

Ken Macdonald

# Water Stewardship

Bridging the past, present and future

 Tonkin+Taylor

**water**  
NEW ZEALAND  
The New Zealand Water & Wastes Association Waiora Aotearoa

**water**  
NEW ZEALAND  
CONFERENCE & EXPO  
17-19 OCTOBER 2023  
Tākina, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington

# Stewardship...

*Stig...*

(house, hall)

*...Weard*

(ward, guard,  
guardian, keeper)

Taking care of something we do  
not own



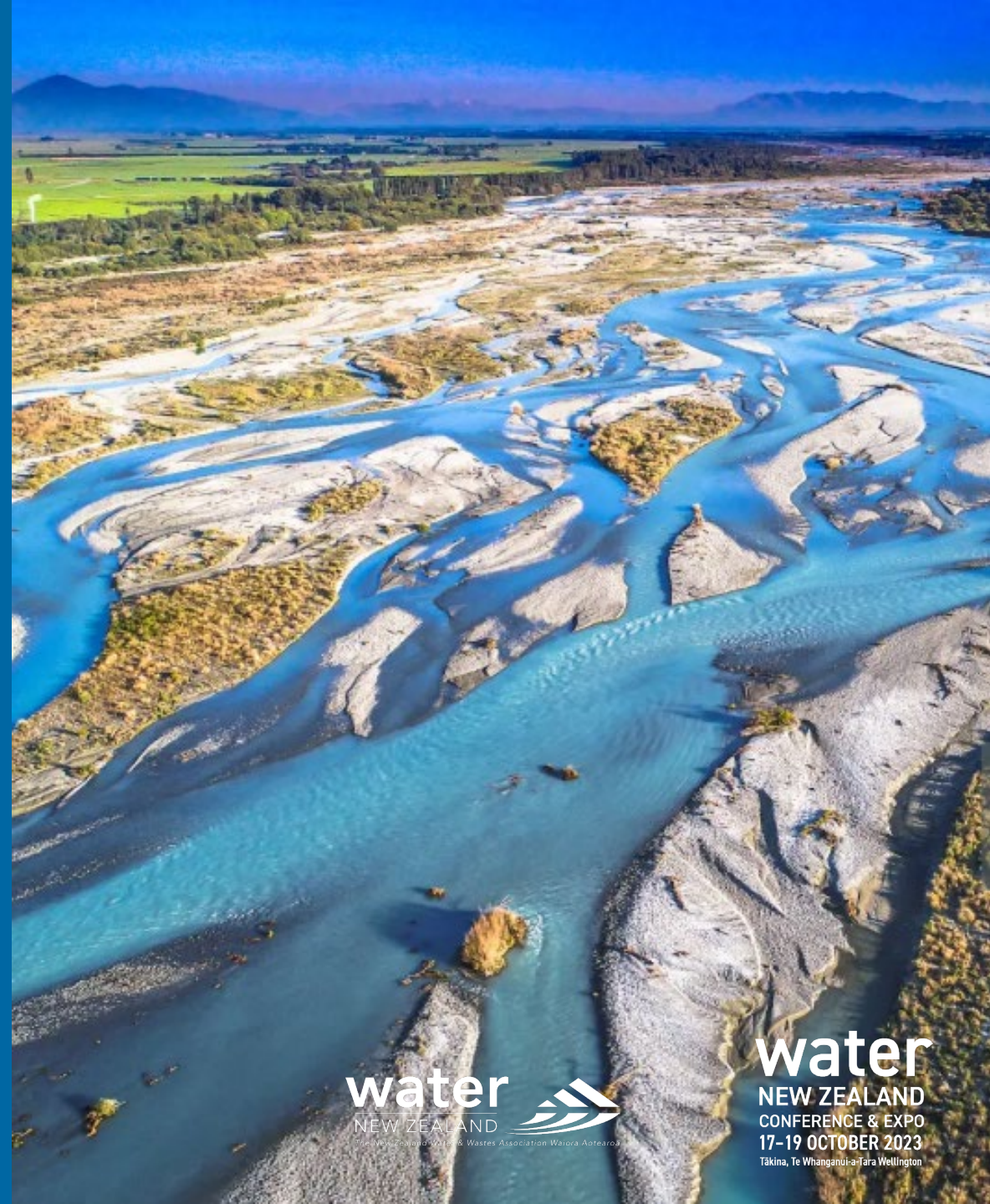
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# What is Water Stewardship?

