

Essential Freshwater Iwi Pānui

This pānui provides an update on the central government's recent Essential Freshwater announcements. It is not an exhaustive description of the new policy and legislation, rather, it highlights some main points. In general, the objectives of the central government's Essential Freshwater package are to:

- stop further degradation of our freshwater;
- start making immediate improvements so water quality improves within five years; and
- reverse past damage to bring our waterways and ecosystems to a healthy state within a generation.



Essential Freshwater Package:

The government recently released the following documents, available via the Ministry for the Environment website:

1. National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-FW)
2. Stock Exclusion Regulations (under Section 360 of the Resource Management Act)
3. National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)

The first two documents listed above have rules that came into effect from early September 2020. However, some of those rules have different timelines as to when they will be enforced. For example, the stock exclusion rules provide time for people to fence off their waterways. Depending on the stock type, they have between 2023 - 2025 to have those waterways fenced.

The third document (NPS-FM) has policies that Horizons Regional Council and iwi will need to consider. Together we can then devise ways to implement those policies, which will ultimately require a plan change to amend or introduce new rules and policies to the One Plan. This Plan change must be notified no later than 31 December 2024.

What does Essential Freshwater mean for iwi and hapū?

There are a number of aspects within the NPS-FM and NES-FW that direct or encourage Council to actively involve iwi and hapū in the following ways:

- resource consent applicants will require assessment and advice from iwi and hapū on a number of new consents;
- freshwater management which includes applying Te Mana o te Wai (throughout the decision making and policy development process);
- applying mātauranga Māori within freshwater management; and
- further protection of Māori values in regards to freshwater including the compulsory value mahinga kai.

Council recognises this mahi as an opportunity to build our relationships and work closely with iwi and hapū to ensure that your values are reflected throughout this process. Beyond the immediate needs, it is also a chance to develop a shared, long-term vision for freshwater.

OUR Freshwater FUTURE

Since 2014 central government's NPS-FM has undergone a series of reviews and iterations which the Council has been responding to. Prior to the 2020 update, Council had introduced an implementation programme called Our Freshwater Future: a collaborative, community-driven approach where iwi would take an active role in governance and the general process.

Changes introduced through the new NPS-FM reinforce this approach so that iwi are more closely involved in a wider range of matters, including governance. Our hope is that this will result in outcomes that better reflect te mana o te wai and te mana o te iwi. This will be a significant body of work for the Council, and for iwi, within a compressed timeframe. This work began earlier this year and will continue through to 2024. It will inform changes to the One Plan, and our future 'business as usual' approach.

Council acknowledge that iwi and hapū have varying interests and capacity to engage in these processes. Council would like to develop, with iwi and hapū, options to facilitate and support a partnership approach to implementing Our Freshwater Future.

Next steps

As outlined in this pānui there are many moving parts and a journey ahead for our freshwater over the next four years and into the future. Council intends to follow up this pānui with Hui-ā-Iwi (regional hui on 12-13 November 2020) to continue to explore this kaupapa.



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