scope' or 'out-of-scope'. This enabled subsequent analysis, mapping, and prioritisation activities to focus on community drinking water supplies relevant to the requirements of Section 69.

Where it is not immediately clear whether an identified community site is or is not connected to an existing reticulated drinking water supply, a conservative approach was taken to include these within the register and consider them as 'in-scope' until such time as a true determination can be made (through future evaluation exercises).

2.2.1 Planned integration into an Assessment Framework

The intended final output of the identification process was to compile a comprehensive and validated register of community drinking water supplies across the district. This register forms the basis with which future assessments are to be conducted as required under the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025. The developed register currently achieves the following;

- Provides a consolidated view of drinking water supply arrangements across the Tararua District, and
- Supports the evaluation of different supply types, including Council-operated, community-managed, and self-supplied systems, and
- Enables identification of information gaps across the district.

The identified 'in-scope' supplies are detailed within Section 5 of this report and underpin the findings and conclusions of this assessment.

2.2.2 Out-of-Scope Sites

All sites identified as being Department of Conservation huts, golf courses, campgrounds/holiday parks, educational facilities, or community sites known to be connected to existing reticulated supplies were all found to fall outside of the scope of Section 69 of the LG(WS)A. Details regarding these sites have been kept within the standalone drinking water supply register for completeness and where relevant have been included in the tables in Section 4.2.

3. Tararua District Council Water Services

This section outlines the communities within the Tararua District that are serviced by Council-operated drinking water supplies and provides a combined assessment of adequacy and resilience across both treatment and distribution components. TDC operates multiple reticulated water supply schemes that serve a mix of urban and rural communities.

In alignment with the intent of Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, this assessment considers the extent to which water services are fit-for-purpose, reliable, financially sustainable, and capable of meeting current and future demand, while supporting the delivery of safe drinking water and maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements.

The assessment adopts an integrated, system-wide approach, combining evaluation of both:

- Treatment infrastructure, including source water availability, treatment processes, plant capacity, treatment performance, and the ability to manage source water risks and variability; and
- Distribution networks, including reticulation coverage, asset condition, storage, redundancy, pressure management, and the continuity and reliability of supply to consumers.

By considering these components together, the assessment provides a consolidated view of each scheme's ability to consistently deliver safe and sufficient drinking water from source to point of use, including during periods of peak demand, operational disruption, or asset failure.

The assessment draws on underlying technical documentation, including the WSDP, AMP, and DWSPs, to evaluate system performance, identify constraints, and assess risks to service delivery.

The communities listed in Table 1 are supplied by TDC through Council-managed reticulated water supply schemes. These schemes collectively support public health outcomes and must demonstrate adequacy, resilience, and operational performance consistent with legislative expectations for long-term water service delivery. The following information relates to those supplies owned and operated by TDC.

Table 1. TDCs community drinking water supplies

Supply Name	Supply ID	Population
Akitio	AKI001	113
Dannevirke	DAN001	5680
Eketāhuna	EKE001	590
Norsewood	NOR002	150
Pahiatua	PAH001	2860
Pongaroa	PON001	80
Woodville	WOO001	1710

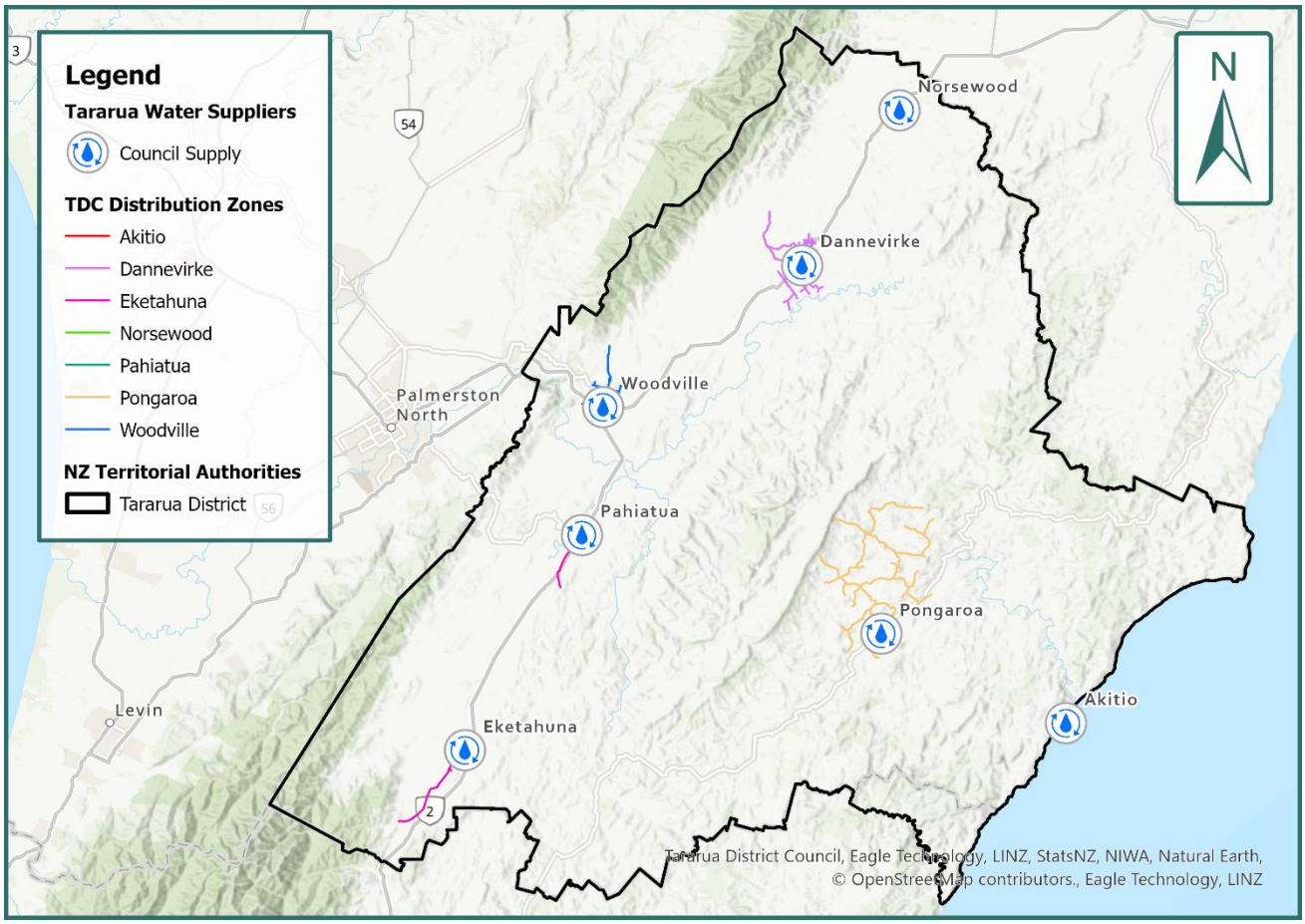


Figure 2. Overview of TDCs networked community drinking water supplies (location and delivery)

3.1 Assessment of TDCs achievement of legislative duties

The following table details the Council's achievement of legislative duties for each of its respective drinking-water supplies that it owns and operates:

Table 2. TDCs Assessment of Legislative achievement

Supply Name	Water Services Act					Health Act 1956	RMA 1991
	Registered	DWSP	SWRMP	DWSNZ[3]	DWQAR[4]		
Akitio	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Dannevirke	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eketāhuna	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Norsewood	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Pahiatua	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pongaroa	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Woodville	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The following information provides further context to the supplies in the above table where requirements were not achieved:

[3] Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022.

[4] Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules 2022 (Revised 2024) – results based on externally verified DIA Drinking Water Quality Audit Report for the 2024-2025 financial year.

- Akitio:
    - Water Treatment Plant Performance – Has the necessary treatment barriers to meet the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. Upgrades to key barriers (such as installing alarms on the UV reactors) was completed as part of SCADA upgrades in November 2025 supporting compliance to be achieved in full. Enhancements to chlorine dosing practices and consideration for pH control would aid with meeting bacterial disinfection rule requirements.
    - Distribution Zone Performance – No issues identified. Bacterial compliance achieved in full for the zone.
- Eketāhuna:
    - Water Treatment Plant Performance – Has the necessary treatment barriers to meet the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. There was a day where UV dose was marginally non-compliant due to a coding discrepancy when the plant was having the raw water meter installed. The code has since been revised. No existing concerns relating to water quality safety as compliance achievement >99%.
    - Distribution Zone Performance – No issues identified. Bacterial compliance achieved in full for the zone.
- Norsewood:
    - Water Treatment Plant Performance – Substantial water treatment upgrades were completed and fully operational from November 2024. Since November 2024, the treatment plant has the necessary treatment barriers to meet the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. Enhancements to chlorine dosing practices and consideration for pH control will aid with meeting bacterial disinfection rule requirements.
    - Distribution Zone Performance – No issues identified. Bacterial compliance achieved in full for the zone.
- Pongaroa:
    - Water Treatment Plant Performance – The treatment plant has the necessary treatment barriers to meet the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. Enhancements for pH control will aid with meeting bacterial disinfection rule requirements.
    - Distribution Zone Performance – No issues identified. Bacterial compliance achieved in full for the zone.

Recent achievements for the TDC regarding the performance of their drinking water supplies include:

- Pump system commissioned at Dannevirke Water Treatment Plant impound, enabling access to bottom 6m of the dam for supply resilience.
- Pongaroa and Akitio had their SCADA systems upgraded late 2025 for greater remote control and monitoring.
- Backwash consent granted in May 2026 at Woodville Water Treatment Plant.

Treatment Plants have received significant investment over the last four years to meet Drinking Water Quality Performance Rules, while TDC has increased its focus on maintenance schedules to improve asset resilience.

3.2 Assessment of each supply's achievement of water quality, safety and continuity

The assessment of each supply reflects a combination of treatment capability, distribution system performance, and supply capacity. Across the district, treatment processes are generally appropriate to source

water characteristics, with multiple treatment barriers (e.g., filtration, UV disinfection, chlorination) in place for all schemes.

The assessment draws on information from the DWSPs, AMP, and WSDP to summarise how water is sourced (e.g. groundwater or surface water), the effectiveness of treatment processes, the reliability of the distribution network, and whether current infrastructure can meet existing and future demand.

Table 3. TDCs Assessment of achievement of water quality, safety and continuity

Water Supply Scheme	Source Type	Treatment Adequacy	Distribution Reliability	Capacity vs Demand
Akitio	Surface water (springs)	Multimedia and softener filtration, UV disinfection and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate
Dannevirke	Surface water	Coagulation, direct filtration, UV disinfection and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate
Eketāhuna	Surface water	Coagulation, flocculation/sedimentation, rapid sand filtration, UV disinfection and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate
Norsewood	Groundwater	Cartridge and softener filtration, UV disinfection and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate
Pahiatua	Surface water / Groundwater	Coagulation, flocculation, membrane filtration, advanced oxidation, UV disinfection and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate
Pongaroa	Surface water (springs)	Multimedia filtration, cartridge filtration, softener filtration, UV disinfection, and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate
Woodville	Surface water	Coagulation, flocculation/sedimentation, sand filtration, UV disinfection and chlorine disinfection	Moderate	Adequate

Recent investment has strengthened treatment performance across the network, including upgrades to Norsewood, Pongaroa and Akitio treatment plants. These upgrades have improved the ability of schemes to achieve compliance with the DWQARs.

From a distribution perspective, reliability across the district is generally assessed as moderate, reflecting the presence of ageing reticulation infrastructure, variable asset condition, and ongoing leakage. The AMP identifies that reticulation networks include a significant proportion of assets at or approaching end of service life, contributing to vulnerability to failure and increased maintenance demand.

Capacity is currently assessed as adequate for most schemes; however, adequacy is conditional and is influenced by:

- high seasonal demand during summer periods,
- elevated levels of unaccounted-for water (including leakage), *and*
- source constraints during dry weather conditions.

These factors result in periodic water restrictions and indicate that capacity adequacy is conditional rather than surplus, particularly for surface water supplies. Storage improvements have been implemented in several schemes (e.g., Dannevirke, Woodville, and Pahiatua), however ageing reservoirs remain a constraint in some locations and reduce system resilience.

Overall, the district demonstrates functional but constrained system performance, with improvements underway through targeted capital investment, leak reduction initiatives, and storage enhancements.

3.3 Assessment of each supply's resilience and key risk/constraints

This section provides an overview of the resilience and key risks/constraints associated with each TDC water supply scheme. The assessment considers the ability of each supply to maintain continuous and reliable service under normal operating conditions and during disruption events, including failures, peak demand, or adverse source conditions.

