



To: Freshwater Advisory Group

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SUBJECT: **The Waipaoa Catchment Plan – an update**

Overview

This report provides an update of the Waipaoa Catchment Plan. The report describes its structure, content and how it relates to the regional provisions of the Freshwater Plan. The plan will continue to be developed as more detail is brought into it and the policy team refines its function and relationship to the regional objectives and outcomes.

The Freshwater Plan has been designed in a way that moves from the regional to the local, from the general to the specific. Regional objectives, policies and rules articulate our vision and outcomes for freshwater and provide guidance that relates to how water is to be used and managed across the region. The regional policy structure comprises the main body of the Gisborne Freshwater Plan. Its development has begun to inform what kind of detail might be needed at the catchment scale as well as how catchment provisions might be structured.

A catchment plan is a section of the Freshwater Plan that sits beneath the regional policy framework and provides more specific details about localised freshwater management requirements and how we intend to respond to catchment-based issues. Placing independent catchment plans as sections under the regional provisions allows our planning logic to flow consistently from the regional to the local. Most importantly, it allows us to implement the Freshwater Plan on a catchment by catchment basis. As the first section, the Waipaoa Catchment Plan will provide a useful template that we can apply to the rest of the region.

Catchment plans may have policies and rules to guide water management at a local level but perhaps more significantly, this is where water quality and quantity allocation limits, management targets and other methods will sit. Limits will apply to areas within each catchment and give effect to requirements for setting limits under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management. We have used the National Objectives Framework (NOF) (proposed by the Ministry for the Environment) as a process for helping us set those limits. The catchment plan will tell the end user how much water is able to be allocated and what kind of condition needs to be maintained in terms of sediment, pathogens and nutrients. The catchment plan will also provide non-regulatory methods or projects that involve a collaborative approach to managing our freshwater or improving water quality. Non regulatory projects are a critical part of the Freshwater Plan – they recognise that we can't achieve our objectives and outcomes for fresh water through regulation alone. This is where our toolbox comes into play.

Structure of Catchment Plans

SUB REGIONAL CATCHMENTS

- Description of the function of sub-regional catchment plans
- Possible future map of region with all freshwater catchments
- Description of how this section works

WAIPAPOA CATCHMENT PLAN

- Description of catchment, general features, land uses, processes
- Map of catchment
- Catchment-wide provisions (these are policies, requirements or other methods that relate to the whole catchment but are more specific than regional provisions)

WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS (previously called Water Management Units)

- Description of WMA's in the Waipooa, how they reflect and provide for the values recognised in the catchment
- Map of catchment and Water Management Areas

WAIPAPOA WATER QUANTITY ALLOCATION LIMITS

- Water quantity limits for each Water Management Area: Poverty Bay Flats, Hill Country and Gisborne Urban
- Poverty Bay Flats divided into four allocation zones that reflect different water sources, takes and allocation issues

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ZONES

- Waingake Water Intake Allocation Review

WAIPAPOA WATER QUALITY ALLOCATION LIMITS

- Water quality limits for each Water Management Area: Poverty Bay Flats, Hill Country and Gisborne Urban

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ZONES

- Urban Stormwater Catchment Management Plan
- Mangatu Catchment Stabilisation – Legacy Project
- Waikanae Stream Riparian Restoration
- Waipooa Fish Passage Enhancement Programme
- Lower Te Arai and Waipooa Inanga Spawning Enhancement Project
- Taruheru River Restoration
- Rere Falls and Rockslide Water Quality Enhancement Strategy

1 - General

A catchment plan also moves from the general to the specific by first dealing with the catchment as a whole then looking at smaller management areas in more detail. The first part of the plan starts from the general by introducing the catchment – describing its freshwater resources and how they are used and valued. The section also provides a place for catchment-wide policies, rules and other methods. (This is likely to be especially relevant for catchments that also serve as Water Management Areas). These provisions recognise more specific aspects of the catchment that need to be managed. This could relate to a particular issue that requires more specific policy or rules to ensure that regional policies are given effect to. It could also identify ways to improve freshwater management conditions or other issues that are only found in a particular catchment.