**‘All of us looking after water and using it sustainably...’**

*‘A holistic approach to managing and conserving water resources in a responsible and sustainable manner.’*

**“The obligations of all New Zealanders to manage freshwater in a way that ensures it sustains present and future generations.”**



# What is Water Stewardship?

“Water stewardship is defined as using water in a way that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial.

This is achieved through a stakeholder inclusive process that involves site and catchment-based actions”

*United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)*



# Why do we need it?

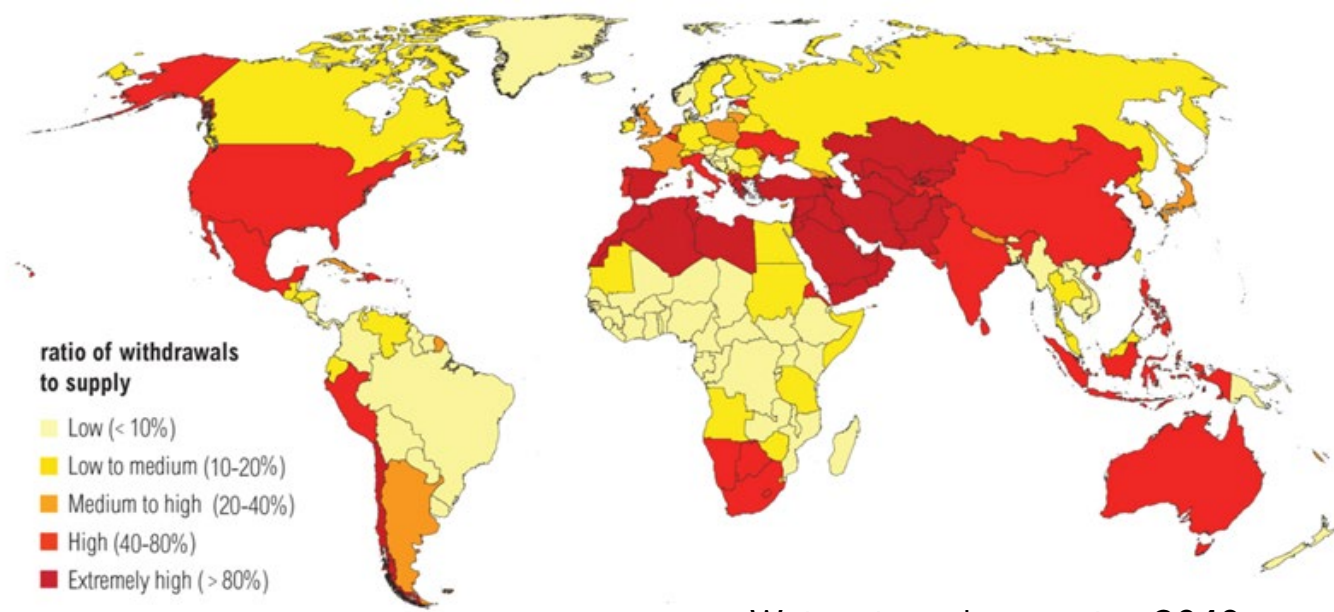
Water stress....

Global sustainable  
water supply  
*4,200 km<sup>3</sup> per year*

Year 2000  
Global water use  
*3,950 km<sup>3</sup>*



Year 2030  
Global water use  
*6,900 km<sup>3</sup>*



Water stress by country: 2040

NOTE: Projections are based on a business-as-usual scenario using SSP2 and RCP8.5.



