

## Media Release

20 May 2020

### The Big Dry still affecting Kaipara

Treat water like gold is the advice given by Waters and Waste Manager Donnick Mugusto from Kaipara District Council.

Donnick and his team have been monitoring water levels across Kaipara, and says they are still critically low, even though we've had some rain over the last few days.

"The rain we've had is only surface deep and we're still in one of the most severe droughts on record," says Mr Mugusto.

Water restrictions have remained at Level 4, which means no outdoor water use, including hoses, water blasters and sprinkler systems.

"We're encouraging people to take shorter showers, turn taps off while brushing their teeth and insert a bottle in their toilet cistern to reduce the amount of water flushed down the drain."

Periods of heavy rainfall have been followed by dry conditions and cold southerlies; much more rain will be needed this winter to get Kaipara back to healthy waterway levels.

"The dry winter in 2018 preceded by a dry year in 2019 were the perfect set-up conditions for the drought," says Mr Mugusto. Although the rain we've had has been welcomed by farmers, most of it has been in 'the wrong place' for our aquifers. What little we have had within the catchment has resulted in temporary surges in supply, that do not last.

"We need rain in the streams and tributaries that feed into our large water supplies."

Baldrock Dam, a supplementary source of water on the East Coast is at the lowest the Water Team has seen, and the Kaihu River, where the main Dargaville supply is drawn, quickly drops back to drought levels following rain.

We've been advised the dry weather will continue a while longer. The council is already urging people to think ahead to next summer and consider their water storage options to protect against possible acute water shortages again next year.

The Council also works closely with the Northland Regional Council in managing water sources in times of water shortage. A long-term solution is water storage is currently being considered for Dargaville.

According to the Northland Regional Council, river flows for this year are currently tracking 40 to 47% below normal levels across all the main centres in Northland.

*PHOTO: Baldrock Dam, East Coast.*

**ENDS**

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