Key risks and constraints have been identified through analysis of existing technical documentation, including the DWSPs, AMP, and WSDP, and reflect factors such as limited redundancy, storage capacity, source reliability, and network configuration.

Table 4. TDCs Assessment of each supply's resilience and key risk/constraints

Water Supply Scheme	Capacity vs Demand	Resilience (Redundancy, Storage, Continuity)	Key Risks / Constraints Identified
Akitio	Adequate	Low-Moderate (limited storage and redundancy)	Small scheme with single-source dependency; limited storage; exposure to drought and supply disruption.
Dannevirke	Adequate (constrained during peak demand)	Moderate (critical assets under upgrade)	Impounded dam identified as a critical risk requiring intervention; ageing reservoirs; leakage and demand pressures.
Eketāhuna	Adequate	Moderate	Ageing storage infrastructure; sensitivity to raw water turbidity events.
Norsewood	Adequate	Moderate	Small scheme with limited redundancy; reliance on groundwater source; operational optimisation required
Pahiatua	Adequate	Moderate - improving	Growth and demand pressures; network losses; reliance on combined surface and groundwater sources
Pongaroa	Emerging constraint	Low - Moderate	Limited capacity relative to demand; small scheme resilience constraints; limited redundancy and storage
Woodville	Adequate	Moderate (locally constrained)	Ageing reservoir and seismic vulnerability; ongoing need for source and storage improvements

These risks align with those identified in the AMP risk management framework, including ageing assets, climate-related variability (drought and extreme rainfall), demand growth, and regulatory compliance requirements. Key risks and constraints are managed through TDCs DWSPs, which identify and control risks from source to tap, with required improvements captured as formal actions. These actions are prioritised and delivered through planned capital works and renewals programmes under the AMP, LTP, and WSDP, ensuring that treatment, storage, and network limitations are progressively addressed. This approach provides a

structured and funded pathway to progressively improve resilience, reduce service disruption risk, and maintain alignment with regulatory and public health expectations.

3.4 Overall assessment of TDCs water supplies performance against the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025

Across the portfolio, TDC water supplies are generally meeting or progressing toward meeting the requirements of s69-70, with variation primarily reflecting scheme scale, source complexity, and the maturity of infrastructure investment. A supply-by-supply analysis is detailed below.

Table 5. Overall assessment of achievement against the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025

Water Supply Scheme	Overall Assessment (s69-70 Alignment)
Akitio	Partially meeting requirements - operational and treatment improvements required to achieve full compliance.
Dannevirke	Largely meeting requirements - key risks associated with critical infrastructure are being actively managed.
Eketāhuna	Largely meeting requirements - minor treatment performance and infrastructure limitations being addressed.
Norsewood	Partially meeting requirements - recent upgrades have improved performance, with further optimisation required.
Pahiatua	Meeting requirements - generally compliant with ongoing improvements to support future demand.
Pongaroa	Partially meeting requirements - capacity and resilience constraints require planned upgrades.
Woodville	Meeting requirements - compliant overall, with known infrastructure improvements underway.

The following contextual factors explain why some schemes are not yet fully meeting requirements:

- Legacy infrastructure constraints: Smaller and older schemes continue to rely on infrastructure that requires upgrading to meet current operational and compliance expectations.
- Treatment optimisation requirements: While appropriate treatment barriers are generally in place, some schemes require refinement of operational controls (e.g., dosing, monitoring, automation) to achieve full compliance performance.
- Capacity and resilience limitations: Emerging demand pressures, storage constraints, and limited redundancy reduce the ability of some schemes to consistently maintain service levels under peak or adverse conditions.

TDC maintains an up-to-date understanding of system performance, risks, and asset condition through its DWSPs, AMP, and compliance monitoring framework. Identified issues are systematically incorporated into forward planning through the AMP, Infrastructure Strategy, and WSDP.

Through these planning instruments, Council has established a funded and prioritised programme of works, including asset renewals, treatment upgrades, and network improvements, designed to address compliance gaps, improve resilience, and meet future demand. This approach demonstrates that TDC has both clear visibility of system risks and a structured pathway to achieve full alignment with legislative requirements over time.

4. Identified Drinking Water Supplies

The identified sites represent a range of drinking water suppliers across the Tararua region. These supplies generally support shared use by groups of people and vary in terms of infrastructure, population served, and potential risks to drinking water safety.

A total of 81 sites were identified through the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register and associated desktop investigations. Each site was assessed against the criteria set out under Section 69 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 and categorised as either in scope or out of scope for this assessment. Where the applicability of the criteria was uncertain, sites were conservatively treated as in scope.

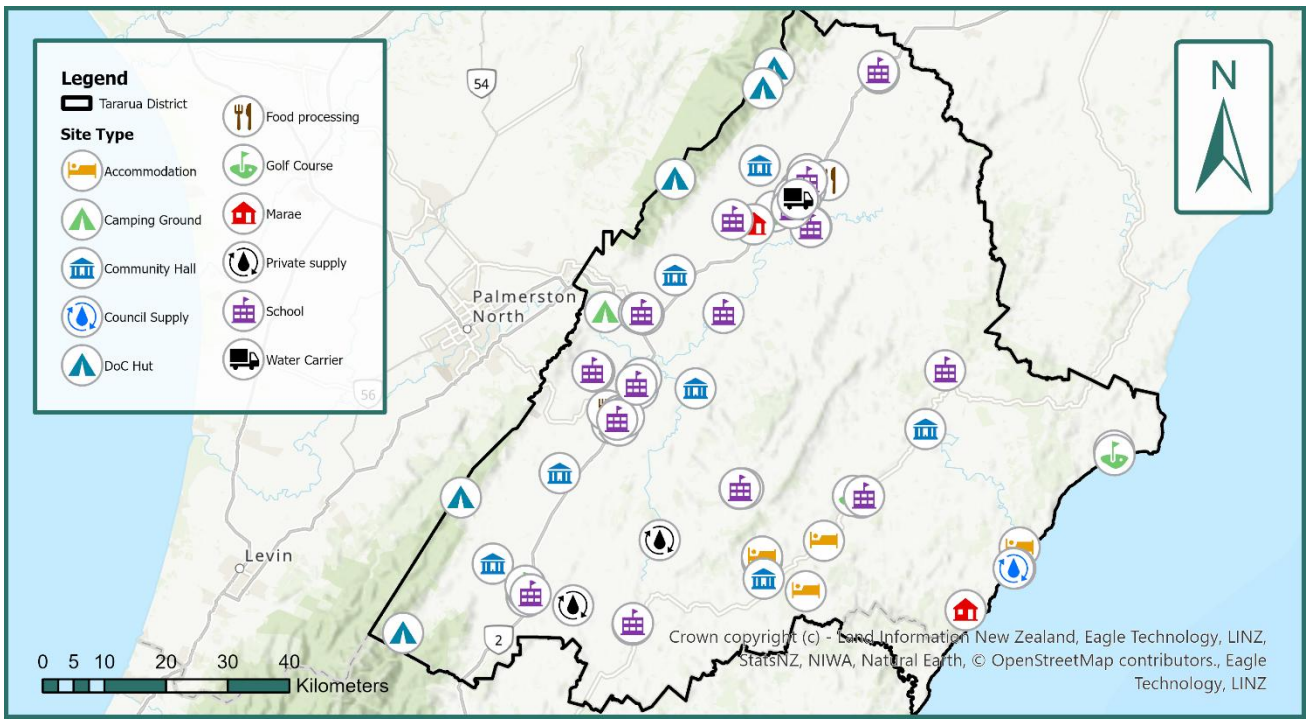
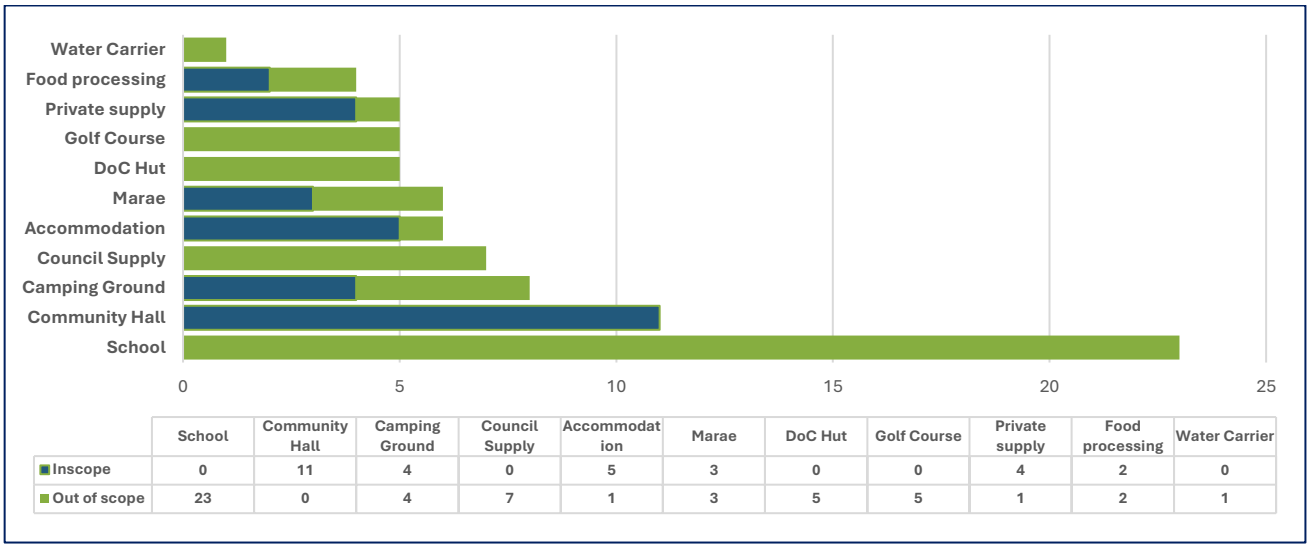


Figure 3. Map of all identified water supplies within the Tararua District.

4.1 Summary of Site Types

During the identification process, 81 sites were identified and classified across 11 variable site types. Figure 4 summarises the identified drinking water supplies by site type and assessment status. These include:

- Accommodations
- Camping Grounds
- Community Halls
- Council Supplies
- Department of Conservation Huts
- Food Processing Facilities
- Golf Courses
- Marae
- Private Supplies
- Schools
- Water Carriers



	School	Community Hall	Camping Ground	Council Supply	Accommodation	Marae	DoC Hut	Golf Course	Private supply	Food processing	Water Carrier
Inscope	0	11	4	0	5	3	0	0	4	2	0
Out of scope	23	0	4	7	1	3	5	5	1	2	1

Figure 4. Number of in scope and out of scope community drinking water supplies by site type

Applying the criteria outlined within the methodology of this report, (Section 2.2), of the 81 identified supplies, 29 were determined to be in scope of the assessment, while the remaining 52 were classified as out of scope.

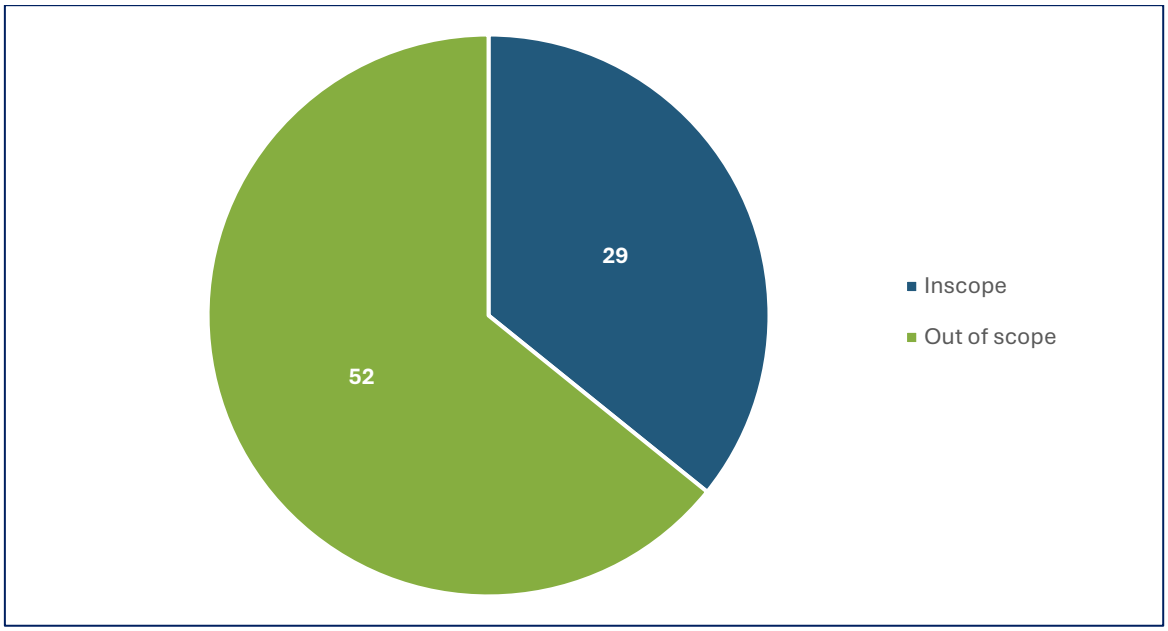


Figure 5. 'In scope' vs 'Out of scope' community drinking water supplies

The distribution of identified supplies by site type, including both the total number of sites and the subset assessed as in scope, is presented below.

