

# Report of Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee Meeting 15.6.17

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5-9pm, Pātaka Art + Museum

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## Summary

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### Overview

**Meeting Attendees** **Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee:**  
Barbara, Dale, Diane, David, Jennie, Larissa, John G, John M, Naomi, Sharli-Jo, Stu  
(Chair), Warrick, Hikitia  
**Apologies:** Richard

**Project Team:**  
Alastair (Project Manager), Suze, Murray, Turi, Grace, Nicci, Hayley, Brent, Ned  
Facilitator: Isabella

**Visitors:**  
Wellington Water Limited: Paul Gardiner, Rebecca Maplesden, Mark Kinvig  
(Apologies: Colin Crampton)

**Members of the Public:**  
Cr Peter Gilbert  
Rex Bradley

**Meeting purpose** The purposes of this meeting were to:

1. Build understanding of the policy framework and the draft proposed policy package
2. Make a consensus decision about which elements Committee wish to see taken forward.
3. Get introduced to Wellington Water’s Three Waters Strategy

The first and third purposes were achieved; the second was deferred to the next meeting.

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## Committee Decisions and actions to do

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**Committee Decisions** No decisions were made at this meeting.

**Actions:**

1. Project team highlight what in draft proposed policy package is already in the works or status quo
2. Project team add Whitireia area objective dot to the WMU map as noted
3. Project team add Daylighting Streams and Reducing Infiltration & Inflow to the draft policy package

## Meeting notes

### Session 1 –Welcome, karakia, housekeeping

Stu Farrant, Hikitia Ropata- TAOPWC

Hikitia gave the karakia and Stu welcomed everyone including a large contingent from Wellington Water as well as some members of the public.

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### Session 2: Policy in Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua

(Hayley Vujcich, GRWC, Alastair Smail, GWRC)

See presentation [“Strawmen policy packages”](#) and [map](#) in Whaitua Committee webpage

This session had two purposes:

1. Build understanding of the policy framework and the draft proposed policy package
2. Make a consensus decision about which elements Committee wish to see taken forward.

The first purpose was made the focus of the session and the second deferred.

Alastair presented first, talking through objectives and limits in the whaitua. See slides 1-5 in the presentation.

There was considerable discussion from Alastair’s presentation. Some key themes are below.

- Words, terms, concepts**
- Objectives, high-level objectives, limits, administration points, monitoring, loads, concentrations, and other terms were explained. See the presentation (policy framework diagram) and the glossary. Alastair’s hand-drawn graph is at Appendix 1 and the presentation version at slide 5.
  - It was noted that the map’s green dots are indicative / illustrative only of water bodies where Committee should set objectives.
  - One observation was that there should be an objective created for open coast water quality around Whitireia, currently lacking a dot in that overall area.
  - ACTION: this will be added to the map.
- Failure?**
- Several times people discussed what happens when or if we fail – i.e. if water quality gets worse.
  - While Stu is unlikely to be thrown in prison (for this), it constitutes breaking the law (RMA) and there are consequences for the regional council.

Committee were referred to the events around Environment Canterbury for an illustration of this.

- Initially, failure to meet a water quality objective will trigger a review of the limit and the management regime (scale depends on the circumstances)

**Worse than now?**

- People asked what reference points were for various considerations – such as reducing contaminants.
- People highlighted that the BAU is highly likely to show a dramatically worsening state of water quality, much driven by developments on which the proverbial ship has sailed.
- Alastair explained that the status quo as the reference points for reduction in contaminants, and that given consented new developments will contribute a lot, we need to make that back somehow.

**Monitoring & accounting**

- There was discussion of monitoring (for enforcement, and for achieving objectives), also for accounting. Please see the glossary and FMU map.
- There was general recognition that monitoring for enforcement was essential; this will be discussed later.

