

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee - Community Meeting on WIP recommendations (1)

SUBJECT Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee meeting with the community on their Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) recommendations

WHEN Tuesday 1 May 2018, 6:30-8:30PM

WHERE Kiwi Hall, Featherston

ATTENDEES

WHAITUA COMMITTEE Peter Gawith, Esther Dijkstra, Ra Smith, Colin Olds, Rebecca Fox, Vanessa Tipoki, Mike Birch, David Holmes, Phil Palmer

PROJECT TEAM SUPPORT Mike Grace, Jon Gabites, Kat Banyard, Horipo Rimene

COMMUNITY MEMBERS 60 members of the community attended the meeting.

Presentation from the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee presented on the contents of their WIP for approximately an hour. The presentation can be found [here](http://www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua-process/) or on the GWRC website at: <http://www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua-process/>.

Break out groups

People then split into groups to put together a list of questions they had. People were asked to highlight their top three which the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee would then respond to the whole meeting on. The questions are below. The key questions agreed by the group are in bold.

Group 1

- Will farm environment plans remain voluntary?
- Storage options - large scale community storage?
- Storage of excess winter water?
- What are the timeframes for research and science about Lake Wairarapa and Lake Onoke?
- How will the opening of Lake Onoke be affected if lake levels are set higher and there is a strong southerly storm?
- What happens if raising the minimum flows in the Upper Ruamāhanga and Waipoua Rivers doesn't work? What then?
- **What economic work has been done on the effect of reducing Category A groundwater takes?**
- What evidence do we have for declining fish life and is this related to declining water quality? How do we know this?

- **Do you have a position on the water use project and storage in general?**
- How will the opening of Lake Onoke work with conflicting demands of cultural eel harvest and flood events?
- Will urban people be treated the same as farmers?

Group 2

- When does the 10 years start?
- Why 10 year period before any changes are made?
- **If climate change is worse than predicted are there mechanisms/processes to facilitate change quickly?**
- Tree planting – focus on natives?
- **Individual farm monitoring for nutrient/sediment/ E.coli. What is available and what is the cost? Does GWRC have the resources for FMU work?**
- River management – saving flows?
- Are resources available for FMU work?
- What is to be done with water races?
- More detail on urban waste water.

Group 3

- Query re evidence re integration between Cat A groundwater and surface water. What is this?
- What is the science Greater Wellington use to determine this? Why say Cat A and surface water are linked?
- When was data gathered for the table on pg. 2? Inconsistencies to objectives. Is there a consistent method with bands/objectives?
- How do FMU's self-manage/regulate etc.?
- **How robust are data collection methods? Where from etc.?**
- What are the blank bits on the table? How did the objectives get determined?
- Management of urban takes compared to farm takes.
- Will we still be able to water stock? (Note cease take).
- **What monitoring will happen over the 10 year period? How will information be shared, impacts on community.**
- Could Greater Wellington reject our recommendations?
- What happens if the current government introduces a water tax?
- Talk about slowing down water in the catchment. How is this going to be done and what are the implications on flooding risk?
- Where does the funding for these proposals come from?
- Is there public access to our information - GW website/Wairarapa waterways?
- Is there data showing reduction/ change in MCI?
- What are the implications of gravel extraction - how does our WIP proposal deal with this?
- How do you incentivise wetland restoration on private land?
- How does the lifting of the lake levels affect agriculture?
- Sediment in Lake Onoke?

- How do you keep the water in Lake Onoke? – Stop banks etc. complex process of slowing the water down.
- **5m³ per farm per household.**
- **Water tanks- storage- yes.**
- Cross blading in rivers – does the Whaitua have a recommendation?
- When will the Committee set nutrient limits for FMUs, land-use vs farming practices in respect to leaching and when will they know?
- Who is initiating the Cat A discussion?

Group 4

- Tauanui and Turanganui should be considered as category 1? (Due to the effects on activities)
- To what extent have the economic impacts been taken into account?
- **Is the current category A regime not working? Why do we have further restriction?**
- **Who does investigation - GWRC or farmers?**
- What investment will come from outside the district?
- How will you slow the rivers down?
- How do we improve? What are the mitigations to improve MCI in rivers?

