Minutes

Board meeting	Public session
Date	29 September 2026
Venue	Watercare House, Level 4 Boardroom, 73 Remuera Rd, Remuera and via Microsoft Teams
Time	10:29am to 11:22am

Attendance		
Board of Directors	**Watercare staff**	**Guests**
Geoff Hunt (Chair) Karen Sherry Graham Darlow Derrick Adams Julian Smith John Crawford Rukumoana Schaafhausen	Jamie Sinclair – Chief Executive Mark Bourne – Chief Operations Officer Andrew Mercer – Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing (from start until end of item 7) Marsden Cheung – Senior Elected Member Relationship Advisor (for items 6 and 7) Matthew Hill – Head of Legal and Governance Izzy Mohammed – Legal and Governance Advisor **On Microsoft Teams** Joanna Tao – Elected Member Relationship Advisor	Trudi Fava, Principal Advisor CCO Governance and External Partnerships, Auckland Council Alexandra Bonham and Peter Elliott, Waitematā Local Board (for items 6 and 7)

1.	**Opening karakia** The Chair opened the meeting, and Karen Sherry led the karakia.
2.	**Apologies** Andrew Clark sent his apology. Andrew Clark was in attendance via Microsoft teams for the Board only and Board/CE sessions that occurred prior to the meeting.
3.	**Quorum** A quorum was established.
4.	**Declaration of any conflicts of interest** No conflicts of interest were noted.

5.	**Minutes of the previous meeting of 27 August 2026 board meeting** *The Board **resolved** that the minutes of the public session of the board meeting held on 27 August 2026 be confirmed as true and correct.* *The meeting moved to item 7.*
7.	**Health, safety, and wellness update** The CE introduced the report, and Andrew Mercer spoke to the health, safety, and wellness update. The following key points were made: • Three contractor-related notifiable events had been reported to WorkSafe, with no further action taken. • Management continues to focus on staff wellbeing, recognising the impacts of organisational change, demanding workloads, and pressure on key staff. Health and safety metrics remained stable for the month. • The Board noted that staff absences can place additional pressure on teams, although sickness levels were not considered unusually high relative to comparable organisations. • The Board noted a high-potential confined space event related to a fixed access ladder that did not extend as required, creating a fall risk. The Board acknowledged the positive decision by staff to stop work and ensure the task was undertaken safely. • A plant component failure involved the use of unsuitable equipment (an auger) for the task. Appropriate exclusion zones were in place and effective, and lessons learned have been shared by the contractor across its wider operations. • Increased use of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was attributed to encouraging earlier engagement and the introduction of a new provider offering a broader range of wellbeing tools and resources. The Board asked Andrew Mercer to provide future reporting on EAP usage trends and patterns. *The Board **noted** the report.*
6.	**Public deputations** Alexandra Bonham, Chair of the Waitematā Local Board, and Peter Elliott, a member of the Waitematā Local Board, presented to the Board regarding the proposal to outsource central area maintenance services. They acknowledged Watercare's strong reputation and positive engagement with local communities, including work undertaken in the Herne Bay area. Key points from their deputation included: • The Local Board was seeking greater information on the modelling and assessment underpinning the proposal before adopting a formal position. • The current model, which provides Watercare with direct operational knowledge and oversight of maintenance activities, was considered to offer long-term strategic advantages and should not be changed lightly. • Drawing on local government experience, Alexandra noted that outsourcing can reduce maintenance costs in the short term but may result in increased renewal costs or deferred asset issues over the longer term. • It was recognised that external providers can also deliver benefits, including identifying opportunities to extend asset life where they maintain close oversight of facilities.

