



REGIONAL FORUM

People Water and Land – *Te Mana o te Tangata, te Wai, te Whenua*

RECORD OF WORKSHOP

Thursday 19 and Friday 20 September 2019

Phase 2, Workshop 5 held at Waiau Town and Country Club, Tuatapere

Present

David Diprose
Kelsi Hayes
Bernadette Hunt
Joyce Kolk
Jade Maguire
Paul Marshall
Phil Morrison (deputy chair)

Lisa Pearson
Estelle Pera-Leask
Michelle Roberts
Hayden Slee
Fiona Smith (chair)
Vaughan Templeton

Apologies

Ewen Pirie
Mata Cherrington
Bernadette Hunt (Day 2)
Estelle Pera-Leask (Day 2)

Consensus was reached on:

1. That the Regional Forum would provide advice for Council to consider in relation to its submission to the Ministry of the Environment on the *Action for Healthy Waters* discussion document;
2. That the advice would note the forum's concern that any exclusion of any waterbody or catchment, including the Waiau, from the requirements laid out in the proposed revised National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management would undermine the principle of Te Mana o te Wai;
3. To seek clarification on the definition of Te Mana o te Wai used in the discussion document;
4. That a working group of Fiona Smith, Phil Morrison, Jade Maguire, Lisa Pearson and Paul Marshall would finalise the wording of the advice to be included in Council workshop papers on 10 October 2019.

The group consensus aligned with the guidance laid out in Regional Forum Terms of Reference.

Other areas of discussion:

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Estelle Pera-Leask opened the workshop with a Karakia and the Chair, Fiona Smith led a discussion amongst the Forum members as to their experiences since the last workshop in Invercargill in July.

Overview of Phase Two of the Forum's work

Rhiannon Suter, Regional Forum Lead, outlined the approach for the second phase of the forum's work, which is focused on Southlander's values and objectives for freshwater. This workshop (Workshop 5) is the first of three workshops in Phase Two, which will conclude in February 2020. Following the conclusion of Phase Two, the Regional Forum will provide a report to Council. This report will accompany the Values and Objectives package and will include:

- A reflection of understanding of the community's values and objectives for freshwater
- A reflection of understanding of the challenge for Southland based on the current and future state of freshwater as defined by the draft freshwater objectives.
- Areas of focus for Phase Three
- Any recommendations for immediate practical action

Rhiannon outlined that the Forum could expect to receive information on Iwi values and analysis of the current and future state in November, and information on Iwi Draft Freshwater Objectives in February.

The Essential Freshwater Package

A short overview of the Essential Freshwater Package was provided, noting that Council is still analysing the information and considering its implications for Southland, as well as for the work of the Forum and Council.

It was noted that the work of the Forum remained important and that the Forum is operating within a dynamic environment which requires the team to be responsive and agile. The work of the Forum, to produce a package of advice for Council and Te Ao Marama (via the Strategy and Policy Committee of the Regional Council), on the limits and methods needed to deliver the community's aspirations for freshwater, remains essential. The forum may choose to focus their guidance on alternative methods if some are directed as outlined in the package (e.g. Farm Environment Plans).

It is noted that the Strategy and Policy Committee of the Regional Council will include mana whenua appointee(s) after the forthcoming Council elections, the recommendations from which are brought to full Council meetings for adoption.

The timeframe to deliver a operational plan including limits and methods remains 2025.

Values and objectives package

Rachael Millar, lead for the Values and Objectives workstream, presented the community values and objectives package. It was noted that this package will only be complete with the addition of the Iwi values and objectives which Te Ao Marama are working on, as well as the analysis of the current and

future state of freshwater in relation to the draft Freshwater Objectives. The information presented will be published following the completion of the peer review process. This is expected in November.

The results of the Share your Wai engagement process and the confirmation of the community values was presented.