Group 5

- How are we coping with phosphorus levels in sediment?
- How are district councils going to be compliant with limits? How have they been involved in the process?
- What is happening for urban?
- **Where the equity between urban and rural?**
- What will the impacts on industry be? What will the economic impact on industry be? What will the economic impact of all changes be? People and jobs.
- **What economic research has been done? Specifically around Cat A groundwater as an example. Alternatives - want economic compensation?**
- What is the economic impact right now? Land values etc.
- How is Martinborough wastewater treatment meeting standards?
- Can we have large scale water storage?
- More agility/flexibility to provide on farm storage?
- Checking water testing – Cat A classifications.

Group 6

- Who has done modelling?
- Have swimming levels been re-adjusted? 90% by 2040. What % is working?
- What economic impact reports have been made by whaitua on the economic impact on minimum flows going from 50% to cease take?
- Has any water storage modelling been done to supplement minimum flow?
- Forestry-What has been done regarding harvesting and sediment?

- Plan stage to allow for farm storage?
- Slowing down river and accumulation of sediment. How slow do you have to slow the flow down?
- How slow does the river have to go to replenish the aquifers?
- Will there be funding for catchment communities?
- Featherston wastewater disposal when ground is saturated.
- What economic impact information was used by the whaitua when making the changes to minimum flows/category A?
- Was any water storage modelling done to supplement minimum flows?

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee response to questions

- Is the current Category A groundwater regime not working?
 - Fairness angle – the Committee believes everyone should be treated the same. If surface water users are required to stop taking water at minimum flow then groundwater users should be treated the same.
 - If people don't believe they have a Category A take they can talk to GWRC.
 - The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) requires over-allocation to be phased out.
 - The minimum flows were set to achieve a 90% protection of habitat objective. The Committee could have set it lower, or higher.
- Multiple questions around the economic assessment completed.
 - Modelling of the economic impacts has been done. The Committee didn't need the modelling to tell them there would be big economic impact.
 - The Committee is supporting storage at all levels. It is up to the community to have a conversation about what water storage they want.
 - The Committee is looking at other options as well e.g. improved water efficiency.
 - There will also be economic impacts if we do nothing.
 - A review will occur in 10 years' time. The Committee is encouraging people to make a change now and investigate other ways.
- Multiple questions around equity between town and country.
 - At minimum flow people will only be able to take for the health needs of people and for stock water. This applied to both urban and rural.
 - Industry have 7 years to stop taking from a community water supply. E.g. JNL.
 - Concern that for wastewater towns have much longer timeframes to remove their wastewater from water, while farmers have to do this now. The Committee wants wastewater to be considered as a resource.
- When will the Committee set load limits?
 - People will know the overall percentage reductions needed for each contaminant in each area. The load limits have been calculated from the freshwater objectives.
 - The Committee expect to have the numbers out to the community in the next few weeks.

- A lot of this work is based on modelled data. More monitoring will be needed in the future to ground truth numbers.
- Multiple questions about monitoring in the future.
 - We will need to monitor in each FMU.
 - GWRC will collect the majority of this information but the community can do their own monitoring as well.
 - Communities can do their own monitoring to find out where the problems are coming from.
 - People are welcome to contact Esther Dijkstra directly if they have questions about setting something up in their catchment.
 - Farmers already collect a lot of information. Water quality information can help them understand what's happening in their local waterway.
- How will community groups be funded? E.g. for planting or monitoring.
 - Talk to Esther Dijkstra who can assist in looking for funding for groups. There are some options available.
- Will GWRC pay for investigations for people to prove they are not Category A groundwater users?
 - GWRC is already completing a review of current Category A takes. This won't be completed in time for the WIP but any changes will be incorporated into the plan change that will follow.
- If climate change impacts happen quicker than anticipated, what options are there for change?
 - The freshwater objectives will be reviewed in 10 years' time.
 - Information will be collected regularly so we will have the information to see whether a change needs to be made.
 - Technological advances are likely to happen and change what we do in the future.
 - Ground truthing will occur and there will be new monitoring sites.
 - There are provisions in the RMA about adverse effects that give GWRC discretion if something was going wrong very quickly.
 - Individual farmers can do monitoring if they want. Water quality sampling kits are available and you can decide what you want tested.

Statements

Jamie Fallon – Federated Farmers

- Don't rush the process. People need to understand what it means for them. The Committee should produce a draft WIP so everything can be seen in one place.

David

- Thanks for all the hard work of the Committee. Support for the whaitua process and its outcomes.

Leo Vollebregt – Water Users Group

- Thanks for the Committees hard work. There is a part of the community not happy with the recommendations – particularly around the category A groundwater changes and the big financial impact. People have invested in irrigation based on community support which has now changed. An alternative is needed to make this change.