

Report to the Collaborative Stakeholder Group – for information

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To: Collaborative Stakeholder Group
From: Interim Chairperson – Bill Wasley
Subject: Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River
Section: **For Information**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the legal status of the Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River (the vision and strategy) within the national statutory planning document hierarchy.

Recommendations:

1. That the report “The Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River” (Doc 3130259 dated 6 August 2014) be received for information.

Overview

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (NPS-FW) was recently amended and directs regional councils to establish objectives and set limits for freshwater in their regional plans and how this should be done

The Collaborative Stakeholder Group (CSG) will be discussing how to meet the requirement of identifying values as set out in the NPS-FW at their workshop in August 2014. The values conversation will need to take account of the vision and strategy, as it contains objectives that express values.

How the NPS-FW relates to the vision and strategy

The Ministry for the Environment website¹ on the NPS-FW outlines the relationship between the NPS-FW and the Vision and Strategy. It states the vision and strategy:

“...prevails over any provisions in the NPS-FW that are inconsistent with it. The vision and strategy requires the Waikato River to be restored according to tikanga and that its entire length be safe to swim in and take food from. This requirement prevails over the national bottom lines for human health of the NPS-FW”.

How the vision and strategy relates to other planning documents

The Waikato-Tainui Raupatu claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 states in section 5 (1) The vision and strategy is intended by Parliament to be the primary direction-setting document for the Waikato Rivers and activities within its catchment affecting the Waikato

¹ <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/nps/freshwater-management.html>

River. In Section 12(1) it states the vision and strategy prevails over any inconsistent provision in a) a national policy statement; and b) a New Zealand coastal policy statement.

Conclusion

The NPS-FW are at the forefront of decision makers, councils and stakeholder/community groups minds when considering setting objectives and limits for freshwater and how to do this.

The Waikato and Waipa river catchments are unique in that the vision and strategy applies to these catchments. The vision and strategy prevails over any provisions in the NPS-FW that are inconsistent with it. It was also intended by parliament that the vision and strategy by the primary direction-setting document for the Waikato and Waipa rivers and activities within these catchments.

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