# Why do we need it?

Water quality continues to deteriorate

Public health is at risk

Serious issues of equality and equity

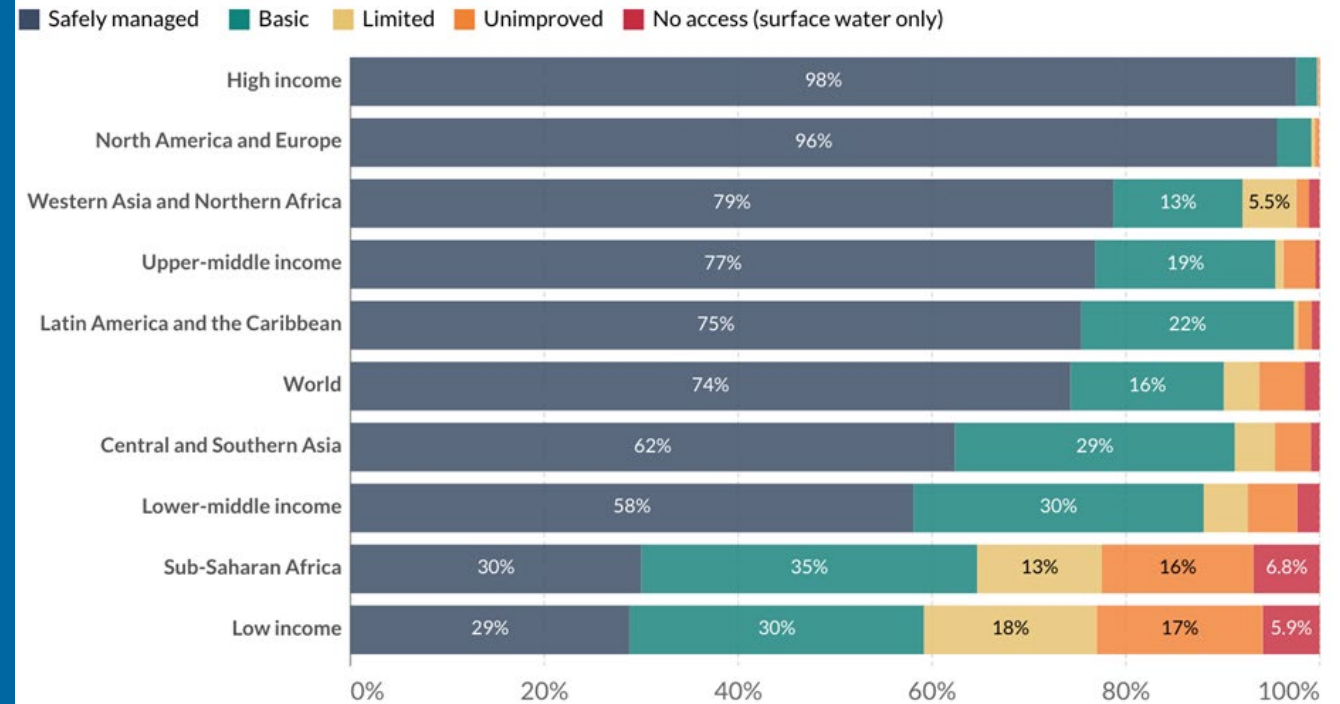
Impacts on global economies and financial risk