2 - Water Management Areas

A core focus of the Freshwater Plan is to make sure we provide for the values we identify in our catchments. Values are locally derived and sit comfortably at the catchment plan scale. Our freshwater values help define Water Management Areas. These are areas that we set water quality and allocation limits for. Water Management Areas enable our values to drive the limit setting process.

According to the Ministry for the Environment, a Water Management Area can be a water body, multiple water body or part of a water body that is an appropriate spatial scale for setting objectives and limits. This could be a whole region (at least in theory), a catchment or part of a catchment. Because we need to provide for the values identified within the Waipaoa catchment, then an appropriate scale is one that enables us to provide for them adequately.

Through the significance test we have identified three Water Management Areas for the Waipaoa catchment and these reflect key differences in how fresh water is used and valued, and how it needs to be managed in the future. They are:

- Waipaoa Hill Country
- Poverty Bay Flats
- Gisborne Urban Area

Each of these areas carries a distinctive set of values and we can establish limits, targets and other methods to make sure we provide for these values and achieve our overall plan objectives.

3 - Water quantity and quality allocation limits

Arguably the most important parts of the catchment plan for the end-user are the water allocation and quality limits. They set thresholds for how much water can be taken from a Water Management Area and what kind of condition it needs to be in. Allocation limits will be set for each of the three WMAs in the Waipaoa catchment. In addition, the Poverty Bay Flats WMA requires a little more detail in how we manage water quantity allocation and this reflects differences in the sources of water, their allocable volumes and use issues. For this

reason we have divided the Poverty Bay Flats into four water quantity zones that provides separate limits for each. This allows Council to better manage fresh water on the flats. The four zones are:

- Te Arai Surface Water;
- Waipaoa Surface Water (including Waipaoa Gravels and side streams);
- Poverty Bay Deep Aquifers;
- Poverty Bay Shallow Aquifers.

Water quality limits can be set for each of the Water Management Areas without the need for further subdivision. The quality tables identify the attributes to be measured, how they are measured, the numeric limit that is set, what that means in plain English (narrative state) and where it sits in the National Objectives Framework (A,B,C or D). The tables are essentially what comes out of the broad limit-setting process discussed during the last two FWAG hui. For each of the Water Management Areas, we clarify what we are aiming for through the prioritisation of values. In the case of the Poverty Bay Flats, it is to maintain high reliability of supply for abstraction (irrigation, water supply), moderate water quality and maintain a bottom line for ecosystem health. Based on water quality monitoring data from our monitoring sites, we know whether we need to maintain the water quality state for each of the attributes or improve it. The National Objectives Framework gives us options for each attribute measured so we can select a banding range that is most appropriate to the prioritised values.

We will continue to review the limits alongside our assessment and testing of the monitoring and attribute data so it is likely that the current limits will be updated accordingly.

4 - Special Management Zones (previously Special Interest Areas)

Special Management Zones are basically a range of non-regulatory methods bundled together to form discrete, spatially defined projects related to key water quantity and quality issues within a catchment. These projects are another important way of making sure we achieve our objectives and outcomes. They are proposed as collaborative ventures and as such continue to articulate the collaborative spirit of the freshwater planning process.

Without an enforceable component, non-regulatory approaches are often under-utilised or not used at all in an RMA planning context. The purpose of Special Management Zones is to re-package our 'other methods' so they are SMARTER:

- **S**pecific,
- **M**easurable,
- **A**chievable,
- **R**elevant,
- **T**ime-bound,
- **E**valuated and
- **R**eviewed

As discrete projects, we can tackle the key freshwater issues in the Waipaoa catchment with the best chance of resolving them. They are also more likely to gain funding support through Council's annual planning process.

Currently, Special Management Zones are organised according to whether they are water allocation or quality related and sit within the two sections on limits. For water allocation, we have identified one project related to Council's water take at Waingake. Other projects identified are related to water quality issues.

Each Special Management Zone outlines the issue that needs to be managed, the project objective, methods of implementation, estimated timeframes and how the results will be monitored / reviewed. Timeframes vary as do resources required. Some projects may require generations to see benefits from and considerable long-term investment. Others may require more immediate attention (Waikanae and Taruheru Rivers) so there is a need to prioritise each zone for implementation accordingly. We will continue to work with members of the FWAG to help develop details around each project so the foundations for implementation are prepared prior to plan notification.