4.2 Site Types

Section 69 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 (LG(WS)A) explicitly excludes drinking water services owned and operated by government departments listed under Section 5 of the Act. Relevant exclusions include:

- Ministry of Education facilities, including:
  - Early childhood education centres

  - Primary, intermediate and secondary schools
  - Te Kura Kaupapa Māori
  - Other education facilities
- Department of Conservation facilities, including Department of Conservation huts

The figure below shows the generalised locations of these excluded sites.

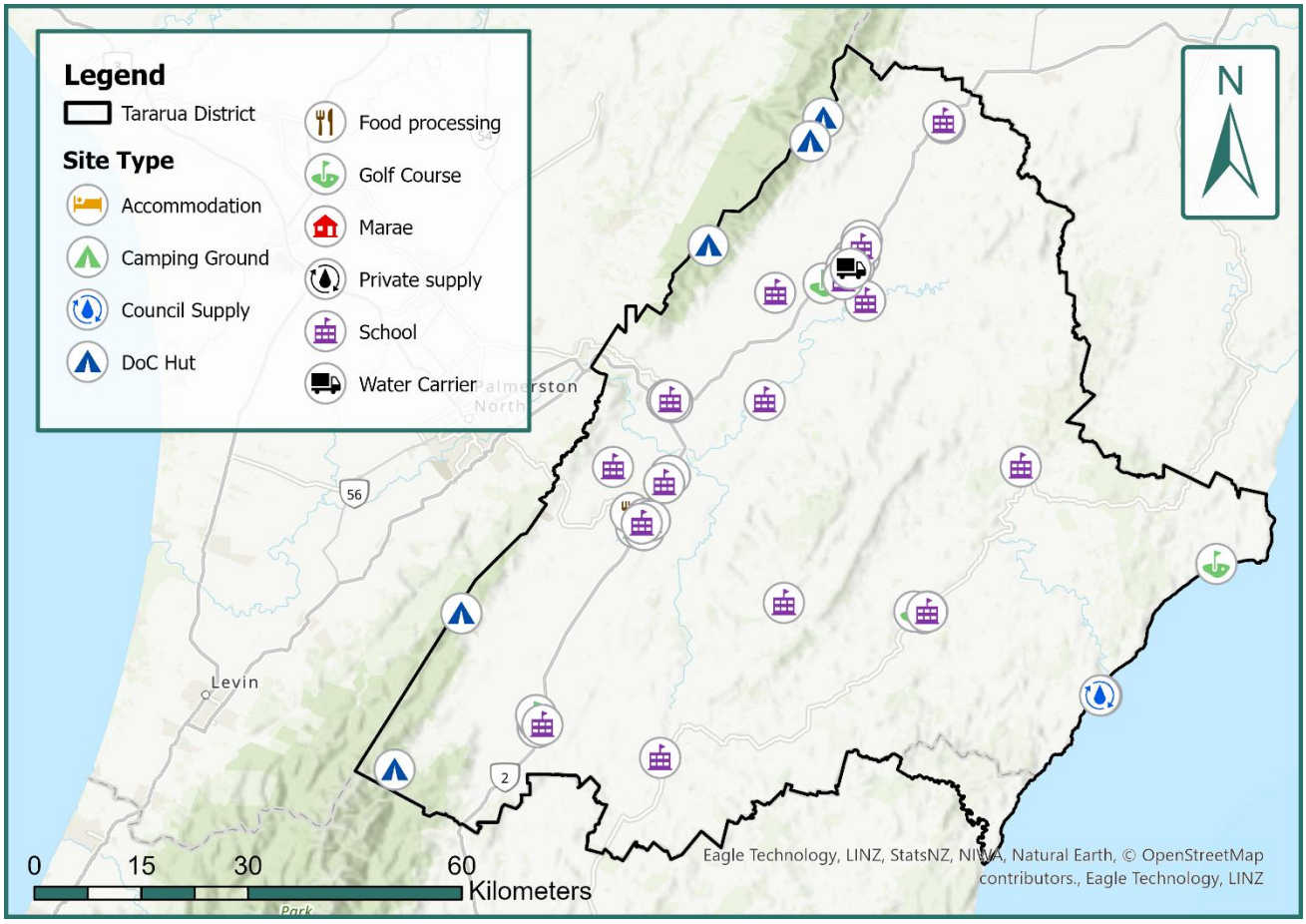


Figure 6. Map of out-of-scope water supplies within the Tararua District

Following application of the assessment criteria and removal of excluded supply types, a refined dataset of in-scope community drinking water supplies was developed. The distribution of these supplies is shown below.

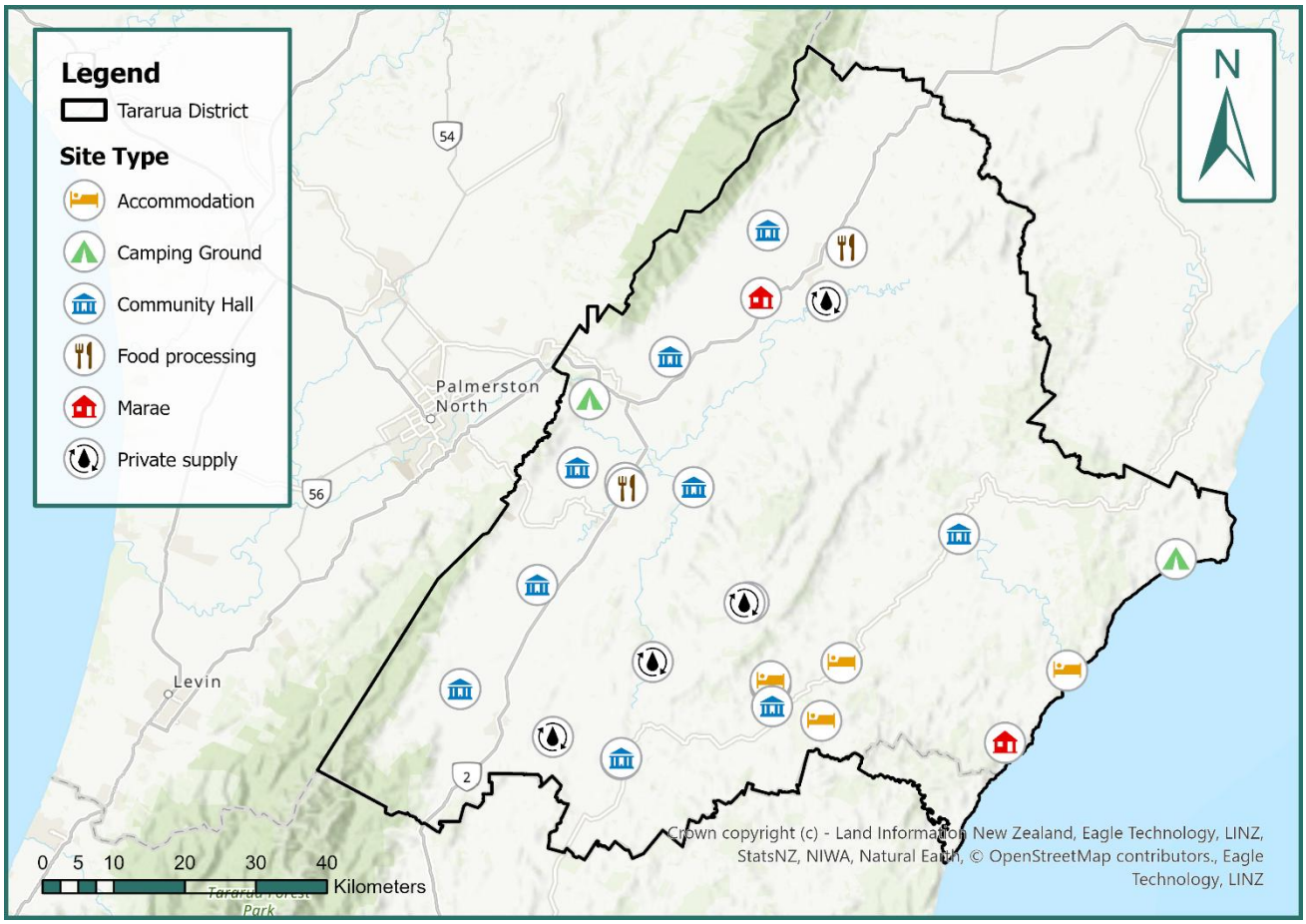


Figure 7. Map of in-scope water supplies within the Tararua District.

4.2.1 Accommodation

A total of **six** accommodation locations have been identified in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register, of which **five** are considered to be within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025. The following table outlines the supplies that were identified during the community drinking water supply assessment.

Table 6. Accommodation supplies identified as in-scope within the Tararua District.

Site Type	Site Name	Within Section 69 Scope
Accommodation	Glenross Backpackers	Yes – not connected to a TDC or any other Water Supply Network.
	Marainanga Station	
	Otapawa Backpacker Lodge and Caravan/Campervan site	
	Otapawa Farmstay Cottage	
	The Sheds	
	Puketoi Lodge	No – within a Water Supply Network.

Accommodation providers represent an important category of community drinking water suppliers within the district, as they may temporarily serve a significant number of guests and visitors. The identified accommodation supplies are distributed across both rural and remote areas of the district, with several located along key transport routes and within areas that support tourism and recreational activities.

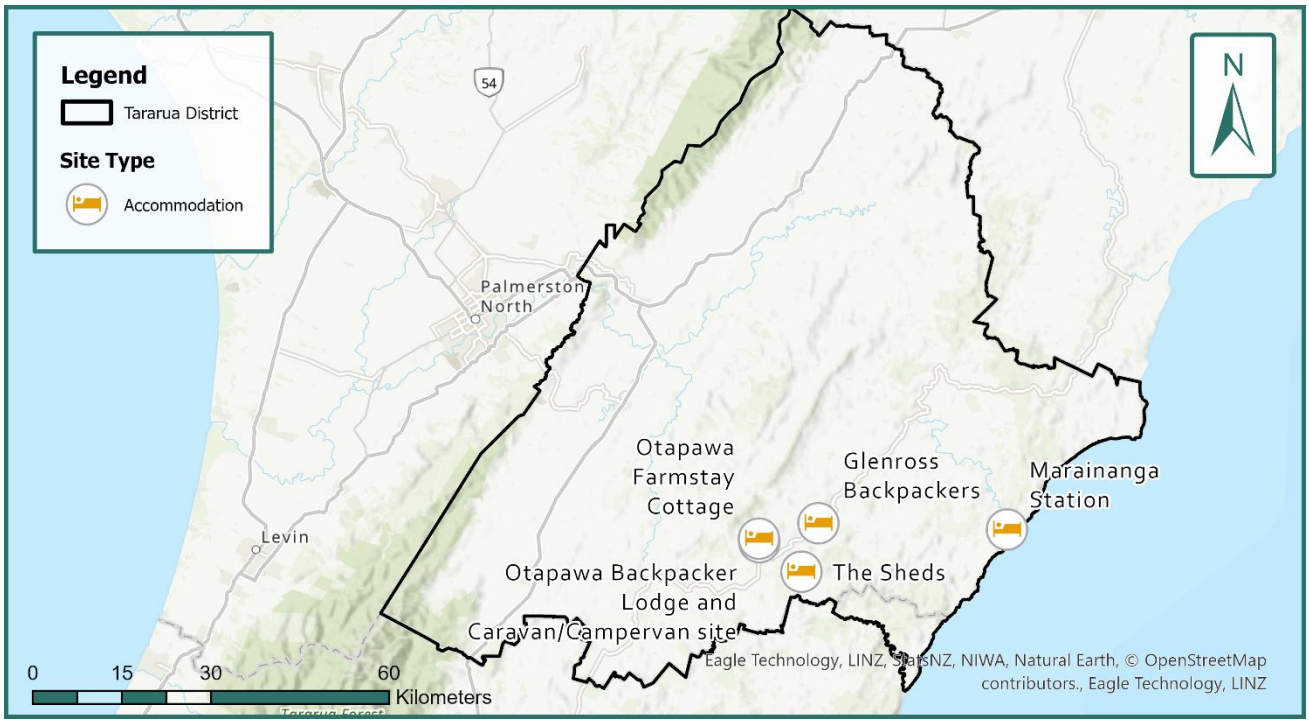


Figure 8. Map of 'In scope' Accommodation sites within the Tararua District

4.2.2 Camping Ground

A total of **eight** camping locations have been identified in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register, of which **four** of these are considered to be within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025. The following table outlines the supplies that were identified during the community drinking water supply assessment.