	• Alexandra emphasised the importance of safe drinking water and wastewater services, and the need to balance service quality, environmental outcomes, affordability, and long-term asset stewardship. • The Local Board requested that local boards and communities be kept informed of any future decisions that may affect Watercare's operational model. The Chair acknowledged and thanked Alexandra and Peter for their feedback, noting that the Board would consider the matters raised and provide a formal response in due course.
8.	**Review of Corporate Governance Charter** The CE introduced the report, which was taken as read. The following key points were made: • The proposed amendments update the Corporate Governance Charter to reflect recent delegation now held by the Asset Management Committee (AMC). • It was noted that section 58 should also acknowledge the relationship with section 57(1)(a), such that the requirements of section 58 apply only to the extent they do not override section 57(1)(a). • The Board agreed that further consequential amendments were required to reflect AMC delegations throughout the Corporate Governance Charter, including references to delegations in clause 6 and clause 9 of the Charter. The Board requested that delegated authority throughout the document appropriately reflect delegations held by the AMC. • Management was requested to incorporate the proposed amendments and circulate an updated version of the Corporate Governance Charter to the Board. *Subject to the agreed changes being incorporated into the Corporate Governance Charter and a revised version of the Charter being circulated to the Board, the Board **approved** the Corporate Governance Charter.*
9.	**Chief Executive's report** The CE introduced the report, which was taken as read. The following key points were made: • Water storage levels remain in a good position, however, rainfall over the previous 90 days had been significantly below normal winter levels. Management is implementing its drought management plan and has contingency measures in place, including supplementing supply from the Waikato River. • The Board noted that increased operational expenditure may be required if dry conditions continue, although current forecasts indicate the position would improve if rainfall increases by November 2026. • The Board discussed the potential financial impacts of water conservation messaging and restrictions. The CE noted that the pricing framework provides protection through the maximum allowable revenue (MAR) mechanism, with any under-recovery addressed through future wash-up processes. • The CE highlighted Watercare's success at the Water New Zealand Conference, where the organisation received four awards across a range of disciplines. The Board congratulated staff on their achievements, including recognition for work associated with the Māngere Wastewater Treatment Plant. • Compliance performance remained strong and customer metrics were generally stable. The Board discussed customer trust measures and satisfaction reporting, including the distinction between community-wide perception surveys and customer feedback from specific interactions and projects. The Board sought clarification on the methodology and trends underlying the Voices of the City trust measure, including the meaning of a benchmark shown in the reporting. It was noted that comparative trust data had recently been compiled, and the CE agreed to provide further detail on the measure and its trends.

	• The Board discussed workforce capability and recruitment. The CE advised that operational teams remained stable, recruitment activity was continuing to support the capital programme, and candidate quality was generally strong. • It was noted that developing internal capability remains important to address sector-wide skills shortages. • The Board noted positive progress in Watercare's engagement with mana whenua, including a shift towards earlier involvement and partnership approaches. Future reporting should include how these commitments will be supported and funded over the longer term. *The Board **noted** the report.*
10.	**Board planner** • The Board discussed potential topics for the upcoming Board Strategy Day. • The strategy day was identified as an opportunity to discuss organisational capability, accountability, change management, succession planning and the capabilities required to deliver Watercare's transformation objectives. • Directors expressed interest in receiving an update on workforce development initiatives, including early-career programmes, talent pipelines, and long-term workforce planning. The Board discussed the importance of understanding how Watercare is building capability to ensure the organisation remains appropriately resourced over the long term. The CE advised that approximately 50 early-career staff are currently participating across a range of programmes. • The Board discussed the frequency of Board meetings and whether opportunities exist to rationalise the meeting schedule, including the need for a meeting in January 2027. The CE and Chair will review the 2027 meeting planner and advise the Governance team of any potential changes. *The Board **noted** the board planner.*
11.	**Directors' appointment terms, committee memberships and meeting attendances** The Board noted that Trudi Fava would follow up with James Stephens regarding a response to the director term renewal matter raised by the Chair. *The Board **noted** the report.*
12.	**Disclosure of directors' and executives' interests** The Board considered the interests register and noted the following updates: • Graham Darlow advised that LEAD Project Alliance Board and Wellington Metro Water Services Delivery Plan should be removed from his interests. • Julian Smith noted that Look Good Feel Better Trust has changed its name to Cancer Support New Zealand, and that his advisory role should be recorded as Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT), rather than Ministry for the Environment. • Rukumoana Schafhausen advised that her interests should be updated to include her directorship at Kiwibank. She also advised that Waikato Tainui Endowed College and the Tindall Foundation should be removed from her interests. In addition, she noted that she will retire from the King's Trust in December 2026. *The Board **noted** the report.*

13.	**General business** The public session closed at 11:22am.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD

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Geoff Hunt, Chair