Divergence from Sustainable Development Goals



Share of the population with access to drinking water facilities, 2020

Our World in Data



Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation

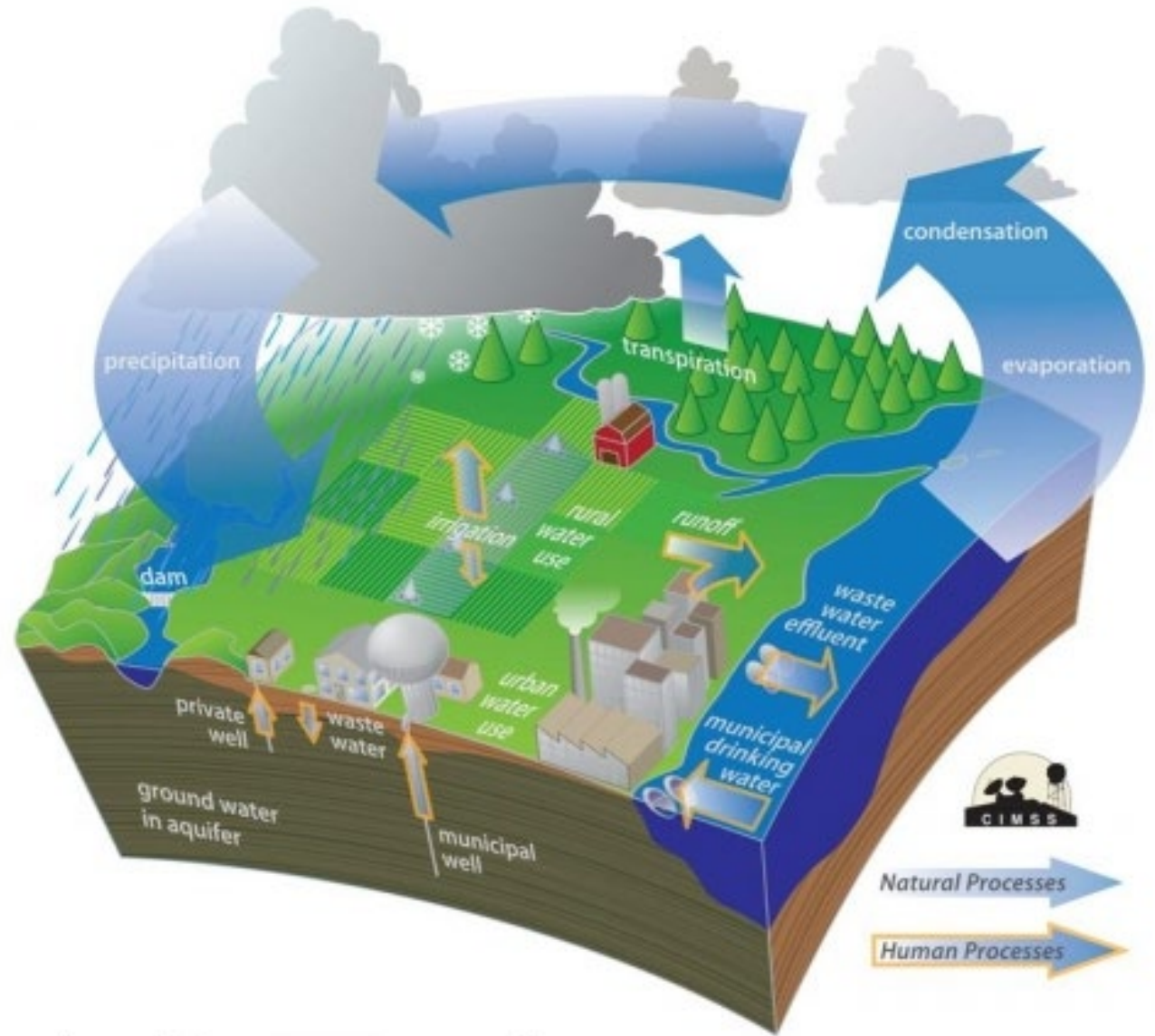
OurWorldInData.org/water-access • CC BY

# Summary

We are living in a way that is out of balance with the natural water cycle.

This creates multiple challenges and threats – but also opportunities.

We need to keep developing and improving our stewardship approach



Adopted from CISS water diagram

# How do we ‘do’ water stewardship

This is not new!

Embrace existing knowledge and perspectives and connect innovation and technology

Move from thinking about ‘managing’ water to living with water

“Good water stewards recognise the need for collective responses to the complex challenges facing the water resources we all rely on.”



The image shows a screenshot of a webpage from World Water Week. The page features a dark blue header with the World Water Week logo and navigation links: Attend, Convene, Programme, Partner, About, Account, and a search icon. The main headline is "First Nations Focus at World Water Week" in a large, bold, blue font. Below the headline is a sub-headline: "Indigenous Experts offer their perspectives, values, and lessons to the water community on approaches that have been undertaken for generations in their respective territories." The main content area is a photograph of a traditional wooden canoe on a calm river, surrounded by lush green trees. The canoe is in the foreground, with a green rope tied to its bow. The water is still, reflecting the surrounding greenery.



# How do we 'do' water stewardship

Multi-party, multi-tiered approach

No single actor, agency, location or part of the value chain that can do it all

Already have and act on many parts of the holistic water stewardship 'jigsaw'

Visible, synergistic, holistic actions - and a common set of outcomes

Can be hard to see what can be done at a localised, organisational level



# CEO Water Mandate

Commitment platform for businesses to advance water stewardship.

Companies commit to action in six areas and report annually on progress on these:

Operations - Supply Chain and Watershed  
- Collective Action – Public Policy –  
Community Engagement - Transparency

<https://ceowatermandate.org>



# Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)

Global membership collaboration for businesses NGOs and public sector

Focussed on production/ manufacturing facilities and site water uses within context of their catchment

Priority sectors:

- Agricultural supply chains
- Food and beverage manufacturing
- ICT and microelectronics
- Textiles and Apparel