Ned Norton and Karen Wilson, co-science leads on the Kaititui Technical Team then led the forum members through an exploration of the technical process through which attributes are selected for each value and draft freshwater objectives established.

Periphyton was considered as one attribute important as an indicator of river and lake ecosystem health. This example was used as just one of the 35 attributes selected as relevant to water health.

The Forum members considered the factors which cause periphyton growth, including natural state conditions and levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the water caused by run off from different sources. The importance of the location of the river and lake within the catchment, as well as seasonality were discussed as factors affecting levels of periphyton. Using visual depictions matched with concentration values for periphyton the group discussed where the A, B, C and D bands would sit for this draft freshwater objective. It was discussed that as a result of to the range of natural conditions across the region that there will not be one draft freshwater objective for each FMU, but instead different objectives based on water body classification reflecting community values expressed within existing planning documents and through the Share your Wai community engagement process.

It was questioned how didymo fits into the wider periphyton classification system. As this is something which the National Policy Statement provides little direction on, the Kaititui team will consider this further.

In looking ahead to the current state analysis, which the group will receive in November, the Forum members were interested to know whether trend analysis as to whether conditions are improving or declining at a particular location will be available. Monitoring data will enable analysis based on 2010, 2016 and 2019 conditions.

Barriers and Drivers for Positive Change

The Forum members considered the most significant drivers or factors likely to help create positive change in Southland's freshwater that the community wants to see and the barriers they believe will make it difficult to achieve these changes. They worked to cluster these ideas into groups. The following themes emerged:

Drivers for positive change

- The role of the community as kaitiaki and guardians of the land
- Education and capacity building
- Regulation and rules (if well designed and implemented)
- Financial assistance (grants or lending mechanisms) to assist investment in practical measures of which riparian planting is just one example
- Collaboration and partnership

- Public opinion and peer pressure can influence all actors which need to change, both urban and rural
- The role of research and technology

Barriers to positive change

- Financial and economic costs of implementing required changes
- Impractical rules and regulations, which are unclear, difficult to implement or have unintended consequences
- Failure of bureaucracy, including lack of adequate compliance monitoring and inadequate consequences for non-compliance
- Lack of knowledge of what changes need to be made, including lack of location/ situation specific knowledge
- Psychological processes which lead to denial or blaming
- Lack of understanding of Te Tiriti o te Waitangi and Te Mana o te Wai

There was a discussion of the barriers and drivers for change within the freshwater management units. Some of the issues raised include:

With regard to the Waiau FMU, the importance of social licence to operate for users of water was discussed, as well as the potential for regulatory mechanisms reward good performance, for example, through reducing compliance costs.

With regard to the Aparima FMU, the role of rural contractors in affecting water quality, both positively and negatively was discussed. The impact of outdated urban residential water infrastructure was also noted.

With regard to the Mataura FMU, the potential for Southland to lead in bringing together rural-urban groups to create change was raised, as was the impact of short election cycles and under-resourced runanga in limiting the ability of the community to take a longer term perspective.

With regard to the Oreti FMU, the potential impact of removing costs for consenting on initiatives which might have a positive impact (e.g. constructed wetland) was floated as well as the positive impact which farm environment plans can have. The possibility of urban environment plans was also discussed.

This work will be utilised as the forum puts together their report for the Council and Te Ao Marama at the end of the second phase of their work.

Public session

Around 120 people packed into the Waiau Town and Country Club for the Regional Forum's public session.

The evening was kicked off with a short overview of the Government's Essential Freshwater package by Environment Southland's acting chief executive Vin Smith. He outlined the possible impacts of the

current proposal as it stands, and encouraged those concerned to make a submission. He highlighted that this was a Government proposal and not an Environment Southland proposal, but that the overall intention (to improve waterways) was in line with the aspirations of both council and the community.