**Major shift in approach**

- Alastair emphasised the significance of the whitua work: until now, major planning decisions have been made ad hoc, consent by consent. Catchments' water quality suffers death by a thousand cuts.
- What we are doing is lifting the decision-making to a catchment-scale planning level, based on water quality outcomes.
- This is a really big step forward.
- The permissions regime (including consents) will drop naturally out of this because the outcomes and objectives will have been set, and an approach of summing all the sources of contamination in the catchment.
- Because the big decisions will be made at the catchment level, it gives certainty: when Josephine Bloggs wants to do an activity that creates discharge to water she knows what her activity has to fit within.
- There are currently no meaningful outcomes nor management regime for water quality in Wellington. We are better in NZ at doing this for quantity (water takes), but discharges are a newer space.

**Wriggle room**

- Flowing on from the discussion about a shift in approach, there was discussion about how the current state of affairs is, technically, "illegal": lower-level planning and operations are not implementing the directions set above it.
- There was recognition that the simple fact of its being "illegal" clearly does not drive improvement, and Committee members noted the contribution of improved institutional attitudes and cultures - an important complement to the WIP which can only really target one "leg" of the three-legged stool (infrastructure investment, local government planning, regional planning).

**Implementation considerations**

- There were lots of questions about the "nuts and bolts" of applying policy tools to achieve change. In general these were held over for the next discussion, because this one was about the top part of the policy framework. Topics raised included:
  - Equity and fairness of policy
  - Monitoring and enforcement – esp. point-source vs diffuse sources of contamination
  - Rates increases and other ways to pay for improvement

- Describing discharges as rights (pros, cons)
- Financial tools such as bonds for risky developments (any developments?)
- Effect of spatial caps on contamination (limits)
- Performance standards for subdivision impacts
- Use of consents, incl. for public bodies (such as NZTA)

- How much better, how soon, for a place?**
- People acknowledged that rates and public affordability is the main determinant of how quickly contaminant loads could be reduced. The main sources are (controlled by) public agencies - so there's not the direct "polluter & beneficiary pay" dynamic in other catchments.

Hayley Vujcich (GWRC) took over for the second part of the presentation (remaining slides), introducing the proposed draft policy package for Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua. The project team had decided not to look in detail into the policy packages this evening, but to do an introduction and go deeper on the 29<sup>th</sup> June Committee meeting.

Hayley noted questions about what is already on the cards or being done (e.g. policies in the PNRP).

ACTION: highlight in the proposed draft policy package what is status quo / already happening

There was discussion during and after her presentation, following some themes from earlier discussion. Some key themes included:

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- Bits of the package**
- There were discussions about how different parts of the package related to one another and where "real world" phenomena fitted. Examples raised included a stream receiving both wastewater and stormwater, fish passage, waterways management, floodplain management, opportunistic improvements such as Victoria Street Wellington (missed opportunity) and Riverlink (opportunity being taken).
  - It was noted that daylighting streams was missing from the package and could be added.
  - ACTION: add daylighting streams to draft package
- Major change**
- The discussion about wriggle room recurred around the regulation of discharges. Hayley observed that this is now possible with a national-level requirement we can use to create an outcome-based regime to control things affecting water quality.
  - There were observations that the cascade of policy from the top through implementing agencies needs to be really clear with rock-solid limits.
  - It also means pulling up the rules and pathway (progressive reduction of contaminants) into the plan so everyone knows what the long-term requirement is.
  - Members commented that the current ability for the intent to get lost in translation must be removed.

- Prohibited means No**
  - If a catchment is known to be already at its discharge limit (monitoring shows the level to be already on the line in the graph), and someone wants to do something that creates more discharge, they can't; that's prohibited. They won't be allowed to do their activity in this catchment unless they can show no increase in the catchment's level of contaminants.
- Review**
  - Regional Plans are reviewed every decade but with a long-term goal and description of the pathway (including with intermediate objectives) it will make the consenting process much clearer. Even with 35-year consents, conditions can be written that require progressive reduction of discharges.

At the next meeting, we will look into the proposed draft policy package in detail, with the aim of Committee making a consensus decision about developing it up further.

### Session 3 - Wellington Water's Three Waters Strategy

(Rebecca Maplesden, Wellington Water Ltd)

See [presentation](#) on *Whaitua Committee webpage*

This session was to introduce WWL's Three Waters Strategy.

