

11 February 2020

Kia ora,

Severe water shortage in Kaitaia

We are in a water shortage crisis in Kaitaia and we need your help.

Northland has experienced one of the driest 12-month periods on record and is nearing drought conditions. Many of our waterways, including the Awanui River, have been hit hard and we are fast running out of water.

We applied Level 3 water restrictions to Kaitaia in mid-January to reduce demand on the Awanui River. Unfortunately, flows have continued to drop and we have now breached low-flow limits set by the Northland Regional Council. We must now apply Level 4 water restrictions to all Kaitaia businesses and households connected to Council water supplies.

Level 4 restrictions mean water is for essential use only and can only be used for drinking, cooking and washing. All outdoor use is banned.

The MetService is predicting little chance of rain in coming weeks and no significant falls likely until May or even later. If correct, we face a very real prospect of taps running dry in Kaitaia – possibly within weeks.

To help avoid this scenario, we are asking everyone in the Far North to reduce water consumption by 25 per cent from today. There are simple changes you can make to achieve this, some of which are included on the reverse side of this letter.

Our 25 per cent reduction plea includes people on rain water supplies. With no significant rain forecast, we know many water tanks will soon run dry. Town supplies are often used to refill private water tanks, placing an extra burden on our dangerously stretched resources.

We are now testing our contingency plans for the current severe conditions. These include the provision of tanks of drinking water for residents of Kaitaia if water saving efforts prove to be inadequate.

If you see breaches to water restrictions, please report them by calling 0800 920 029 or go to www.fndc.govt.nz/Contact. We are stepping up checks when unusual water use is detected. Anyone who repeatedly ignores water restrictions can be fined up to \$20,000.

Yours sincerely



Andy Finch
GENERAL MANAGER - INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSET MANAGEMENT



We are asking all Far North residents to reduce water use. Here are some simple tips to help you quickly and easily reduce your water consumption today.

- Use the toilet's half flush, or put a full soft drink bottle in your toilet cistern to reduce the quantity of water you flush
- Flush the toilet less often
- Only wash clothes when you have a full load. A washing machine uses about 150 litres of water per wash
- Reuse your kids' bathwater in the washing machine
- Use hand sanitiser instead of washing your hands from time to time
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth – use a small glass of water instead
- Take shorter showers. A shower can use about 8 litres of water every minute. Turn the shower off while you soap (wet, soap and rinse)
- Place a large tub in your shower, stand in it and collect water for re-use
- Use the dishwasher for full loads only. Each load uses 40 to 80 litres of water
- Put a bowl in the sink for washing vegetables and don't leave the tap running
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge to avoid running more water than you need for a glass of water
- Boil water in the kettle for hot water instead of running the hot tap.

To report a water leak call 0800 920 029. For more water saving tips, visit the Save Water page on the FNDC website www.fndc.govt.nz.