



Freshwater Record of Meeting

Primary Industry Special Interest Group Workshop

Monday, 4 April 2022, 10am

Attendees:

Charlotte Holdsworth	Forest Owners Association
Allen Stancliff	Fish and Game
Katrina Boon	NZ Forestry
John Baylis	Dairy NZ
Shaun Hazelton	Federated Farmers
Jacob Morison	Fish and Game
Fiona Gordon	Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust
Suzanne O'Rourke	Fonterra
Richard Allen	Fonterra
Leedom Gibbs	Federated Farmers
CJ McMillan	Wild For Taranaki
Mark Hooper	Federated Farmers
Anna Sing	Dairy NZ
Urs Singer	Climate Justice Taranaki
Gareth Hopkins	Department of Conservation
Caleb Higham	Open Country
Rachel Millar	Forest Owners Association
Paul Turner	Taranaki Catchment Communities
Matt Vujcich	Taranaki Kiwi Trust
Michelle Lewis	Department of Conservation
Cam Eyre	NZ Forestry
Fiona Shaw	Te Kahui o Rauru
Macy Duxfield	Te Kahui o Rauru



Attendees to the workshop (both online and in person) were welcomed by Taranaki Regional Council Chief Executive Steve Ruru, who gave an overview of the government's Essential Freshwater package and what it aims to achieve.

After hearing from the Council's subject matter experts, the workshop broke into smaller groups to discuss three matters: (1) Long-term vision for freshwater, (2) Te Mana O te Wai and (3) Water take.

WATER QUALITY IN TARANAKI

Council Science Manager, Regan Phipps introduced the national objectives framework, and the role it plays. He shared the Council's freshwater report card, noting the areas where the region's waterways meet the national standards: periphyton, ammonia, nitrate and dissolved oxygen and those areas that need improvement because they were below the national bottom line: e coli, suspended fine sediment and dissolved reactive phosphorus.

He noted that the Council's data around lakes in the regional is limited and more analysis is needed.

Mr Phipps noted that further analysis is underway and that the Council would facilitate workshops with industry and the community to examine these issues further later in the year.

TE MANA O TE WAI

Snr Policy Analyst, Kelly Langton, provided an overview of Te Mana o Te Wai including the hierarchy of obligations which establishes what things the Council must give priority to when making freshwater management decisions. The hierarchy gives highest priority to the health and wellbeing of waterbodies and freshwater ecosystems, followed by the health and wellbeing needs of people, and lastly the ability of people and communities to provide for their social economic and cultural wellbeing.

Attendees broke into small groups and considered two questions:

- If we are prioritising the health and wellbeing of the waterway, what does this look like?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for you around prioritising the health and wellbeing of the waterway above other needs?



Prioritising health of the waterway

Key themes from participant feedback are noted below:

Rules that prioritise waterway health over economic gain would give effect to the hierarchy. For example rules would restrict or remove harmful discharges to water; rules that ensure suitable waterflow (to protect ecology); rules that consider climate change; and rules that give priority to restoring the mauri of the awa would be prioritised.

Waterways would have healthy aquatic life, productive fisheries and the waterway ecosystem and habitat would be protected from pest plants and species.

Water would be clean and swimmable. Streams would be fenced and planted to eliminate stock entering waterways.

Solutions would meet the unique characteristics of each waterway within Taranaki.

Solutions can not be one-size-fits-all – catchment based solutions are needed. Catchments or waterways that are most at risk could be prioritised.

Underpinning group feedback was the idea that new ways of doing things are needed, such as innovative sediment solutions and better use of technology and data.

Challenges and opportunities

The importance of supporting behavior change with education across the community was noted, as was the fact that funds and resources to facilitate change are required.

The challenge of fair apportionment of cost was discussed, including recognition that improving water quality was a whole community problem, and the cost of implementation shouldn't be borne by a single sector, such as farmers.

The challenges presented by the fast-changing regulatory environment were noted.

Demonstrating the sector's social license to operate could open up new markets and opportunities, and this was considered a real opportunity.

FRESHWATER VISION

Policy Analyst Grace Marcroft introduced the concept of a long-term vision for freshwater, explaining that it is a component of the National Objectives Framework and documents the community's aspirations for freshwater. Mrs Marcroft shared feedback from earlier community workshops, and participants were then invited to share ideas they wanted captured in the long-term vision for the region's freshwater.



Noted below is a summary of the ideas:

- **Communities coming together** to deliver freshwater outcomes. Collegial partnerships with governing and regulatory bodies and communities and industry are important.
- **Environmental and economically sustainable use of water.** Environmental wellbeing should not be considered in isolation from economic wellbeing. Thriving communities are important to water quality.
- **Recognition and protection of cultural values** including acknowledgement of tino rangatiratanga – Maori sovereignty and safeguarding taonga species and customary rights.
- **Healthy, resilient ecosystems** including the protection of wetlands, retention and restoration of instream habitat and thriving species.
- Freshwater is **available for everyone**
- Protecting water for **future generations**
- **Clean, clear, swimmable and fishable** water, and recognition of the overall importance of freshwater for recreational purposes in the long-term vision was considered important
- **Climate resilience**

WATER TAKE

The following question was posed: **“Knowing that for some catchments there’s not enough water for everyone to take as much as they want, what are the possible solutions?”**

All groups commented on the need for good data to better inform decision-making, and felt that greater use of technology would enable better use of water. In particular the following areas where better data could be available were highlighted:

- Analysis of actual water use vs consented water use
- Understand how much water is actually available
- Understand where water is currently allocated

In response to this question: “Knowing that for some catchments there’s not enough water for everyone to take as much as they want, what are the possible solutions?” key themes from participant feedback are as follows:



Investigate options to improve water storage facilities at both macro and micro level.

Capturing and storing water during peak flows was noted as part of the solution. Both natural and artificial storage methods would need to be considered. Participants noted that water storage is costly and could impact on landscape value.

Examination of alternative allocation methods. Participants suggested a range of options for allocation that they felt could drive better water quality outcomes.

- Shared water takes and scheduled irrigation
- Proportionally lower all existing water takes (burden of change spread fairly across all users)
- Change water take permitted activity levels

Pros and cons of the options were discussed and the challenge of prioritising the needs of one group over another were noted.

Improve water use efficiency. The importance of developing water use solutions that are sustainable long-term was noted. Other key themes from the discussion:

- Making better use of rainwater collection systems and storage
- Increase use of telemetered water take systems
- Improving irrigation efficiency
- Investment in re-use and recycling, such as promotion of greenwash to reduce dairy shed water use

Implementation of water use restrictions that are appropriate and enforceable

Mr Ruru wrapped up the session by thanking attendees for their contribution and outlining the next steps in the engagement process. He confirmed that the feedback gathered at this and other engagements in coming months would contribute to the shape of rules, limits and targets in the Natural Resources Plan, which was currently under development.

The meeting closed at 1:00pm.