Those attending were invited to ask questions. They were:

- What are the implications of aluminium dross in Waiau catchment?
- Will Environment Southland support the removal of the Manapouri Power Scheme from the exemption list?
- According to the Regulatory Impact Statement 'other parties' listed as affected by the exemption decision are noted as 'not applicable'. What about the costs on 'other' parties?
- How might Meridian be required to release water under the proposed wording of the exemption?
- What are the costs? Opportunity for organic innovation and economic opportunities. How do we encourage the Government to support more organics?

The attendees were seated at tables with a Regional Forum member at each. This enabled the Forum members to discuss any issues and hear from people directly regarding their values for the Waiau.

Two questions were posed by facilitator Barbara Nicholas, which were discussed at the tables.

The first was "What do you love about the Waiau catchment?"

Regional Forum members reported back, with many comments receiving agreement from around the room and similar themes emerged from each table. They were:

- The need to restore the health of the river and increase the minimum flow
- Community identity is based around the river...when the river is sick, the community is sick
- People want to be able to go kayaking, rafting, swimming, fishing, horse riding, skinny dipping; they want the ability to enjoy the river
- People love the tranquillity of the river, the hunting
- Loss of fishing
- The river doesn't flood as much as it used to
- Problem with low flow and increased amounts of algae (toxic)/didymo
- Agreement that it's still a good place with good people
- We need to get the health of the river back

Second question was "What can be done to help the health of the river/catchment?"

Ideas from each of the tables were shared with the wider group. They included:

- Better education about what's going on in the lower Waiau. Think about the whole Waiau
- Tax incentives would be good for planting and biodiversity
- Stop tourists polluting the river
- More good management practices on farms
- Move gravel to help the flow in certain areas
- More public access to river
- Managing riparian buffers better
- Improving wastewater schemes in the area
- Reducing plastic as it washes up on beaches in the area
- Technology to increase energy efficiency and improve wastewater schemes
- We want to celebrate what we've still got

Forum chair Fiona Smith closed the session by thanking all those for coming out, and encouraging everyone to keep engaged with the work of the forum. She commented that forum members want to hear their concerns, so people should feel free to get in touch with any of them at any time.

Field Trip – on the Waiau

Forum members were taken on two jet boats to see a range of issues from water level. Key stops included the Orauea River *E.coli* project where they were told about how farmers in the Orauea catchment were looking at bacteria levels during high flows; the Waiau River Riparian Project which supports farmers with a 50% subsidy for fencing along the Waiau River and tributaries; the indigenous beech forest on the right bank of the river; gravel extraction and gravel accumulation; and stream bank erosion areas.

Following the field trip, forum members discussed the issues they had seen and acknowledged the impact these would have on community values. Regional Forum members were also particularly impressed with the community action already underway and could see how these sort of initiatives will go a way to improving the state of their local waterways.

Key messages from the Regional Forum members

- Tuatapere was a great place for us to understand community values. We heard first-hand just how important the river is to their community.
- The well-supported public session provided us with authentic and emotional feedback on the values that are held for the Waiau and really allowed us to connect to the community values we had read about earlier in the day.
- As part of understanding the communities values, we are keen to explore and understand the Iwi perspectives on freshwater which we will receive in November.
- Local community efforts we heard about were inspirational. Many groups and communities are focusing their efforts and looking after their own patch.
- We expect that the same passion is likely to run deep in other catchments across the region, and we look forward to hearing more of the communities values for water at our next workshop in Winton in November.
- We were lucky enough to spend time down on the river, building our understanding of a whole river system and seeing first hand some of the concerns we were told about by members of the community.
- Following a briefing and discussion on the Government's Essential Freshwater package, we understand just how important our role is for achieving the communities aspirations for freshwater.
- Having spent the first four workshops getting to know each other, learning about the region and what our role is, we are excited to move into phase two and really get stuck into our work. We will produce our first report for Council at the end of Phase Two in the first quarter of 2020.

The next workshops is scheduled for Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 November in Winton. This workshop will focus on the current and future state of the environment, and Iwi values. Details of the public session are yet to be finalised.