

MEETING NOTES

SUBJECT	Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara Committee workshop notes
WHEN	Wednesday 12 May 2021, 9am-5pm
WHERE	NZ Deerstalkers Association (3 Collina Terrace, Thorndon)
ATTENDEES	Louise, Tui, Sean, Roger, Pat, Anya, Sam, Pete, Ros, Jonny, Hikitia
APOLOGIES	Wayne, Zoe, Kara, Naomi, Gabriel
PROJECT TEAM	Phill, Emily, Mike G., Matt, Kat, Richard, Mike T., Mark, Helli, James, Tim, Geoff, Dave, Te Rangimārie, Glen

12 May workshop notes – water quantity issues

KEY

D = decision.

A = action.

PT = project team.

R = idea for drafting a recommendation.

General business – upcoming Committee meetings

Sam opened the workshop with a karakia.

- Welcome to Helli who recently joined the GW Project Team in a science communication role.
- The Whaitua Committee recently met with Mauri Tuhono, the Biodiversity Framework group. They discussed principles that can be worked into the WIP narrative and are keen to continue conversations. Meeting notes from Paul Blaschke will be circulated when they are available.
- High level feedback from meetings with TAs is that current funding will fall short of delivering the Committee's short term recommendations.
- [Aotearoa New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy Consultation Document](#) released on 12 May discussing shortfall in funding.

A: PT to get all feedback from TAs by 28 May 2021 for Committee consideration.

D: The Committee will complete working through all the remaining WIP recommendations at the 26 May meeting ahead discussing FMUs and target attribute states in their June meetings.

D: In preparation for the FMU and target attribute state meeting:

- Want to discuss the principles of prioritisation first to then understand how the priorities play out in the target attribute states.

- Need to understand where we can have the most effect for the least cost, where we are failing to hold the line on water quality and where the easy wins are.

Te Mana o te Wai (TMOTW) framework

Introduction to TMOTW framework presented by Mike G:

- TMOTW was introduced through the 2020 NPS-FM with principles for decision-making that regional councils must give effect to.
- The hierarchy of principles is outlined below:
 1. Health of the water/waterbodies
 2. Health of people
 3. Economic and cultural use
- The principles can be applied to water quality and quantity issues.
- It requires mana whenua to have an active role in management and to set “ambitious but reasonable” visions.
- Wellington Water was not established to implement TMOTW, however, Taumata Arowai will be set up to deliver TMOTW.
- TMOTW can help the Committee to think in a new paradigm without being constrained by the limitations of the existing system.

Introduction to TKT’s adaptation of the TMOTW framework presented by Te Rangimārie:

- TKT has been looking at how TMOTW can be applied in practice. They want to be aspirational in setting limits for water and are committed to achieving them, while being cognisant of the working realities and practicalities.
1. Te mauri ora o te wai – the health of water
 - Water is the lifeblood of Papatuanuku and we are all descendents. The health of atua and tupuna are the first priority for mana whenua.
 - There’s a lack of monitoring data on mana whenua values to inform what the minimum flow should be. Kaitiaki observations show that water flows have been depleting.
 - Urgent action is needed to collect and analyse data to set minimum flows that provide for te mauri ora, TKT will recommend that a working group is set up for this mahi. Monitoring is needed for both consented and permitted takes to inform decision-making.
 - Need to take a precautionary approach until further information is available. Understanding of pressures if minimum flow were raised.
 2. Whakapapa – human health needs
 - Ensure continuation of whakapapa from atua to future generations, supply for essential needs now and future proof.
 - Essential needs of human beings includes quality drinking water, hygiene and spiritual needs.
 - Wellington Water provides water for municipal supply for purpose other than human health. When there are shortages, these other uses should not be prioritised as they are nonessential.
 - Need to work through what water flow/allocation is needed to support spiritual health – pristine water for use in karakia, baptism, etc.
 3. Ngā mahi a ngā tupuna – uses that support mana whenua and community identity
 - Water that supports community connection, rituals, water in swimming spots, community vegetable gardens, mara kai on marae, etc.