Rebecca Maplesden, Principal Advisor (Strategy), presented to the Committee. Following this there was discussion, with Mark Kinvig and Paul Gardiner from WWL joining Rebecca at the front. Some themes included:

- Strategy & whaitua**
  - There were questions about the role of the strategy, and its role vis-à-vis instructions from the five councils and the role of the WIP. This is an area where WWL are exploring the different documents and other ways to define and steer roles and relationships.
  - WWL are trying to have a longer term conversation with councils, being quite proactive and aiming to take the three waters strategy to the next level in terms of influence.
  - Committee and WWL reps both observed the need to find ways that the whaitua work and strategy work can help each other achieve the shared outcomes. This will be an ongoing discussion.
  - The Strategy will hopefully have a full first draft in 1-2 months. There will be extensive consultation with partners. It was not clear if this would include the whaitua committee.
- Councillors vs asset managers**
  - People noted the different "shelf life" of elected officials vs infrastructure management organisations: 80-year or 100-year timeframes are of limited meaning on a 3-year election cycle. Members also observed the difficulty for the public in understanding infrastructure costs and innovation (i.e. methods other than building bigger pipes)
- Incentives and tools**
  - Members raised different tools being used elsewhere to change public thinking about water, such as water meters. WWL explained the "horses for courses" approach – different tools are more or less useful depending on the conditions of the catchment. E.g. where people are very extravagant with water, meters can be a good start, but deliver

<b>Funding model</b>	<p>low marginal benefits where use is already lower.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alastair asked about the prospect and impact of a different funding model for local water infrastructure other than rates with a sprinkling of development contributions. There was some discussion about different ways to do this (e.g. levy, user charges).</li> <li>People observed that Wellington is generally a low-charging region for development contributions but all parties acknowledged that the status quo funding model seems clearly unable to afford water quality improvement in a meaningful timeframe.</li> <li>Rebecca noted that the National Policy Statement on Urban Development may be a vehicle for changing funding models.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure capacity: block on development?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were questions from Committee about whether WWL says a clear No to councils seeking to develop more land where the infrastructure is near or at capacity.</li> <li>Mark described the type of conversations WWL has about whether councils have the additional funding for infrastructure in greenfield developments. He also noted the challenges with current development practice and infill, where greater density seems inevitably to mean greater load on infrastructure.</li> <li>Alastair added that stormwater from new developments is currently not controlled, and that there's an opportunity to assist WWL in managing this and bring regional planning into the game for urban development.</li> </ul>
<b>PCC's annual plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was a question about what the submissions to the annual plan had revealed about people's desires for wastewater. Dale reported that the question was worded to encourage aspirational responses, and submitters thought that the target should be more ambitious than proposed.</li> <li>However in the trade-offs question ("put dollars around that"), submitters' responses were unsurprisingly less ambitious. PCC is working through the costs and implications.</li> <li>Submissions received to the Annual Plan are now public – available on the PCC website.</li> </ul>
<b>Ongoing conversation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWL reps are keen to strengthen the relationship and deepen the conversation with TAOPWC, and were encouraged not to be strangers.</li> <li>Kara told Committee that Colin Crampton, WWL Chief Executive, was sad to miss this meeting but is full of anticipation for attending the next and having conversation with Committee members.</li> </ul>

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## Sessions 4 + 5 - Conversations update & AOB

- There were some brief updates and the acknowledged best update was from Warrick. He announced the arrival of his second son, to a round of applause.
- Stu informed Committee that there hadn't been demand for Committee-only sessions so far, but this was always an option that could be activated as soon as one person wished to have it.
- He reminded Committee that requests for this, and any other suggestions / complaints / questions could come anytime through him, Project Team, Isabella, or anonymously via the small black box.
- There was a brief summary of the WWTP field trip from Diane. She reported that people had learnt what WWL were aspiring for and what the issues were, and it was a generally interesting and worthwhile excursion.

Sharli gave the closing karakia and the meeting finished at 8.50pm.

**The next meeting of Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee is 29.6.17, 5 – 9pm, Newlands Community Centre. This will be our last meeting for a month, the next one is August 3.**

## Appendix 1:

Alastair's graph of reducing contaminant load over time

