



Freshwater Record of Meeting

Commerce and Industry Special Interest Group Workshop

Wednesday, 7 April 2022, 10am

Attendees:

Amber Archer	Contact Energy
Rob Nichol	Contact Energy
Nicola Hine	First Gas
Bruce Colgan	OMV
Evelien Wallace	Todd Energy
Allen Stancliff	Fish and Game
Jacob Morrison	Fish and Game
Jen Roberts	Forest and Bird
Paul Churchill	Silver Fern Farms
Jamie Coburn	Silver Fern Farms
Anne Probert	Venture Taranaki
Matt Lamb	Venture Taranaki
Adam Wood	Beach Energy
Maui Matthews	Taranaki District Health Board

Attendees to the workshop 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 discussed 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 later in the year.

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.

Ms Marcroft shared feedback from a series of freshwater community workshops. She identified key themes from community feedback and noted that the primary outcomes identified so far were: swimmability; freshwater that supports biodiversity; social responsibility and kaitiakitanga; and water that was clean, fresh and clear. A variety of secondary responses were also noted such as reduced pollution and contamination. Attendees were directed to the Council's website for a copy of the full report.

Workshop attendees had the opportunity to articulate their aspirations for the region's freshwater by writing or drawing details that illustrate what freshwater in Taranaki might look like. Below is a summary of the ideas raised:

- **Healthy, resilient ecosystems** including the protection and improvement of habitat and looking after threatened species. The interconnectedness of the health of the water and health of the community was noted.
- **Sustainability** - environmentally and economically sustainable use of water is important. Sustainable water allocations and efficient water use informed by better data about where "pinch points" are in terms of water quality and availability were also noted as important elements to capture within the vision.
- **Future focus** – whether it be as a resource for business or providing safe swimming spaces for our children, the importance of having a future focused vision was noted. Water must be suitable and available for both current and future uses.
- **Recognition and protection of cultural values** including integrating Māori knowledge, communicating and seeking values from different groups and ensuring holistic approaches to wai management.
- **Working together** with communities, industry, iwi and others to deliver good outcomes for our wai including community education is important.



- **Accessibility** in terms availability for all users was also noted by attendees. Industry needs water, but wishes to do so in a manner that is connected with the community and the environment.
- **Vision needs to satisfy social and economic aspects** of water use.

Climate change was recognised as an important driver of change. Industry (and others) need to recognise and adapt accordingly. It was acknowledged that things will need to be done differently and time to transition was important (30-40 yrs).

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.

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

Participants made these points in relation to what prioritising the health and wellbeing of the waterway might include:

Better and more transparent water quality and water use data to help inform decision-making. The importance of transparent water use reporting and good baseline data about waterway health was considered critical.

Robust waterway monitoring including relevant cultural components and involving local iwi in policy development was noted.

Preventing pollution and further damage to waterways including ensuring that flow and discharge limits are adhered to, and that assets in and around waterways are properly maintained.

Wide community engagement and education about our waterways and how to make improvements including the opportunity for community and business to voluntarily make changes before regulation is imposed.



Industry needs to demonstrate best practice regarding water take and use and be constantly looking for continuous improvements and efficiencies. It is also important to plan future investment around improvements.

Challenges and opportunities

Conflicting needs among different water users was noted as a particular challenge including the need to balance commercial use against the intrinsic value of water.

Participants also highlighted the complex nature of water quality issues and noted the possibility of perverse outcomes when hard limits are applied. Participants acknowledged the importance of clear limits and targets and noted having them within an agile framework would be a good way forward.

The opportunity to collect better water quality data and communicate it more effectively to enable more efficient and effective decision-making was considered important. Working alongside Council to promote continuous improvement could be part of this. Innovation in the way things are done is critical.

Working alongside the community to help build their understanding of Te Mana o te Wai and what it means for freshwater will also be important, as will working with the community, iwi and others to jointly establish priorities for our region's freshwater.

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?”**

Better data. Participants 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
- Understanding how much water is actually available
- Understanding where water is currently allocated.

Availability of data would drive more efficient use of water and provide opportunities to innovate and ensure less burden on catchments that are under pressure.

Water storage was part of the solution. It was noted that it takes time and significant capital to transition to new water storage, and time would be needed to facilitate any



changes. Innovation in the storage and collection of rainwater and utilising stormwater were also considered important.

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

- Facilitate voluntary water give-backs (possibly incentivising this)
- Shared water takes
- Proportionally lower all existing water takes
- Allocate water via ballot
- Change water take permitted activity levels
- Pricing to recognise water scarcity
- Introduce “environmental compensation” for giving back to the river.

Pros and cons of the various options were discussed including the challenge of prioritising the needs of one group over another. It was noted that a ballot system would be difficult to manage as not having confidence of supply impacts the ability to plan and operate in the long-term.

Improve water use efficiency. Ideas discussed for facilitating this included:

- Having incentives to promote water efficiencies
- Companies implementing programmes to realise water efficiencies
- Sharing between companies on water efficiency (some are doing better than others)
- Technological solutions such as improved water metering and reporting to offer real-time data or other info to support more efficient water use.

Mr Ruru wrapped up the session by thanking attendees for their contribution and outlining the next steps in the engagement process.

The meeting closed at 1pm.