4. Kia whakapuāwai te taiao – water provided for other uses
 - After the first three needs are provided for, look at the remaining amount and how it is allocated to users.
 - TKT supports no further allocation beyond current consents and a precautionary approach to protect the first three needs.
 - Mana whenua and community work together in a working group to set a minimum flow and water allocation framework that meets TMOTW and their aspirations.

Discussion and feedback on TMOTW framework with Committee:

- Need a better understanding of consents (approximately 35 existing) and commercial users taking from the municipal supply (20% of supply) to inform the water allocation framework.
- Understanding that commercial users are employers and there are economic considerations to take into account.
- The health of water in the system and the waterbody are all connected in a te ao Māori worldview, including the wider catchment and ecosystem. The water is right when the land and people are right. Applies to all waterbodies including rivers, lakes, aquifers, springs, etc.
- TKT is developing values, outcomes and attributes for te mauri ore o te wai to bring detail and practicality for target attribute setting.
- Challenge to determine what is a trivial vs health related use, e.g., a water fountain may be seen as nonessential or important for mental well-being. Water blasting as a business may be deemed a nonessential service but critical for the business owner's livelihood. Acknowledging individual needs within a community.
- The NPS-FM is explicit about the three levels in the hierarchy of obligations, need to be confident that it's legal if the Committee decides to change to four levels.
- According to the NPS-FM, the second priority is "the human health needs of people (such as drinking water)." The NPS-FM is the skeleton and the Waitua Committee can put flesh on the bones, i.e., define what human health needs means/how TMOTW applies in this waitua.
- Commercial and residential use are part of the same network and certain users can't be easily restricted. Human health needs account for a lot of commercial water use.
- During a water shortage, the first restriction is on residential sprinklers and irrigation, then an outdoor residential water use ban, then a state of emergency would be declared, which triggers rationing and emergency provisions in the RMA. When the network is depressurised it becomes vulnerable to contamination and needs to be flushed to clean the system.
- An issue for a future forum might be determining what sustainable/responsible commercial activity looks like.
- Commercial users are already metered and paying for their water use but could be using rainwater tanks as well.
- Committee agreed to keep the 3 priorities in TMOTW, expanding level 2 to include human health and mental/spiritual well-being, and including some consumptive or recreational uses in level 3.
- Uncomfortable with deprioritising economic uses that people and businesses depend on, appropriate to keep commercial uses at level 3.
- Discussion about whether to prioritise uses in level 3 for restrictions in water shortages. Challenge to separate economic from social/cultural uses and values based decisions are subjective, e.g., schools or businesses. Each community might have different values.
- Current municipal supply includes water that is wasted, instead focus on reducing wastage.
- In the gas industry, some users could pay a discount for the service but if there was a shortage, their supply would be shut off. Idea to introduce a similar interruptible supply with water metering.

- This whaitua is nearly a fully allocated catchment. Need to review consents when they come up for renewal and consider who has access to water. Currently dealing with the ramifications of the first in, first served allocation regime but need to create space for iwi allocation.

A: PT to provide a list of all commercial users (those with consents and those who get water through the municipal supply) based on the type of use.

D: Te Mana o te Wai framework should have the three priorities set out in the NPS. Fully interpret what each of these mean. In particular the second priority of 'essential human health' needs to be interpreted to include spiritual needs and mental health.

A: Te Kāhui Taiao to discuss the outcome of Committee discussions and respond.

A: PT to draft a WIP recommendation for future work to determine whether there should be prioritisation within priority three of TMoTW – other consumption uses. Tied to future decisions on an alternative to first come, first serve approach.

Principles

- Bullet point list of principles to guide long-term decision-making based on themes picked up in the Committee's deliberations. Consider whether anything is missing or the intent isn't right.
- "Beyond consensus" means the ability for Committee members to hold different views about an issue and that it's ok to communicate these.
- No further abstraction is about the amount of water we take from the river at any time by setting a minimum flow.
- Recognising the value of water is complementary to efficiency and how we manage water use responsibly.

D: The following additions to the list of principles were agreed:

- Equity
- The value of taking water for human health or for economic gain etc.
- Water is essential to life – linked with the kawa.

