

New national drinking water database



By Tracey Clode, Beca.

The new Ministry of Health national drinking-water database, Drinking-Water Online, will be launched on July 1. Drinking-Water Online will replace the existing database, Water Information New Zealand (WINZ 6&7), which has been used since the late 1990s.

WINZ was developed and maintained by the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR), providing a comprehensive and complementary service for drinking-water supply management. Importantly, it includes sample management, DWSNZ assessment and compliance, annual reporting, supply configuration, recognition of test methods, and approved laboratories.

The National Drinking-Water Database project was awarded to Beca in March 2016 with an objective to build a modern, robust platform that would meet the needs of the Ministry and the sector over the next 15 years.

The project is now progressing through its final stages. Drinking-Water Online builds on the functionality of WINZ, and will deliver improved benefits in accessibility, usability and integration. It has web accessible features that are intended to streamline some of the current systems used by the sector to update and access existing information.

Some of the features of Drinking-Water Online include personalised, role-specific sign-on, so suppliers can only access and update their own information; intuitive, user-friendly layout and structure; bulk upload capability; automatic transgression identification; and test scheduling. Drinking-Water Online is essentially much simpler and easier to use than the existing WINZ system. It will replace what is currently three separate tools with one, reducing duplication and inconsistencies.

As it is web based, it can run on most devices with internet access. Some rationalisation and right sizing has occurred – for example, functionality within the current databases associated with DWSNZ 2000, the grading calculation, and template Water Safety Plans have not been carried over to Drinking-Water Online. The July 1 transition provides an opportunity to update supply information and for users to archive historical data.

An industry advisory group of key stakeholders has been engaged to provide industry testing and feedback which has supported an interactive project methodology.

Industry testing took place in November 2016. Following that, two familiarisation training sessions were held in March and April this year for drinking water assessors and public health officers. Valuable feedback from these sessions has been collected by the Ministry for improvements now and into the future.

As well, the Ministry and public health units provided six half-day regional presentations in May for drinking-water suppliers to become familiar with Drinking-Water Online. The presentations provided an introduction to the features and operation of the new database, and included a hands-on tour of the database.

A training environment is available, and provides users with an opportunity to review their current information and supply details, as well as try out the new functionality. Data available on the training site has been imported directly from the current WINZ database, and there will be an opportunity before July 1 to update this before the 'go live'. After this, the training site will remain available for future use. However, data updates for final migration will be as follows:

- By May 31: Updated supply structure and contact information for networked suppliers and carriers to be forwarded to your local public health unit using a WS01 or WC01 form. This will be actioned by ESR and Beca for July 1.
- After July 1: Users will be able to directly update their own information through Drinking-Water Online. Supply structures and other information will continue to be updated through your local public health unit using a WS01 or WC01 form.

To arrange access to the training site please register for a Drinking-Water Online sign-on by emailing your local public health unit contact.

ESR is supporting the project and will continue to provide scientific and analytical support services associated with the data, information and administration of the new system.

Similarly, the breadth of stakeholders engaged with the current WINZ database is not expected to significantly change. However, specified self-supplier information will not be migrated on July 1 as the Ministry of Health is currently reviewing the registration requirements for these suppliers.

Drinking-Water Online is being launched on July 1 with the following transition sequence:

- The 2016/2017 Annual Report on Drinking-Water Quality will use the existing WINZ databases.
- May 2017, regional Drinking-Water Online presentations.
- Between May and June 30 users will be able to access the Drinking-Water Online training site and familiarise themselves with the database, validate supply structures, etc. Please contact your local public health unit to arrange access to the training site.
- July 1 is the official start date for input of water supply data into Drinking-Water Online. Information updated or changed in the training site will not be carried over to the live site.

The 2017/2018 Annual Report on Drinking-Water Quality will use the new Drinking-Water Online database.

The Ministry will work with Beca to explore potential options for any third-party water management system to integrate with Drinking-Water Online. If your organisation is interested in discussing how your complementary water supply systems could integrate with Drinking-Water Online, please contact winz@beca.com. [WINZ](#)