

About the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

This page explains the role and requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014.

- [Read the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014](#) (amended 2017)

What the Freshwater NPS is about

National policy statements are issued by central government to provide direction to local government about how they carry out their responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 when it comes to matters of national significance.

The matter of national significance to which the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (Freshwater NPS) applies is the management of fresh water through a framework that considers and recognises Te Mana o te Wai as an integral part of freshwater management.

What it requires

In a nutshell, the Freshwater NPS directs regional councils, in consultation with their communities, to set objectives for the state of fresh water bodies in their regions and to set limits on resource use to meet these objectives.

Some of the key requirements of the Freshwater NPS are to:

- consider and recognise Te Mana o te Wai in freshwater management
- safeguard fresh water's life-supporting capacity, ecosystem processes, and indigenous species
- safeguard the health of people who come into contact with the water
- maintain or improve the overall quality of fresh water within a freshwater management unit
- improve water quality so that it is suitable for primary contact more often
- protect the significant values of wetlands and outstanding freshwater bodies
- follow a specific process (the national objectives framework) for identifying the values that tāngata whenua and communities have for water, and using a specified set of water quality measures (called attributes) to set objectives

- set limits on resource use (eg, how much water can be taken or how much of a contaminant can be discharged) to meet limits over time and ensure they continue to be met
- determine the appropriate set of methods to meet the objectives and limits
- take an integrated approach to managing land use, fresh water and coastal water
- involve iwi and hapū in decision-making and management of fresh water.

The above list is not exhaustive.

For more detailed information about the requirements of the Freshwater NPS see [Guidance on implementing the Freshwater NPS](#) or read the [Freshwater NPS](#) itself.

How it is being implemented

The Freshwater NPS must be fully implemented no later than 31 December 2025 (or 31 December 2030 in certain circumstances).

If regional councils could not implement the Freshwater NPS by the end of 2015 they must have prepared a programme of time-limited stages to meet the 2025 date, known as a progressive implementation programme, and make this publicly available. They must report annually on their progress towards their progressive implementation programme.

Read about [Regional councils' implementation programmes](#).

Support and guidance for implementation

The Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Primary Industries are providing guidance to support councils, iwi, and other people involved in implementing the Freshwater NPS in their local communities.

The guidance includes a range of:

- online resources that explain what needs to be done at different stages of the freshwater planning process
- publications that provide more detail for the people involved, to help them through the various stages.

See the [Guidance on implementing the Freshwater NPS](#).