Table 7. Camp supplies identified as in-scope within the Tararua District.

Site Type	Site Name	Within Section 69 Scope
Camping Ground	Alfredton Domain Campground	Yes – not connected to a TDC or any other water supply network.
	Herbertville Campground	
	Mangatainoka Reserve	
	Woodville Ferry Reserve (freedom camping site)	
	Akitio Campground & Beach	No – within a water supply network.
	Carnival Park	
	Eketāhuna Motor Camp	
	Woodville Campground	

Camp facilities were identified as a relatively small component of the in-scope drinking water suppliers within the district. Following application of the Section 69 assessment criteria, four camp water supplies were determined to be within the scope of this assessment. Although limited in number, camp-based supplies can serve a large number of users during peak periods and therefore represent an important category of community drinking water suppliers.

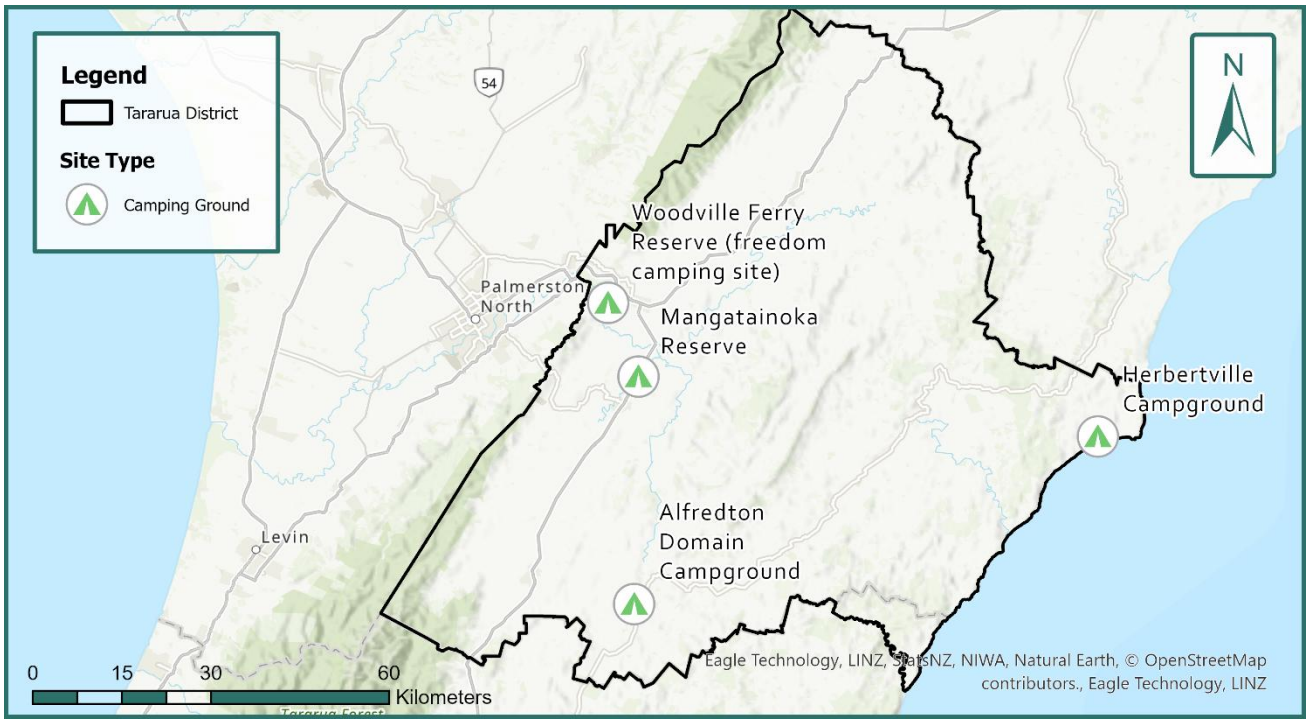


Figure 9. Map of 'In scope' Camp sites within the Tararua District

4.2.3 Community Halls

A total of **11** community halls has been identified in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register, all of which are within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025. The following table outlines the halls that were identified during the community drinking water supply assessment.

Table 8. Community halls identified as in-scope within the Tararua District.

Site Type	Supply Name	Within Section 69 Scope
Community Halls	Alfredton Hall	Yes – not connected to a TDC or any other water supply network.
	Ballance Hall	
	Kohinui Hall	
	Makuri Hall	
	Mangamaire Community Hall	
	Mangatainoka Hall	
	Nireaha Hall	
	Papatawa Hall	
	Ruaroa Hall	
	Tīraumea Hall	
	Waione Hall	

Community halls were included in the assessment as potential locations where drinking water may be supplied to members of the public, community groups, or event attendees. These facilities can act as important community gathering places and may contain kitchen facilities, toilets, or publicly accessible taps that rely on independent drinking water supplies.

A number of community halls were identified across the Tararua District and included within the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register for further consideration. The spatial distribution of these sites, shown in

Figure 10, demonstrates that community halls are distributed throughout both urban and rural areas of the district, often serving as important facilities within smaller settlements.

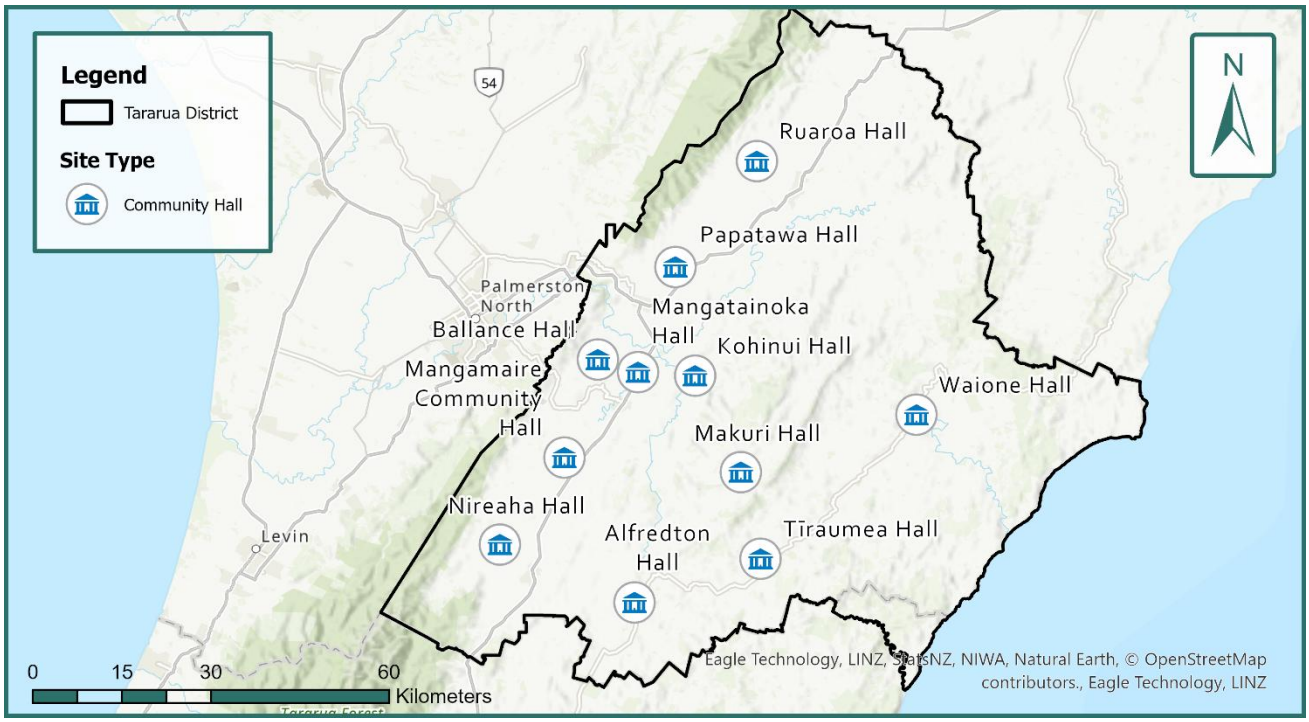


Figure 10. Map of 'In scope' Community Hall sites within the Tararua District

4.2.4 Food Processing Facilities

A total of **four** food processing facilities have been identified in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register, of which **two** are within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025. The following table outlines the food processing facilities that were identified during the community drinking water supply assessment.

Table 9. Food processing facilities identified as in-scope within the Tararua District

Site Type	Supply Name	Within Section 69 Scope
Food processing	Ruahine Ports	Yes – not connected to a TDC or any other water supply network.
	Tui Brewery	
	Alliance Dannevirke	No – within a water supply network.
	Fonterra Pahiatua	No – registered as a networked supply.

Food processing facilities were included in the assessment as potential locations where drinking water may be supplied to members of the public, community groups, or event attendees. These facilities can act as important community gathering places and may contain kitchen facilities, toilets, or publicly accessible taps that rely on independent drinking water supplies. The spatial distribution of the sites considered in-scope are shown in Figure 11.

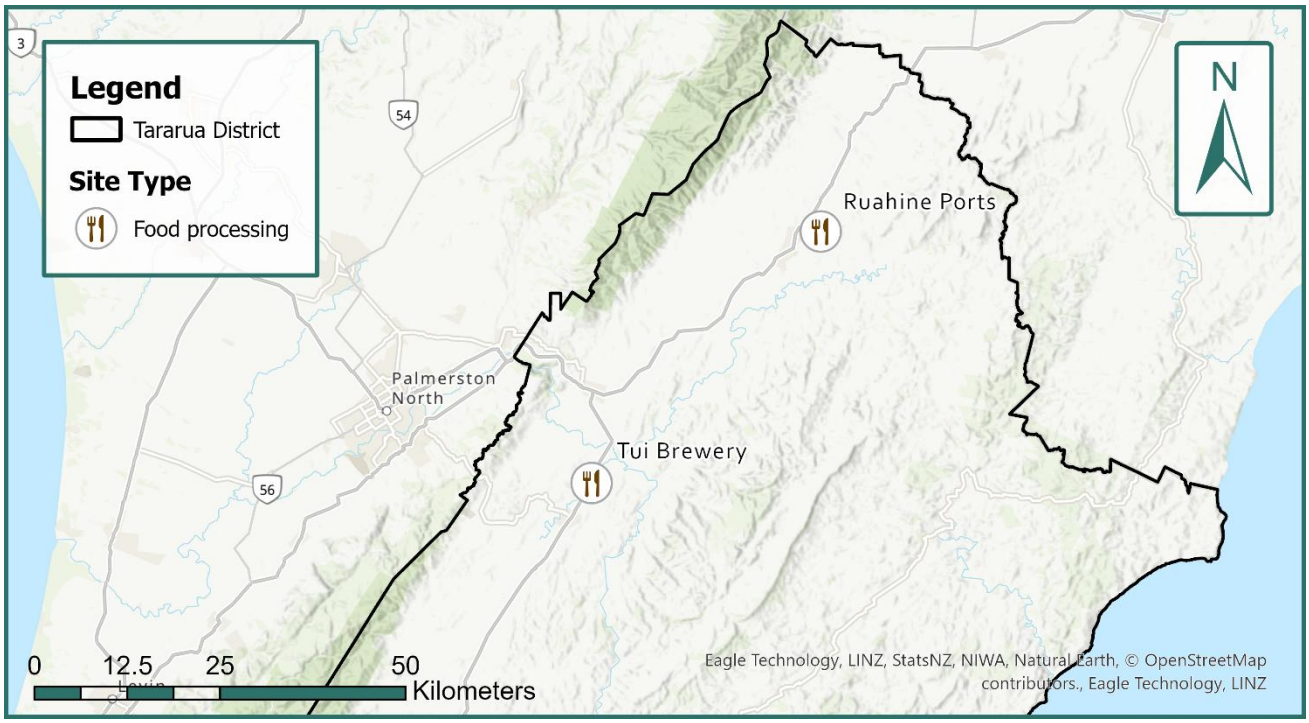


Figure 11. Map of 'In scope' food processing facilities sites within the Tararua District

4.2.5 Marae

A total of **six** Marae have been identified in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register, of which **three** are within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025. The following table outlines the Marae that were identified during the community drinking water supply assessment.