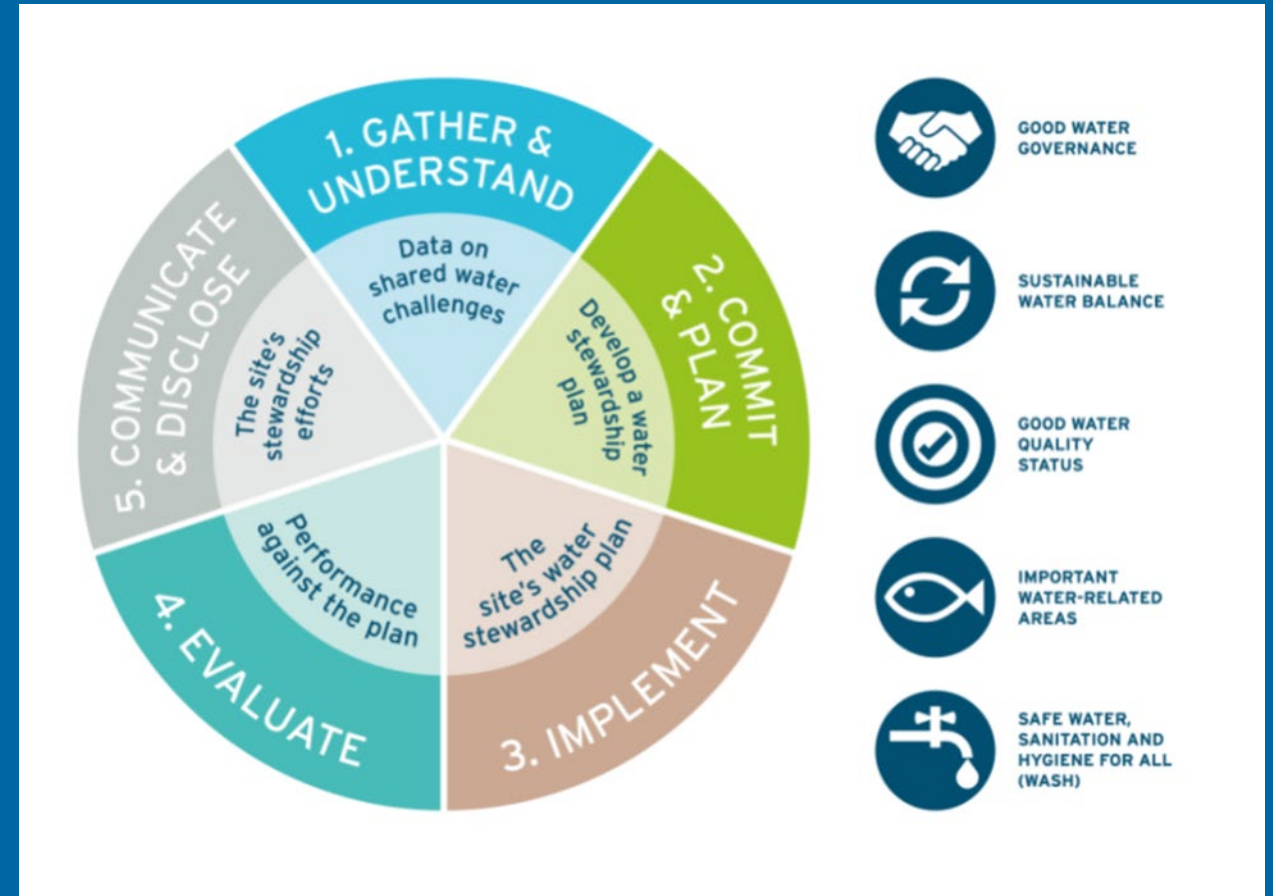
# AWS Certification

Global standard – audited and certified

Aim is to understand site water use and impacts in catchment context

Multiple tools and resources for members

[www.a4ws.org](http://www.a4ws.org)



# Benefits of site-based action

Consistent and easily comparable set of actions and achievements

Credible and publishable progress and achievement

Tangible connection to wider stewardship initiatives

Involves local communities and stakeholders

Takes an 'in-catchment' perspective

A step forward from solely internal initiatives – though not necessarily onerous

Links to broader disclosure initiatives (CDP)

Good for business



# Outcomes

What are we trying to achieve?

How will we know when we've achieved it?

In Aotearoa, can we think about giving effect to Te Mana o Te Wai as one outcome we are aiming for?