A: Clarify the difference between the current bullet points, greater protection of the river at low flows and no further abstraction at low flows.

Long term shifts in how we manage water quantity

- Need to make decisions based on the best information that's available at the time.
- How frequently has the minimum flow been reached at Kaitoke? Likely not for some time, perhaps a 1/100 year flow. The lowest flows were recorded in the 1970s before a minimum flow was introduced. We don't have sufficient data on how the river would respond to sustained periods of low flows, especially for cultural values.
- There will be additional compounding stresses on the river such as increased temperatures, lower flows and contaminants that make it less resilient.
- When we reach the minimum flow in this catchment, no additional water can be taken, unlike other areas where water can be abstracted past the minimum flow.
- Rather than minimum flow, consider the opportunity to provide for abundance, diversity of natural form and life.

D: Updates to the bullet points on the paradigm shift, the case for change and what the future looks like:

- Add narrative to be clear that the longer term arc of work is to assess whether we're achieving Te Mana o te Wai and we don't currently have enough data to assess this. This isn't being used as an excuse to do nothing. The Committee has agreed short term recommendations around efficiency and will be discussing minimum flows and allocation amounts.
- Add that it's about people in our whaitua being high water users in addition to population growth that is increasing demand for water.
- Add narrative about the current health of the awa in terms of flows. With the current levels of allocation are the flows ok?
- Add a bullet point about the Committee being uncomfortable with the current first come, first serve approach to managing water use.
- Add rainwater harvesting and use of greywater to the bullet point about water being supplied from diverse sources. It's about supplying people's needs not just from rivers.
- Rephrase the bullet point on decisions being made using high quality and comprehensive information to speak better to the idea that a lack of data shouldn't be an excuse for doing nothing.
- Acknowledge the other stresses on the river that impact on values, e.g., river temperatures, illegal discharges and the relative role of activities like flood management vs changes to the minimum flow in the health of the awa. Need an integrated approach in relation to te huhua o te wai – the abundance of water.

A: Committee to go in the online draft WIP and add more comments for changes to the bullet points.

Recommendation F

- The current water allocation system grants consents on a first in, first served basis and the whaitua is almost fully allocated.
- Through a TMOTW lens, need to reconsider the current regime with additional mātauranga attributes and a specified percentage of allocation (suggested 20%) for iwi to address equity issues.
- PT to find out what's possible in the PNRP.
- Consider addressing the first come, first serve allocation rule at the national government level.
- Claw back for iwi allocation is at the core of the Committee's work and decisions.
- What level of detail is sufficient or will the Committee be passing the decision to someone else to make in the future?
- Need to understand allocation as part of a broader water quantity package including fixing pipes, an additional storage lake, changing the minimum flow, rainwater tanks and encouraging efficiency.
- Not sure what iwi would use water allocation for but it's the principle of rangitiratanga that matters, they get to choose how to use it.
- Recommending an iwi allocation will likely be challenged in court and will require strong evidence.
- Need to be brave and bold with this decision. It would have symbolism for generations to come.
- Te Mahere Wai will include a narrative with whakapapa and mana whenua relations to the main water supply catchments, their importance and the ongoing role of mana whenua in management to lift their mana.
- Important to prioritise water use for mental/physical/spiritual health before commercial use. Clawback would be applied to consents for commercial use.

D: Agreed that iwi should get a certain allocation of water in the catchment.

R: Update the wording to the following:

- Mana whenua in partnership with GWRC design a new water allocation system that gives effect to ~~mana whenua~~ our understanding of Te Mana o te Wai and utilises mātauranga Māori in the development of plan provisions and monitoring. A new water allocation system will include a specific allocation for iwi and could use mechanisms like clawing back a percentage of water at renewal that is then allocated to iwi.

A: Te Kāhui Taiao to develop a draft narrative and review the draft WIP recommendation wording.

D: WIP recommendation to be highlighted yellow as further discussion including councillor input also needed.