Table 10. Marae supplies identified as in-scope within the Tararua District

Site Type	Supply Name	Within Section 69 Scope
Marae	Kaitoki Marae	Yes – not connected to a TDC or any other water supply network.
	Te Hika o Papauma Marae	
	Whiti te Rā (Poherau)	
	Mākirikiri	No – within a water supply network.
	Pahiatua Marae	
	Te Ahu a Turanga i Mua	

These sites are distributed across both urban and rural areas of the district, reflecting the important role marae play as community gathering places and providers of drinking water services to a range of users.

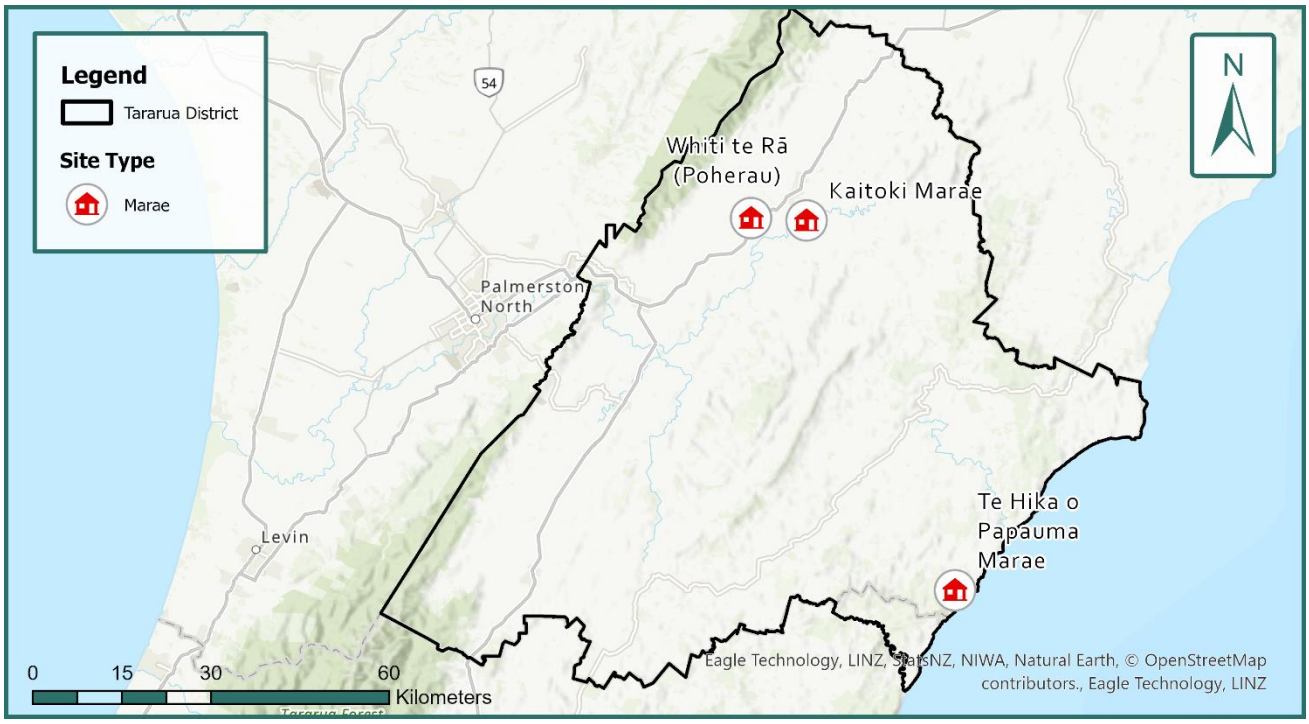


Figure 12. Map of 'In scope' Marae sites within the Tararua District

4.2.6 Private Water Supplies

A total of **five** private water supplies has been identified in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register, of which **four** are within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025. The following table outlines the supplies that were identified during the community drinking water supply assessment.

Table 11. Private supplies identified as in-scope within the Tararua District.

Site Type	Supply Name	Within Section 69 Scope
Private supply	Pleckville	Yes – not connected to a TDC or any other water supply network.
	Makuri	
	Hinemoa	
	Kaitoki Flats	
	Norsewood Heritage	No – within a water supply network.

Private drinking water supplies represent a smaller but important component of the in-scope water suppliers identified within the district. These supplies provide drinking water to groups of users outside of publicly owned or networked systems and may face unique operational and management challenges depending on their location, source water characteristics, and treatment arrangements.

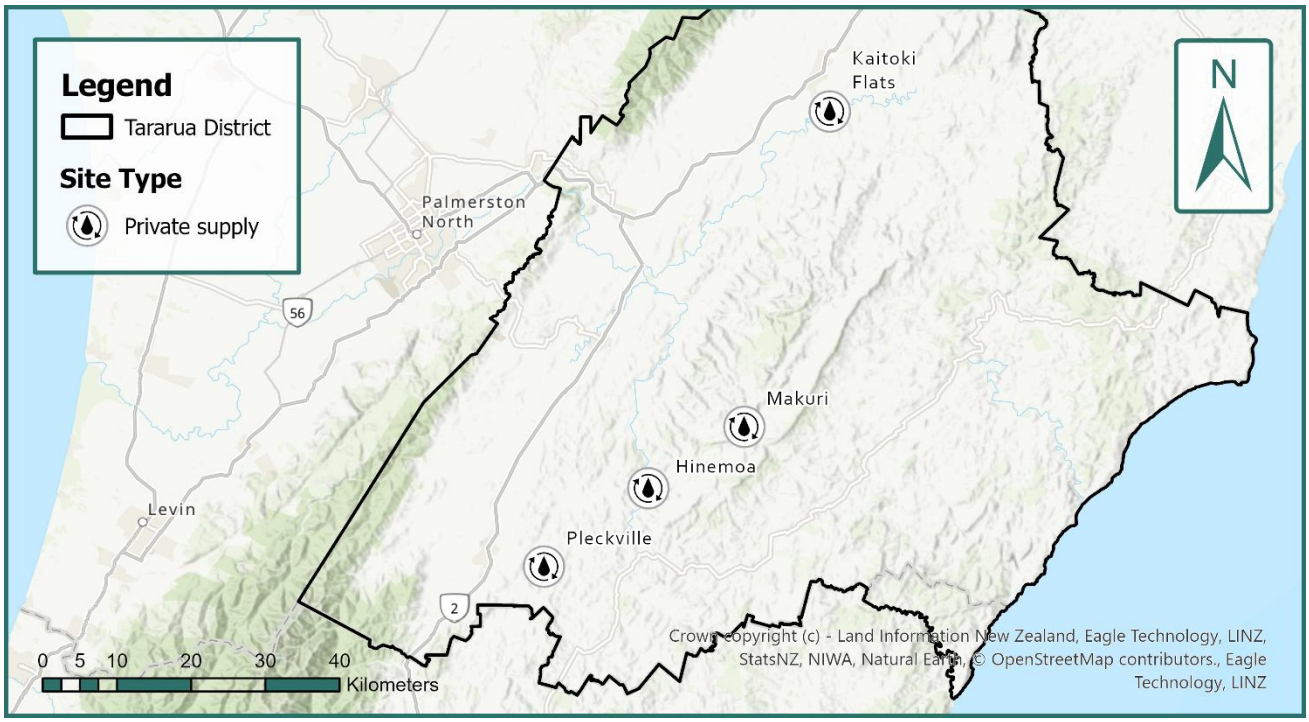


Figure 13. Map of 'In scope' Private Supply sites within the Tararua District

5. LIMITATIONS

This assessment was completed as a desktop-only review. While this provides a practical and appropriate starting point, the findings are subject to several limitations.

5.1 Desktop-based assessment

The assessment is based on desktop data collection only and has not been validated through site visits, as such, some site-specific details may not be fully accurate. As a result:

- The overall level of confidence in the information is low due to limited available data and associated uncertainty.
- Key information may be incomplete or unknown, including source water type, treatment processes, supply reliability, and population served.
- There may be gaps in the identification of drinking water suppliers, with some supplies potentially not captured.
- While some supplies can be readily identified as being within scope under Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025, further work is required to confirm the status for some of the identified supplies.

5.2 No engagement with suppliers

No direct engagement has been undertaken with identified drinking water suppliers or communities, limiting the ability to verify or supplement the information obtained through desktop analysis.

5.3 Incomplete assessment

A full assessment in accordance with Section 69 of the LG(WS)A has not yet been completed for non-Council drinking water supplies, including evaluation of current and future access to drinking water, expected demand, associated risks, water safety and quality, public health considerations, and continuity of supply.

These limitations reflect the early stage of this communities' assessment and emphasise the need for further work to support a more comprehensive evaluation of drinking water supplies, including performing an assessment in accordance with Section 69 of the LG(WS)A 2025.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Tararua District Council's reticulated drinking water supplies are managed through established statutory and planning frameworks, including the Long-Term Plan (LTP), Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP), Asset Management Plan (AMP), and Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSPs). These mechanisms provide a structured and funded approach to managing service performance, compliance, and ongoing improvements.

This assessment identifies the need for further work to improve TDCs district-wide understanding of non-Council drinking water supplies, particularly where information remains incomplete or unverified. Future work should focus on targeted engagement, improved data collection, and proportionate risk assessment of in-scope supplies to better understand service adequacy, resilience, water safety, continuity of supply, and future service provision. These actions will support TDCs ongoing obligations under Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 and provide an evidence base to inform future planning, including relevant LTP, WSDP, or Waitī Waters transition processes where appropriate.

The following recommendations are therefore focused on district-wide oversight and support for *non-Council supplies*, and do not extend into areas already addressed through existing statutory and planning frameworks.

Recommendation 1: Establish a Structured District-Wide Engagement and Information Framework
TDC should formalise an integrated approach to identifying, engaging with, and maintaining information on all non-Council drinking water supplies. This should include:

- Maintaining and periodically updating a district-wide register of community supplies,
- Document any additional drinking water suppliers that are not already captured in the Communities Drinking Water Supplier Register,
- Collect additional information on all in-scope drinking water suppliers. This should include capturing information on:
    - Community characteristics and population served, including vulnerable users.
    - Source water type, treatment processes, and storage infrastructure.
    - Supply reliability, including current and future demand and continuity of supply.
    - Any other foreseeable risks to the community's drinking water supply.
- Implementing regular engagement cycles (e.g. surveys or direct contact),
- Prioritising engagement with higher-risk or higher-population supplies.

This will ensure TDC maintains an up-to-date, evidence-based understanding of drinking water service provision, risks, and gaps across the district, consistent with its obligations to assess community access to water services (as per the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025).

Recommendation 2: Maintain Oversight of Emerging Compliance and Public Health Risks
TDC should maintain ongoing visibility of emerging risks associated with non-Council drinking water supplies. This should include:

- Monitoring progress of identified higher-risk or transitioning supplies,
- Maintaining awareness of regulatory obligations and upcoming compliance requirements,
- Identifying where advisory or facilitative support may be required to mitigate risks.

Recommendation 2 would be supported by using the collected information to assess each non-Council supply against drinking water service adequacy, resilience, water safety, and future service provision. This would

provide a clearer understanding of current performance, identify any further actions required, and enable a proportionate risk assessment for each supply. Assigning a defined risk level or category would then help TDC determine where ongoing monitoring, review, or support may be needed to manage risks to the safety and sustainability of these supplies.

This approach supports the Council's statutory interest in understanding current and future risks to community drinking water provision under Sections 69-70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, while remaining appropriately aligned with the Water Services Authority (Taumata Arowai) Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy 2025-28.

Recommendation 3: Provide Targeted Guidance and Educational Support to Community Supplies

TDC should develop and deliver clear, accessible guidance and education to support non-Council supply operators in understanding and meeting drinking water requirements. This should include:

- Guidance on regulatory obligations under the Water Services Act 2021 (including registration and planning requirements),
- Practical information on treatment, monitoring, and basic risk management practices,
- Education on public health risks associated with untreated or inadequately managed supplies.

This will support improved operator capability and address identified gaps in treatment, monitoring, and technical understanding across community-managed supplies.

The intended targeted guidance will directly link (align) with that of the Water Services Authority (Taumata Arowai), and existing public health services.

7. Conclusion

This assessment has provided a district-wide evaluation of access to drinking water services across the Tararua District, in accordance with the requirements of Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025.

The findings confirm that TDCs reticulated drinking water supplies are, in the main, fit-for-purpose and aligned with legislative expectations, supported by established planning, compliance, and investment frameworks. These supplies demonstrate a structured and proactive approach to maintaining drinking water quality, managing service continuity, and addressing asset and capacity constraints over time.