# Te Mana o Te Wai

## Principles



## Obligations

Protect the health, wellbeing and mauri of water



Provide for essential health needs of people (e.g., drinking water)



Provide for social, economic and cultural wellbeing – in ways that do not adversely impact mauri of water

# What can we do?

Take site/organisation action

Get involved in a (certified) programme

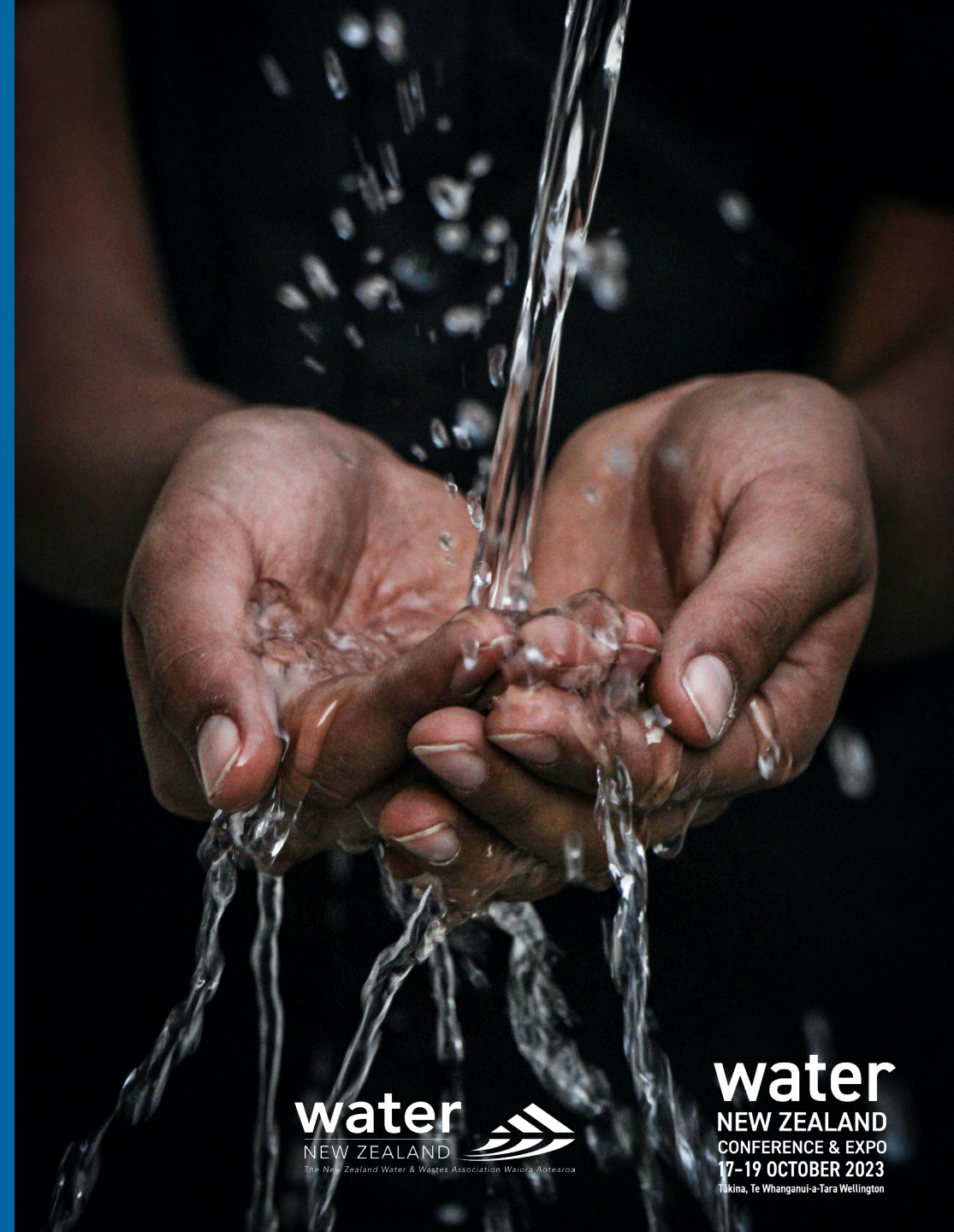
Go public

Engage and collaborate

Advocate and communicate

Challenge, be open to change, innovate

Embrace and understand the true values of water





# What's next in Stewardship?

Integrating water stewardship into businesses' climate strategies

Broadening supply chain involvement and influence

More innovation – new technologies; better planning; more collaboration; bold thinking

Embrace and include indigenous, first peoples, historic and cultural values, approaches and methods

