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## **CITYCARE WATER EXEMPT FROM WATER SERVICES REFORM**

Christchurch City Council and Christchurch City Holdings Limited (CCHL) have welcomed Cabinet’s decision to exempt Citycare Water from the asset and staff transfer provisions of the Water Services Entities Act 2022 following a recommendation from Minister of Local Government Kieran McAnulty.

In a letter sent to CCHL yesterday, the Minister also clarified it was not the Government’s intention to transfer the assets of organisations like Christchurch Airport and Lyttleton Port Company, which both own water infrastructure that supports their operations, to the new water service entities.

The Minister highlighted that the latest decision to exempt Citycare Water was based on it not being an owner of water services infrastructure – but instead delivers maintenance services to local authorities across New Zealand, and the unacceptable risks to service continuity across the country if the transfer provisions were applied to Citycare Water.

CCHL Chair Abby Foote says the Group has welcomed Cabinet’s decision, as well as the Government’s willingness to constructively engage in the consultation process.

“We would also like to thank the Minister for communicating directly with us to provide certainty on these issues – particularly for Citycare Water, its staff, customers and the many communities it serves.”

Abby Foote says the Christchurch City Council, CCHL, Citycare Water, Christchurch Airport and LPC worked closely together, over a number of months, to understand and communicate to Government the potential impacts of Cabinet’s original policy decision.

“This process, and the work that has gone into it, has preserved the value of the assets we hold for our ratepayers as well as the high level of vital services, experience and support these organisations provide for our region and across the country,” says Abby Foote.

Abby Foote says CCHL is supportive of the overall objectives of the reform, and recognises that organisations within the Group, such as Citycare Water, could have a critical role to play in supporting the future delivery of improved water services to the community.

Christchurch Mayor Phil Mauger says he was very pleased to hear the Minister’s decision.

“We have been pushing hard for Citycare to be properly recognised and this decision is a great outcome, says Mayor Mauger.

“It allows Citycare to continue to invest and deliver existing contracts. This is a good result for Christchurch.”

Citycare Chair Bryan Jamison says the decision is a significant one for Citycare Water, providing much greater certainty to enable it to plan for the future.

“Citycare Water has extensive expertise and breadth of resources nationwide to help support the new water services entities, local councils and their communities as they navigate changes in the delivery of water services,” says Bryan Jamison.

“We believe the organisation has a great deal of in-depth knowledge and innovative solutions to offer, as well as providing continuity to our customers through the range of essential services we provide.”

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