

THE CHALLENGE / THE SCENARIO

Taumata Arowai is the new water services regulator for Aotearoa. It was faced with the challenge of becoming an exemplar of modern regulation for Aotearoa, taking its lead from Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Mana o te Wai to drive a holistic view of water services management.

The Taumata Arowai leadership team needed a strategy that would give clarity around their new identity, helping them to define what they wanted to achieve, identify their key deliverables, and give them a clear way forward.

The team at Taumata Arowai were tasked with creating a new regulatory framework based on two new pieces of legislation: Taumata Arowai Water Services Regulator Act 2020 and the Water Services Bill.

Head of Regulatory, Ray McMillan felt confident that MSH Consulting would have the right system to help them nail their strategy.

“When you do a strategy it’s normally clear who you are and what your functions are. As a new organisation we didn’t know that yet. We engaged MSH because we knew they had some great systems to help us clarify that picture.”

MSH Consulting Director, Andrew Darlington says the MSH approach was to produce a thorough Outcome Strategy Framework for Taumata Arowai, with the intention for them to “go live” at the end of 2021.

“Taumata Arowai didn’t want a regulatory model that already existed, they wanted a new one that provides for Te Tiriti partnership. Our goal was to ask them what a great result would look like and design a strategy that gave them the outcome they wanted to achieve.”

CREATING A STRATEGY

The Taumata Arowai team knew they needed a three-year strategy, but they also had more pressing problems they needed to address first.

It was also important to explain the new legislation, the Water Services Bill, the Taumata Arowai Water Services Regulator Act 2020, and the duty of care Taumata Arowai has to the people of New Zealand.

“Not only is it our goal to meet compliance, but we need to understand Te Mana o te Wai (the vital importance of water), taking into account the health needs of people and the ecosystem it supports,” says Ray.

INTEGRATING TE AO MĀORI

MSH Consultant Aaron Booker really enjoyed having to work in an integrated way and understood that Taumata Arowai was seeking to embed Te Ao Māori, across everything and into their strategy.

“It was refreshing to work with an organisation that was genuinely committed to fully integrating a Māori world-view (the values and concepts) into everything they do. It’s exciting to see the sector moving beyond just putting te reo titles on things and recognising that what works for Māori works for everyone.”

THE PROCESS

MSH Consulting started the process by interviewing Taumata Arowai’s customers. With this background research, they then started on the strategy design with the team.

THE OUTCOME/ MSH’S SOLUTION

We worked together to develop an Outcome Strategy Framework that has given Taumata Arowai clarity around their objectives and a roadmap for establishment with a modern, Aotearoa-specific regulatory model.

The strategy helped provide direction and certainty for the leadership team, enhancing their credibility and enabling them to easily articulate their position during discussions with their Board and Minister. It also allowed them to make decisions around priorities and provided a programme of activities delivering on both their short-term and longer-term objectives.

“We sat down with Andrew and Aaron, and we talked about where we were going and discussed possible approaches,” says Ray.

Andrew says they asked several questions, working with the team to define seven intermediate outcomes, and then working out what Taumata Arowai needed to do to deliver them.

“We asked questions like, “What are the challenges you will face to deliver on this outcome, what does success look like, and what is the impact you want to have?” says Andrew. “We had to then think about what they needed to achieve in three to five years, working back to year one.”

Ray says they now have direction and clarity around a set of activities that are important to them. They have a work programme that gives them a good starting point, helping them make decisions and making it easier to prioritise.

WORKING WITH MSH

Ray says MSH made the whole process easy, they have a great affinity with people, and they are really pleased with the outcome.

“MSH are really awesome at what they do. It was challenging, but they asked great questions, and fostered an environment that allowed good debate and challenge around the key areas we needed to focus on,” says Ray.

“You just need to commit to the process because these guys really know what they are doing and will give you a great product at the end of it.”



Photo credit: Taumata Arowai