Variability across the network is evident, particularly in smaller and more isolated schemes where resilience, redundancy, and operational flexibility are inherently more constrained. However, these risks are understood and are being appropriately managed through the Council's integrated planning framework, including the LTP, WSDP, AMP, and DWSPs.

The assessment also highlights a broader district-wide picture, with several independently operated community water supplies identified outside of Council ownership. These supplies play an important role in servicing dispersed rural, cultural, and community-based populations. A risk assessment was not completed under the methodology adopted for this report; however, targeted engagement and further assessment of these supplies should be undertaken over the next three years to confirm that they are providing safe and reliable drinking water.[5]

In this context, TDCs role is not one of direct service delivery, but of establishing and maintaining visibility of these supplies, understanding associated risks, and providing proportionate support where appropriate. The recommendations of this report are therefore focused on strengthening district-wide oversight, engagement, and education to support improved drinking water outcomes, without duplicating existing regulatory or planning requirements.

Overall, this assessment demonstrates that:

- Council-operated supplies are being suitably managed and improved through existing council-based frameworks, *and*
- Further direct assessment of non-Council supplies is required over the next one to three years to build a suitable understanding of the drinking water supplies that exist in the region. The assessment outcomes will support the consideration of a proportionate support programme in due course.

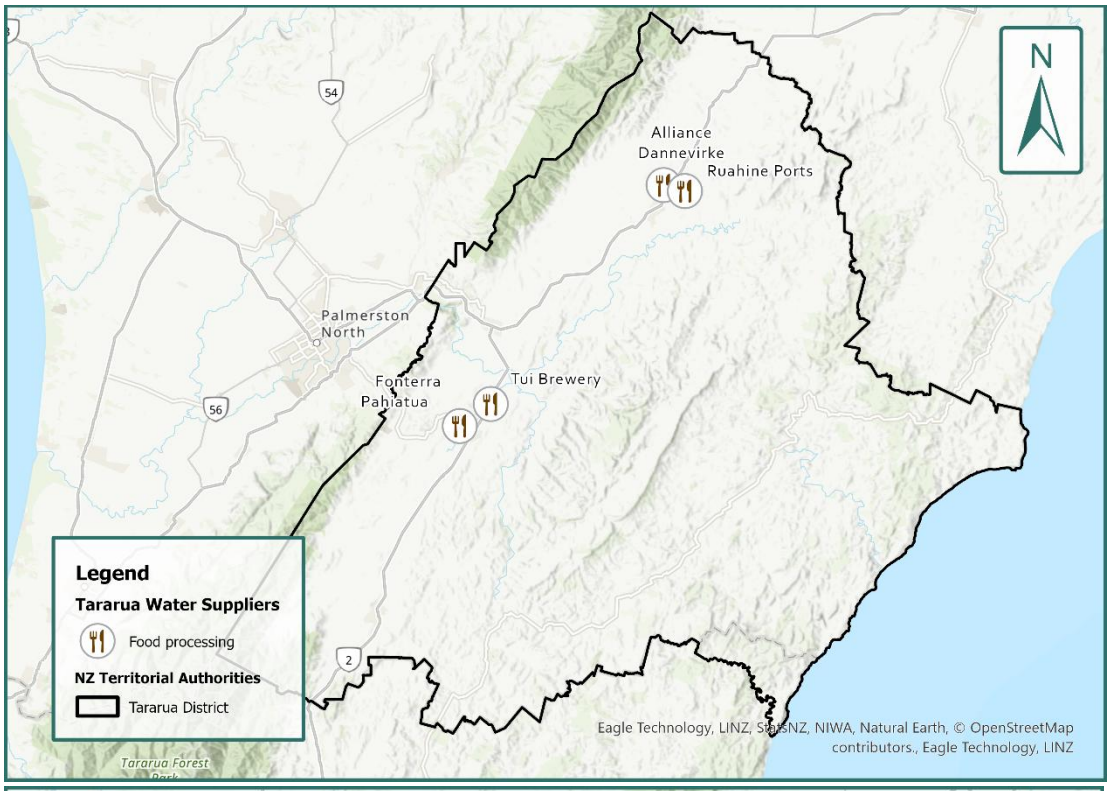
Collectively, this enables TDC to maintain a stronger focus on drinking water supply performance across the district, while applying a proportionate, risk-based approach to service provision.

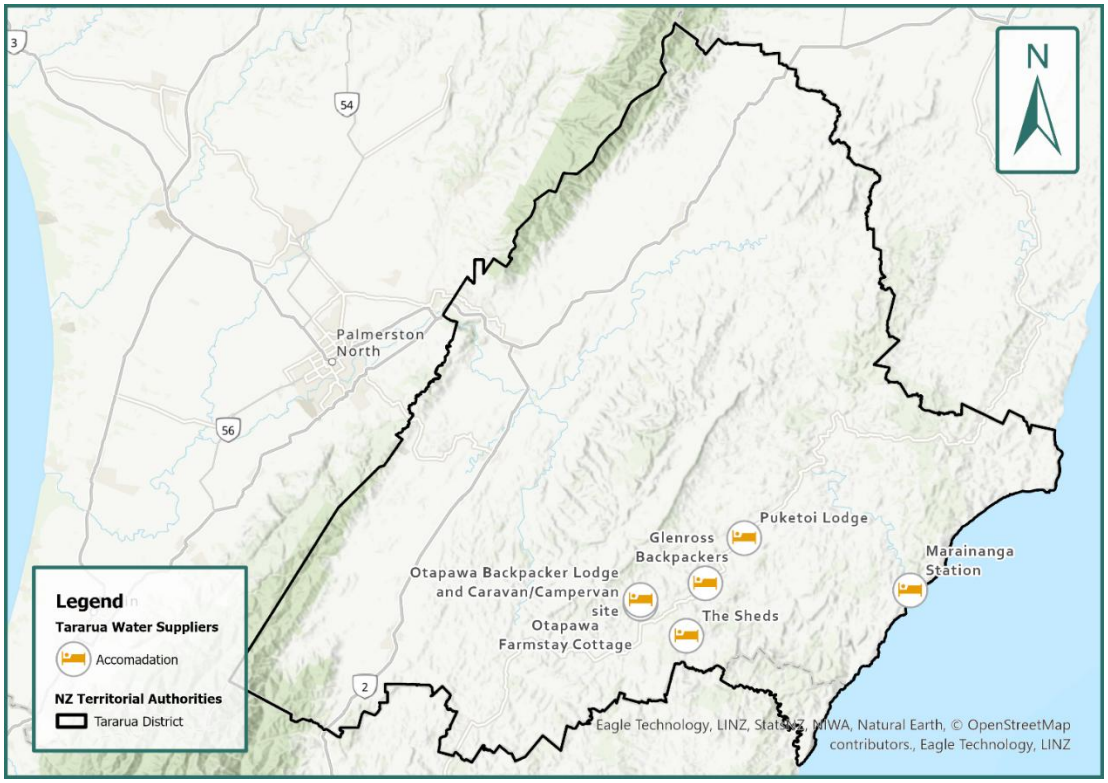
[5] As per the Section 69(5)(c) of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, the assessment may be performed on the Councils behalf by another appropriate organisation within the authority's district, including a water service provider (such as Waitī Waters).

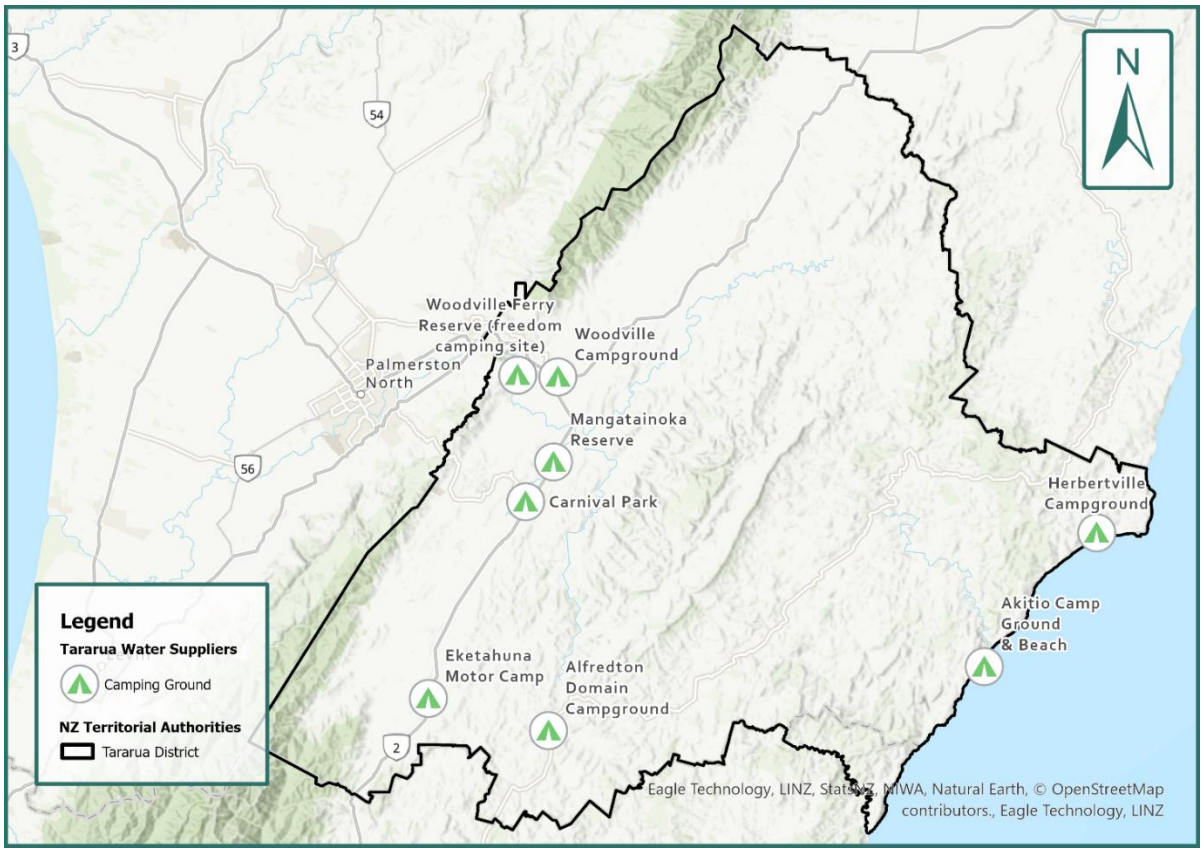
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Series of GIS Maps relevant to this assessment

The maps below provide geographic context for the location of all identified supplies, regardless of their '*in-scope*' or '*out-of-scope'* status as described in Section 2.2 of this report






