

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Question Taken on Notice

Question Number: 10.11

Output Number:

Date: 19/06/2025

From: Mr Matthew Kerle

To: Mr Peter Wilson

Portfolio: Essential Services

Agency: Power and Water Corporation

Subject: Retail pipes replacement policy

QUESTION

Do you have a policy regarding the number of times a section of pipe has to be repaired before it is replaced fully; specifically regarding retail pipes connecting mains to households? If so, what is it?

ANSWER

Water Supply Network - Pipe Types

Power and Water's water supply network comprises three primary pipe types:

- Distribution pipes: Transport water over large distances and across wide service areas.
- Reticulation pipes: Deliver water from distribution mains into specific streets and local areas.
- Service pipes: Connect individual properties to the reticulation network.

Asset Management Approach

Distribution, reticulation and service pipes are managed under an "operate to fail" strategy defined in the Class Asset Management Plan. This means maintenance is reactive, with repairs or replacements occurring only when leaks or failures are detected.

Water supply outages are necessary to repair or replace any of the 3 pipe types. However, outages involving distribution or reticulation pipes typically affect a larger number of customers compared to those involving service pipe repairs or replacements.

Management by Pipe Type

Distribution and Reticulation Pipes

- Monitored for failure events due to the larger number of customers typically impacted by the event.
- If a section fails 3 times within one year, an investigation is triggered to determine the root cause.
- Replacement is only scheduled after exploring and eliminating all other mitigation options, such as pressure management.

Service Pipes

- Reactive response: Addressed only when a leak or break is reported.
- Condition assessment: Once exposed, the pipe is assessed on-site to determine whether repair or full replacement is needed.
 - Replacement: Conducted if the pipe shows widespread corrosion or structural compromise.
 - Repair: Repair is performed if the issue is localised and limited in scope.
- Cost Strategy: It is generally more cost-effective to perform repeated repairs rather than proactively replace service pipes.