Link to broader governance and water resilience initiatives

Scale up – river basins



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NEW ZEALAND  
The New Zealand Water Stewardship Centre  
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri Mātahi

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# Conclusions

Water stewardship is not new, but it is continuing to develop

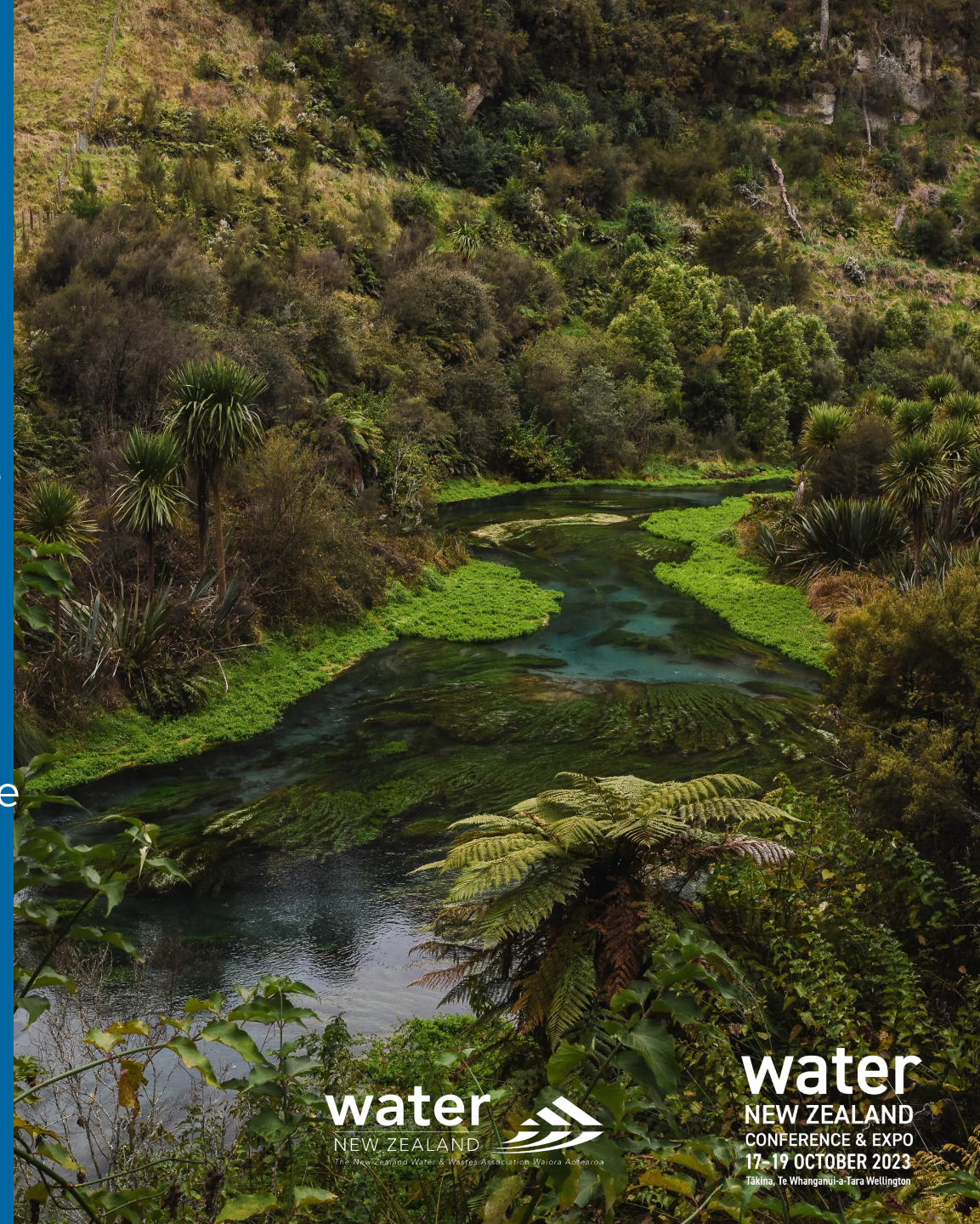
It is complex, involving multiple initiatives across multiple parties - but individual actions can be simple

There are actions and opportunities for all of us

It is compatible with and essential to our ability to achieve water outcomes

We need to think from a 'water-first' perspective

Nothing is perfect but inaction is not an option



“All the water we will ever have is on earth, right now”

# Ngā mihi

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