N
Woodville Ferry Reserve (freedom camping site)
Woodville Campground
Palmerston North
Mangatainoka Reserve
Carnival Park
Herbertville Campground
Akitio Camp Ground & Beach
Eketahuna Motor Camp
Alfredton Domain Campground
Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
Camping Ground
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
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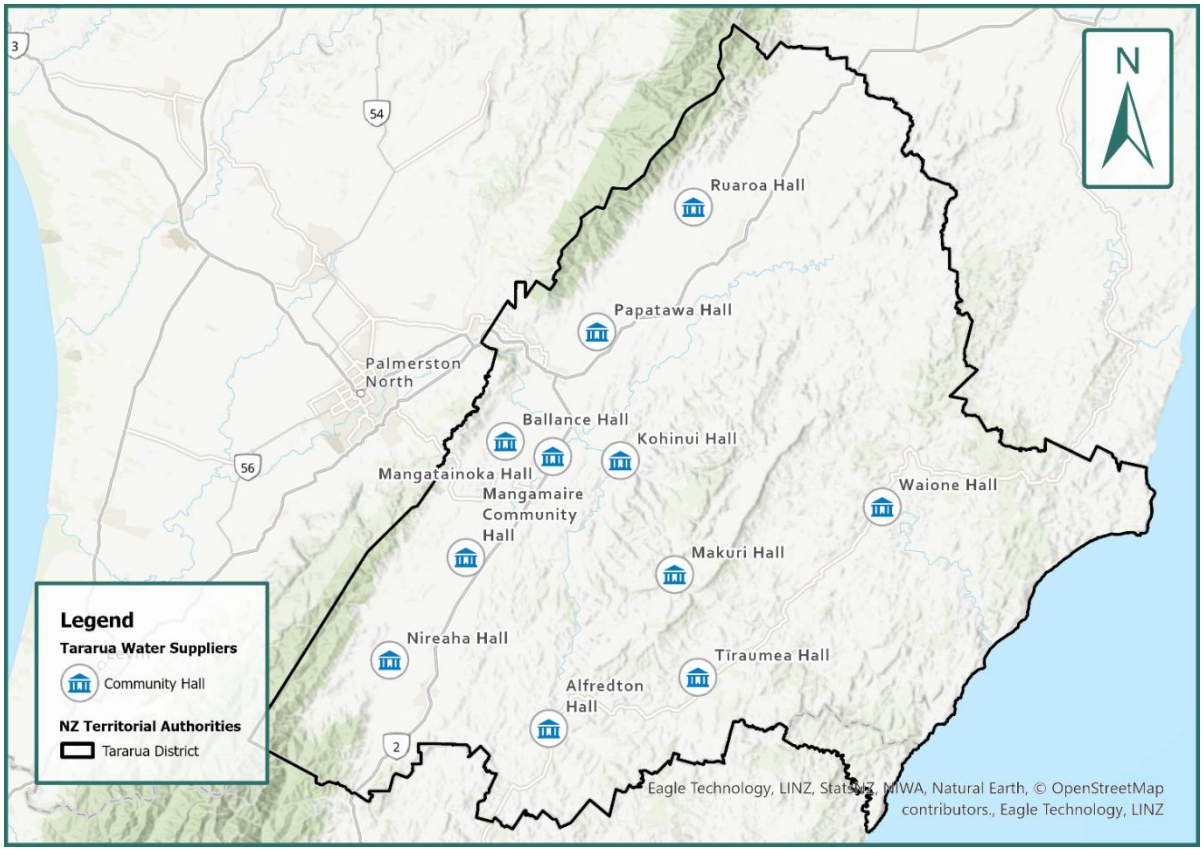
N
Ruaroa Hall
Papatawa Hall
Palmerston North
Ballance Hall
Kohinui Hall
Mangatainoka Hall
Mangamaire Community Hall
Waione Hall
Makuri Hall
Nireaha Hall
Tiraumea Hall
Alfredton Hall
Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
Community Hall
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
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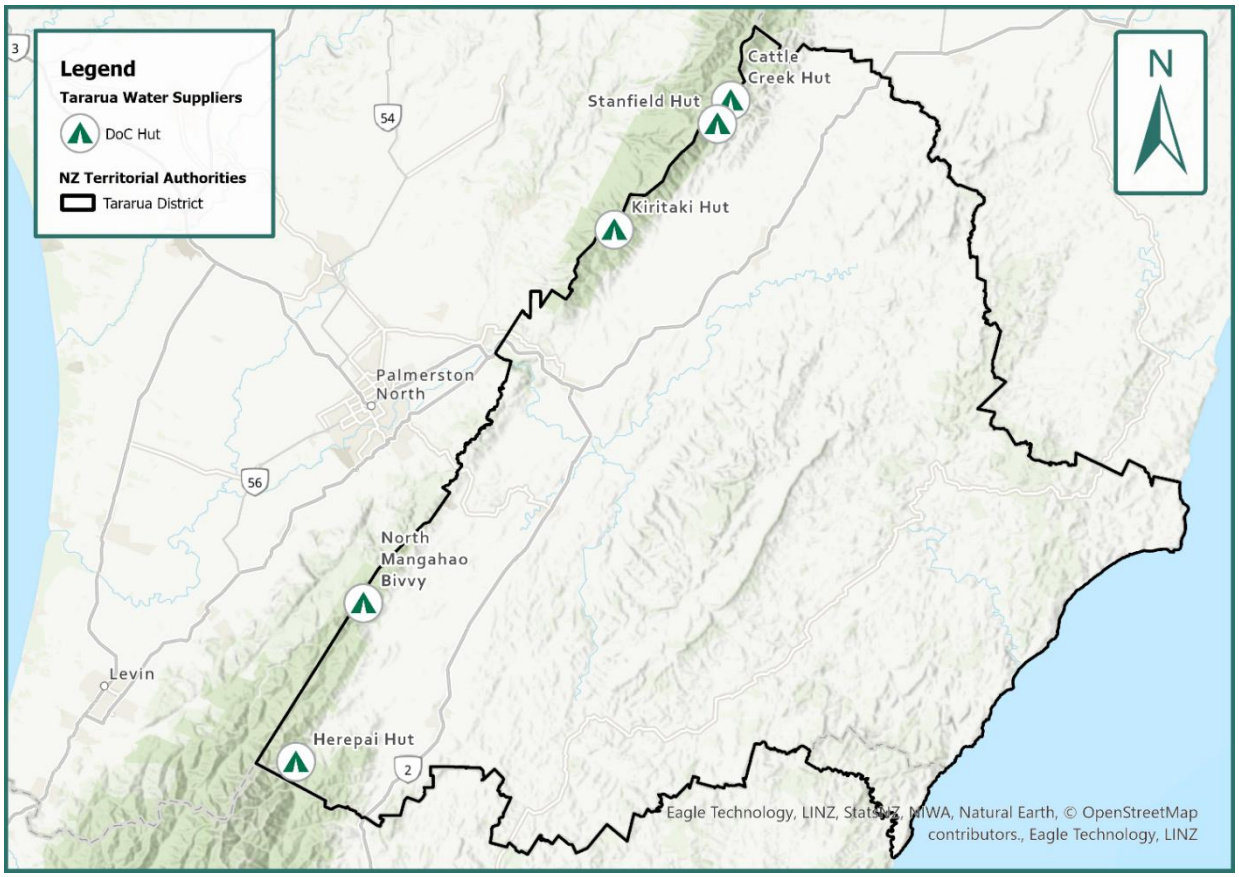
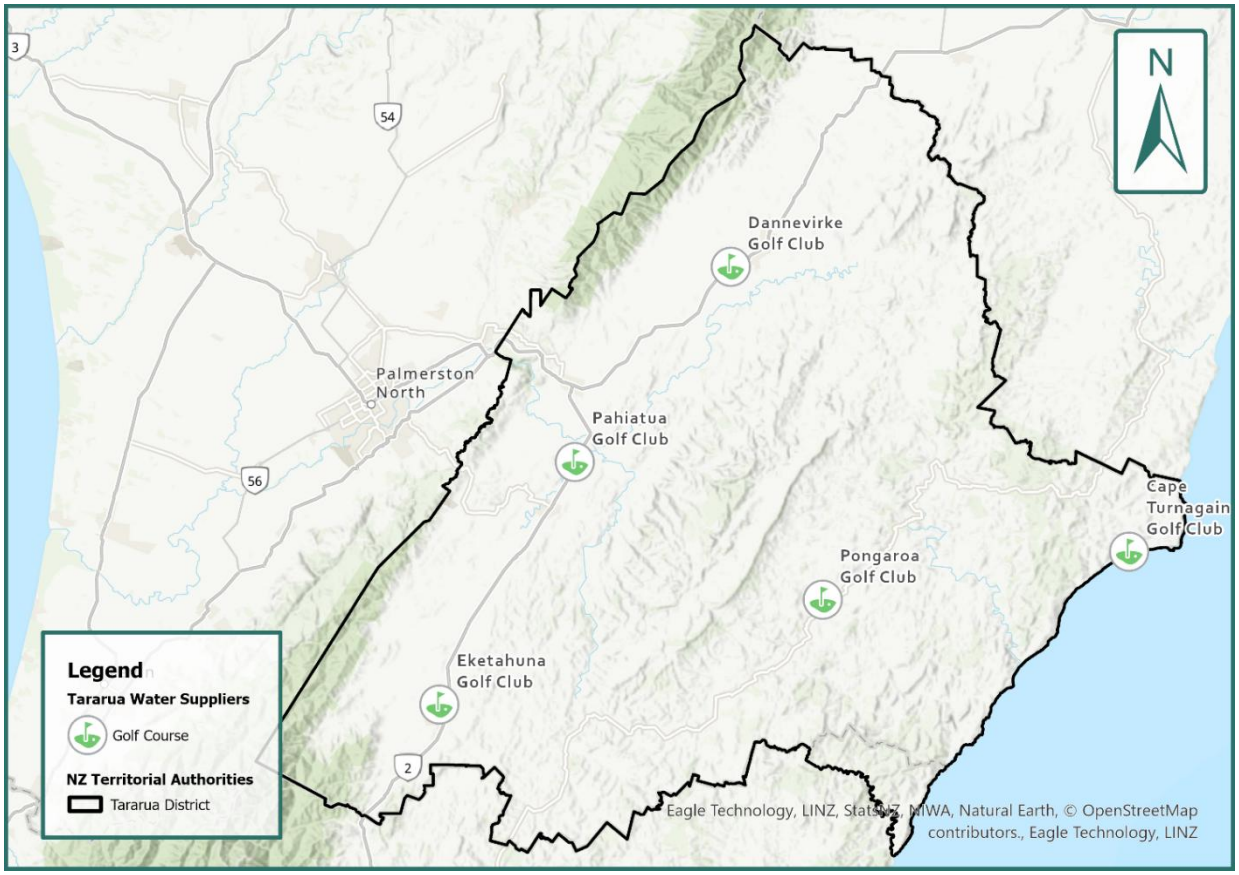

Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
DoC Hut
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
N
Cattle Creek Hut
Stanfield Hut
Kiritaki Hut
Palmerston North
North Mangahao Bivvy
Levin
Herepai Hut
54
56
2
3
Eagle Technology, LINZ, Stats NZ, NIWA, Natural Earth, © OpenStreetMap contributors., Eagle Technology, LINZ


Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
Golf Course
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
N
Dannevirke Golf Club
Palmerston North
Pahiatua Golf Club
Cape Turnagain Golf Club
Pongaroa Golf Club
Eketahuna Golf Club
54
56
2
3
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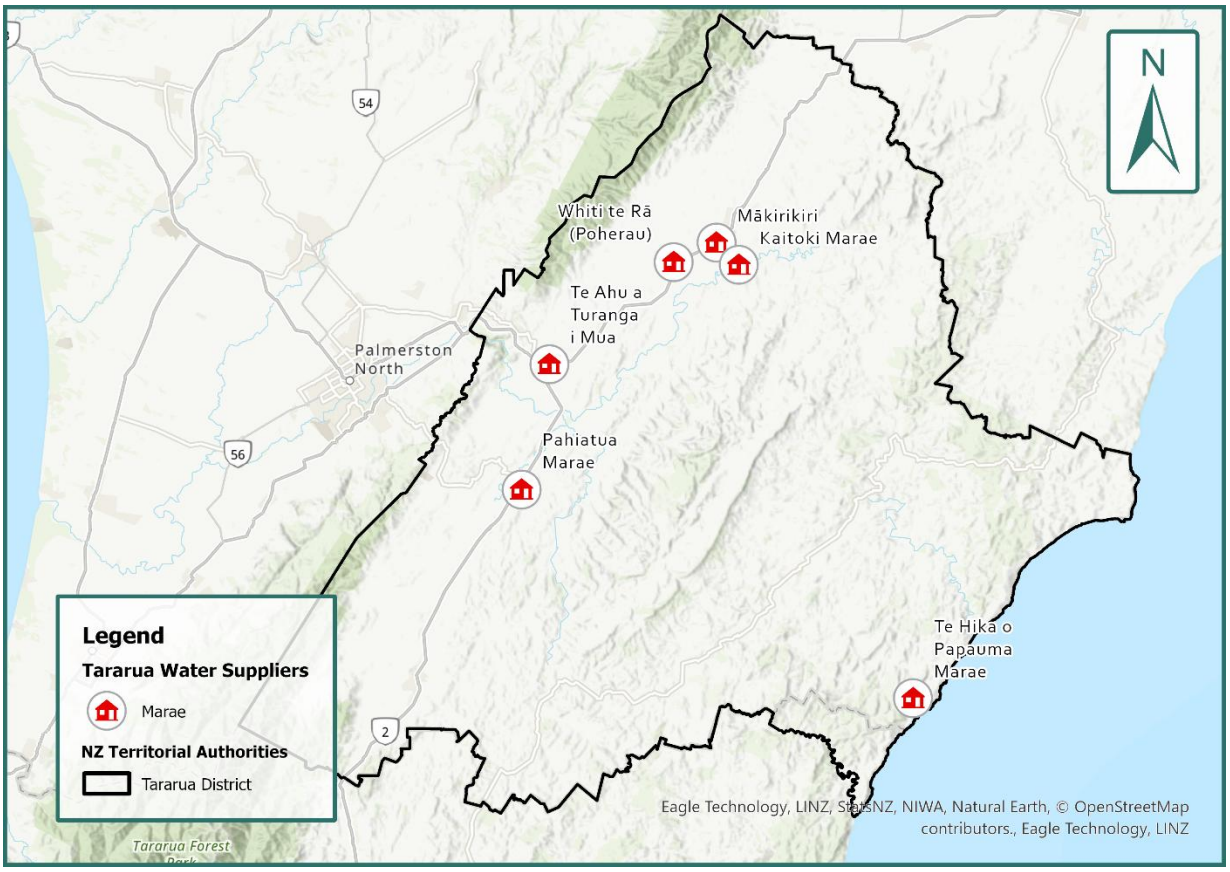
N
Whiti te Rā (Poherau)
Mākirikiri Kaitoki Marae
Te Ahu a Turanga i Mua
Palmerston North
Pahiatua Marae
Te Hīka o Papauma Marae
Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
Marae
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
54
56
2
Tararua Forest Park
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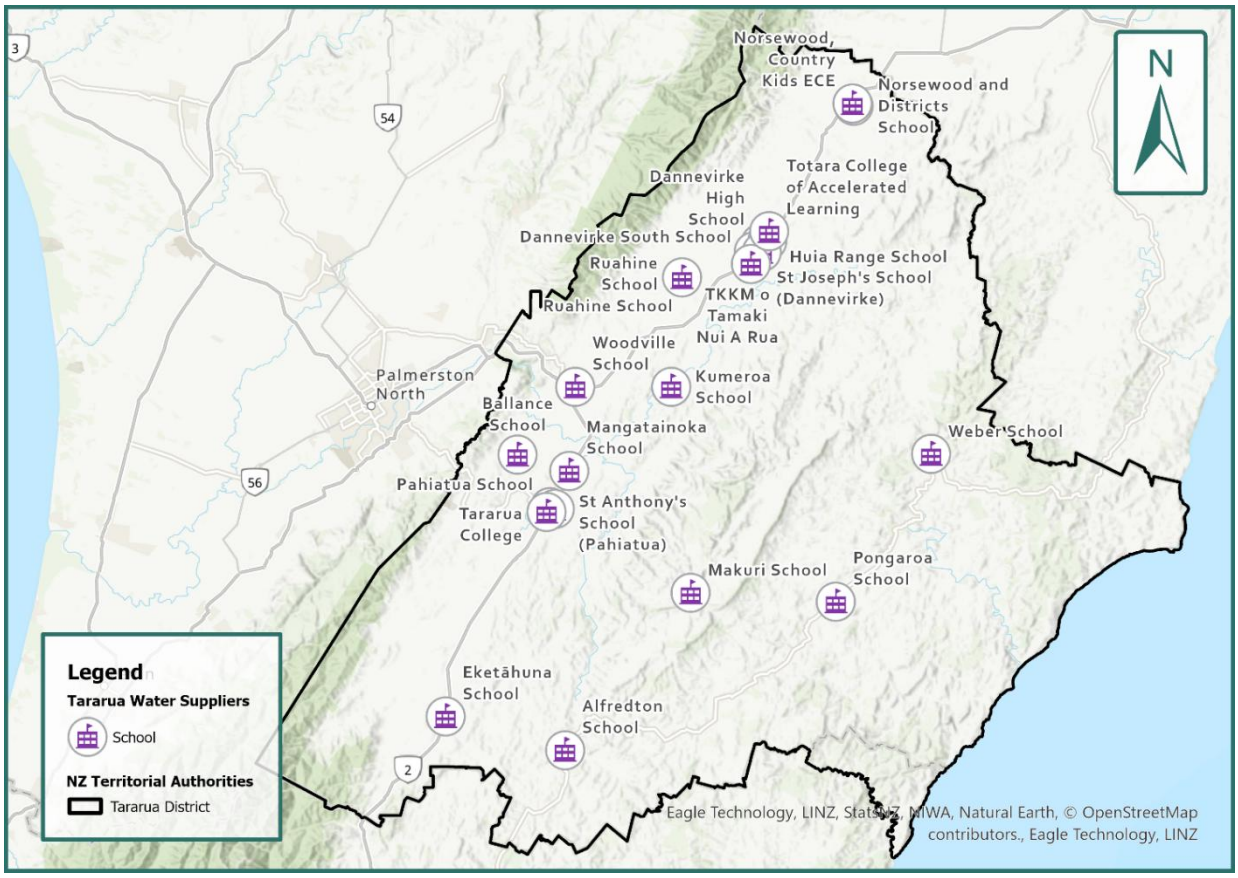
N
Norsewood, Country Kids ECE
Norsewood and Districts School
Totara College of Accelerated Learning
Dannevirke High School
Dannevirke South School
Huia Range School
St Joseph's School (Dannevirke)
Ruahine School
Ruahine School
TKKM o Tamaki Nui A Rua
Woodville School
Kumeroa School
Palmerston North
Ballance School
Mangatainoka School
Weber School
Pahiatua School
Tararua College
St Anthony's School (Pahiatua)
Makuri School
Pongaroa School
Eketāhuna School
Alfredton School
Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
School
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
3
54
56
2
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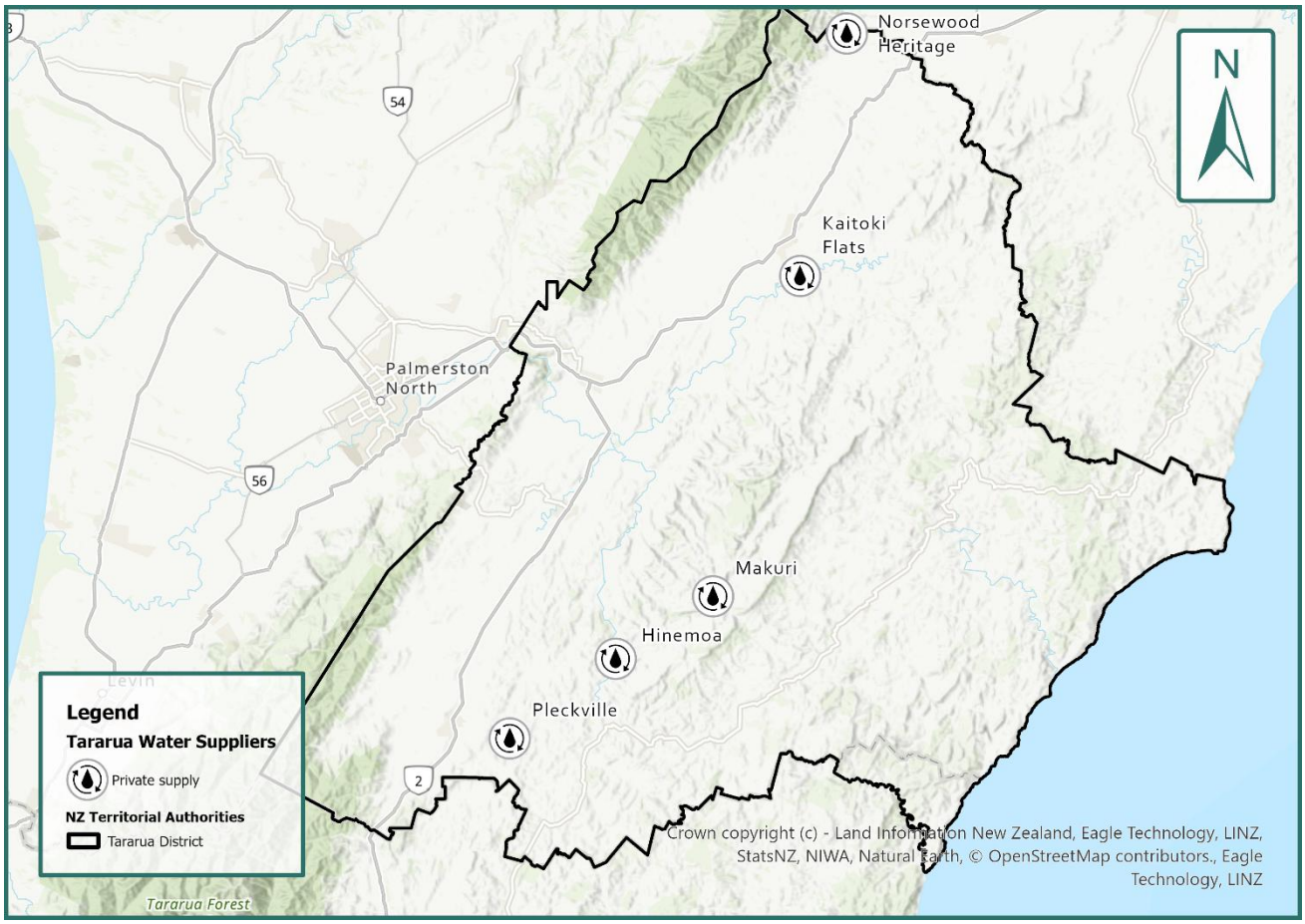
Norsewood Heritage
Kaitoki Flats
Palmerston North
Makuri
Hinemoa
Pleckville
Levin
54
56
2
N
Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
Private supply
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
Tararua Forest
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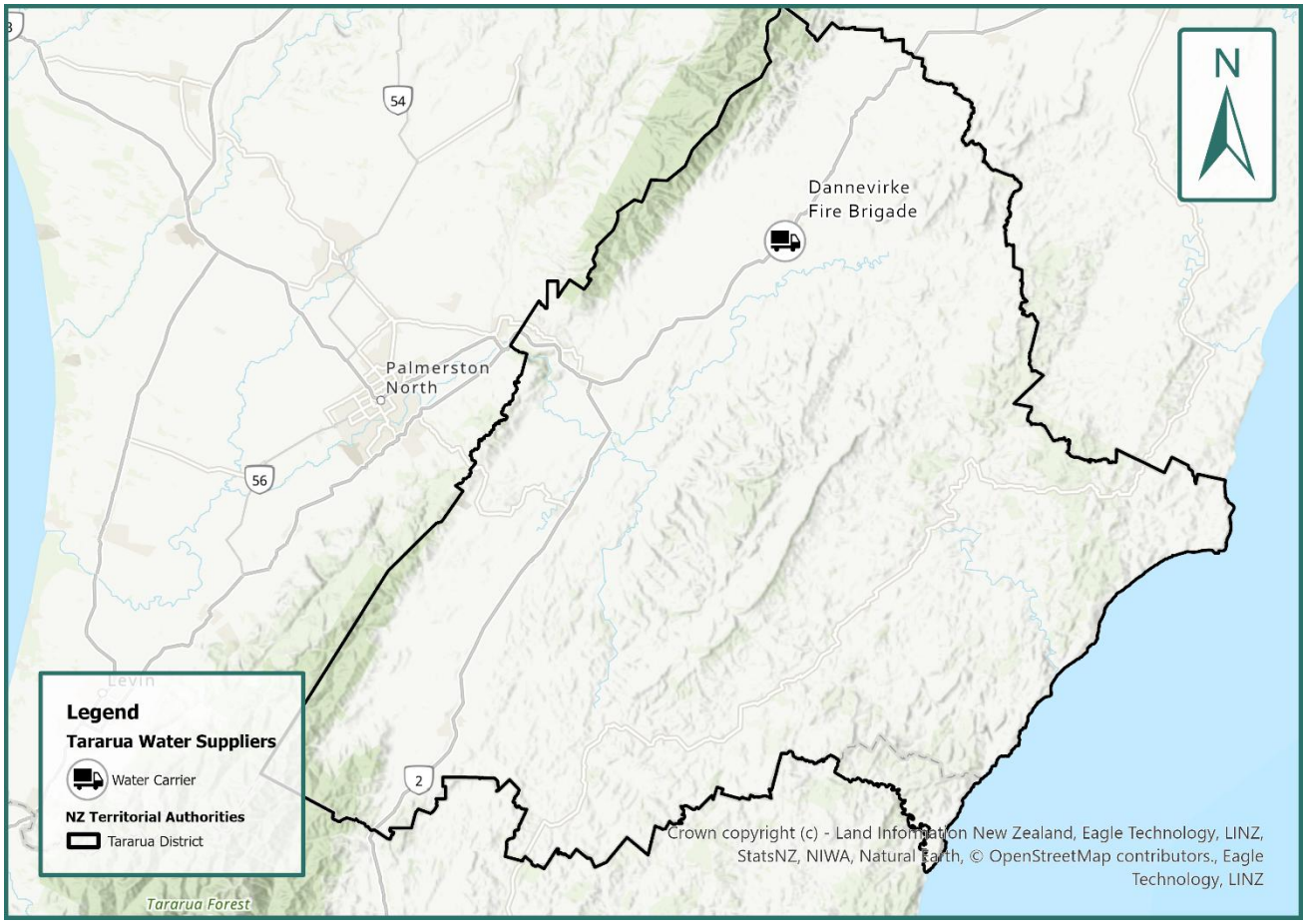
Dannevirke Fire Brigade
Palmerston North
Levin
54
56
2
N
Legend
Tararua Water Suppliers
Water Carrier
NZ Territorial Authorities
Tararua District
Tararua Forest
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