



**Report** 08.746  
**Date** 8 October 2008  
**File** B/05/06/03

**Committee** Regional Sustainability Committee  
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## Regional Water Strategy Update

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on progress with the development of the draft regional water strategy.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Background

Greater Wellington is currently working with the region's eight local authorities to develop a draft regional water strategy.

Councillors received a presentation on the proposed direction of water strategy on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2008. At that time it was noted that the following issues were driving the developing of the strategy:

- Water is a regionally strategic asset and regional leadership is required to set the direction for managing cross boundary / big picture issues.
- All parts of the region are experiencing summer water shortages and the projected population growth means the probability of summer shortfalls will increase unless we are more strategic about how we manage water.
- Water quality is generally deteriorating across the region and more needs to be done to reduce the adverse effects of indirect and direct discharges.

These issues have now been discussed in some detail with the local authorities and a further round of meetings with these authorities is currently underway (i.e. in October) to work through key issues for inclusion in the draft strategy.

## 4. Proposed content

The strategy will set the direction for managing the region's water resources. It will address the following:

- Metropolitan demand management (i.e. water conservation) and security of supply, including options for additional water supply and storage for Wellington, Porirua, Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt cities.
- Urban demand management and security of supply in Kapiti and the Wairarapa
- Environmental water quality, including rural issues relating to water quality and supply, particularly in the Wairarapa but also other parts of the region
- Linkages to the proposed iwi management plan for freshwater in the Wellington region.

It is envisaged that each of the local authorities will develop their own action plan under the strategy. These action plans will set out specific goals and actions (taken from the regional toolkit) for each local authority.

## 5. Strategic goals

There is broad support for a regional water strategy that sets out the high level vision and goals for the region but allows individual local authorities to develop their own action plans.

At this stage of development, the draft strategy promotes security of water supply *within the context of* demand reduction. It also promotes the concept of saving water now to defer (or even avoid) the cost of securing additional water supply through dams and aquifers.

The draft strategy currently has the following water savings goal for the region:

*To provide for future population and economic growth in the Wellington region through to 2025 with the same amount of water that we take from the rivers and aquifers that we take now.*

For the four cities this would equate to water savings of about 15% over the next seventeen years, or about 1% savings per year. Currently water usage in the four cities is about 400 litres/day/person and savings of 15% would require this to drop to 350 litres/day/person by 2025.

The draft strategy currently has the following water supply goal for the four cities:

*To restore the security of supply standard to a 2% (or a 1 in 50 year) probability of an annual water shortfall event by 2012.*

Kapiti Coast District Council currently has a similar security of supply standard.

These draft goals are currently being discussed with local authorities. Some local authorities wish to see a more aggressive water savings goal, with a view to deferring, and preferably avoiding, expenditure on expensive storage options (i.e. aquifers and dams). These local authorities are also conscious of the fact that seeking additional abstraction from rivers and aquifers will be subject to resource consents, which may or may not be granted. On the other hand, some local authorities see the need for additional water storage as a priority.

## 6. Choices about the best mix of water savings and supply options

The spectrum of choices around the best mix of water savings and water supply options facing the four cities is currently being explored. Kapiti and the Wairarapa have a similar range of choices – from more aggressively promoting water savings through to increasing water supply, although the actual options will be different.

The diagram below illustrates the approach we are taking to developing options. Note that the actual options are likely to change as the water strategy is developed.

**Spectrum of choices about the mix of water savings and supply options**



<b>Water savings measures</b>	<p><b>OPTION 1</b> e.g. Achieve 1% water savings per year by 2011 with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trigger-response summer water programme</li> <li>• Local authority initiatives as appropriate to each city</li> <li>• Incentivise key savings measures and promote voluntary water savings</li> </ul>	<p><b>OPTION 2</b> e.g. Achieve greater than 1% water savings per year by 2012/13 with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authority initiatives as appropriate to each city</li> <li>• Compulsory water metering</li> <li>• Voluntary savings</li> </ul>	<p><b>OPTION 3</b> e.g. Voluntary water savings measures only, (likely to achieve considerably less than our goal of 1% water savings).</p>
	<b>Water supply options</b>	<p><u>And</u> by 2011 complete all three short-term supply options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce Kaitoke weir minimum flows and</li> <li>• Central WN reservoir and</li> <li>• Raise SM Lakes</li> </ul> <p>Defer Upper Hutt aquifer until about 2025 Defer dam decision to at least 2032</p>	<p><u>And</u> by 2012 complete all three short-term options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central WN reservoir</li> <li>• Reduce Kaitoke weir minimum flows</li> <li>• Raise SM Lakes</li> </ul> <p>Defer Upper Hutt aquifer until about 2025 Defer dam decision to at least 2032</p>

## 7. Water meters

The ability to achieve significant water savings is a key issue for all local authorities. Many officials believe that installing water meters is the only way to get real water savings (potentially up to 15 or 20%).

However, some local authorities have been instructed by their councils not to promote the introduction of water meters in the short to medium term. This would make the proposed water savings goal difficult to achieve.

As a consequence, Greater Wellington is exploring the concept of a beefed up trigger-response summer water savings programme that has the potential to achieve a reasonably high level of water savings. However, local authorities would have to be willing to enforce compliance with summer water bans to achieve these savings.

## 8. Environmental water quality

The water strategy will also address improvements in water quality. These issues have been discussed in some detail with the Wairarapa councils and will be discussed with other local authorities in October. Improvements in water quality will be driven largely through the consenting process and the Regional Freshwater Plan, which is due for review in 2009. The timing of the regional water strategy is such that it will enable current discussions on environmental water quality to set the high-level goals and direction for the review of the Regional Freshwater Plan.

There may also be scope to develop specific water quality initiatives through the water strategy. For example, a total catchment approach for the Wairarapa (and potentially other areas) may be a useful way to promote catchment sensitive farming practices to reduce indirect discharges from agricultural land use.

## 9. Proposed timeframe

Date	Task
October 2008	Complete current round of discussions with TAs
November 2008	Revised draft strategy for consultation with TAs
November/December 2008	Combined GW / TAs meeting to review issues collectively and confirm next steps, scope of local authority action plans, etc
4 December 2008	Meet with Ara Tahi to explore linkages with proposed iwi freshwater management plan (building on preliminary discussions in November)
January/February 2009	Complete draft strategy, further consultation/discussions with TAs and possibly with mayors
February 2009	Progress update to Regional Sustainability Committee

Date	Task
24 February 2009	GW Council sign off for public consultation
March/April 2009	Public consultation on draft regional water strategy and the LTCCP

## 10. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. *Receives the report and notes its contents.*
2. *Notes the proposed timeline for the development of the Regional Water Strategy.*

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