Recommendation G

- Investigation work to fill in knowledge gaps, involving Wellington Water, GWRC and mana whenua. Acknowledging it will take time to develop baselines (5-10 years).
- The argument to increase the minimum flow is less compelling from the expert panel to provide for ecological values.
- Mana whenua are saying the flow is lower than it should be from qualitative and anecdotal evidence. Need for more data on mahinga kai, required under the NOF as a national value. Assessment should be based on TMOTW and protecting the health of the waterbody in the future.
- We need to develop a shared understanding of how to give effect to TMOTW in order to set up a new water allocation system.
- Include in narrative that mana whenua are being pushed further out of their rohe to collect mahinga kai.
- The expert panel assessed mahinga kai in terms of presence/absence but not in terms of abundance. Mahinga kai is defined as the place, activity and species, which is a comprehensive system to assess.
- Recommendation G is linked to I, consider reordering.
- Councils need to resource mana whenua to monitor and understand current state of mahinga kai.
- Resourcing also needed to support citizen science and community monitoring. Both community and mana whenua need resourcing to enable their participation.
- Want to see a new allocation framework ensuring the best economic value for water. Issue with water bottling because it's deemed a low economic value for water.
- Report back on investigations by 2027 but expect it will be ongoing.
- Consider areas of interest and concern to focus monitoring and investigation efforts in the next 5 years, perhaps where there are greatest concerns about flows.

R: Investigations should be completed by 2027.

R: Required to determine the changes in minimum flows needed as well as allocation. Wording added in.

A: Need a WIP recommendation about resourcing for mana whenua and community. Need to find a place for this in the WIP. All parties need to be sufficiently resourced to participate.

R: Move recommendation I above G as determining the measures of whether we're achieving Te Mana o te Wai is linked to the investigation work.

Recommendation H

- Degree of uncertainty with Taumata Arowai potentially taking over the role of Wellington Water.

R: This WIP recommendation is to be incorporated into a wider section on implementation and accountability. Remove from this section.

D: Three waters review and local government reform mean that the entities named in this WIP recommendation may not be the same in the future. Be clear in the WIP that any changes shouldn't impact on what the Committee wants to see delivered on the ground.

Recommendation I

- A shared understanding of Te Mana o te Wai is essential to developing a new water allocation framework. Recommendation I to be incorporated in narrative and other recommendations.

A: PT to investigate the option of consolidating recommendations F and I, and potentially with G.

Recommendation J, K & L

- Recommendation J is a technical fix and discussion about principles for allocation is needed first.
- Ngāti Toa have statutory rights over the aquifer and tributaries that flow into Te Awa Kairangi.
- The decisions about water supply also impact Porirua. People may not be aware that Porirua's water comes from this whaitua and any recommendations about efficiency and reducing demand will apply there as well.
- Need messaging tailored for Porirua community, beyond letting people know where their water comes from, need to support understanding of the impact of decisions. Also recognising water supply catchments as taonga and tupuna.
- Growth in Porirua will also impact on water supply in the future.
- The Te Awarua-o-Porirua WIP did not include water quantity issues because they understood Te Whanganui-a-Tara would be making these decisions.
- Engagement with PCC needed.

R: Combine recommendation K & L as everyone benefits from our waterbodies. There is one overall role connecting all communities to recognise, promote and provide for the mana of the waterbodies as treasured taonga.

A: PT to come back to the Committee on how best to engage with Porirua City Council on all WIP recommendations that impact PCC in relation to managing our use of water e.g. efficiency recommendations and allocation recommendations. This is because the municipal supply in this whaitua also supplies water to Porirua.

A: PT to provide an update on what was in the Porirua WIP on water use.

Short term decisions on minimum flows

- Decision-making about changing minimum flows in the main water supply catchments applies to Te Awa Kairangi, Wainuiomata and Orongorongo. Committee to decide whether to make that decision in the short term for the 2022 plan change or provide direction to increase over time.
- There is a unique set of values for water supply and implications could involve strong scrutiny from the community.
- The way we have come to understand risk has changed over time. Storage lakes were built in the 1980s, since then the risk to rivers based on abstraction has come into more focus.
- There are large gaps in knowledge and data. There is more information about the lower reaches of Te Awa Kairangi and less about the higher reaches where the flow varies the most. We have little information about Orongorongo.

- In the early 1990s, there were surveys of rivers across the region on the amount of habitat available at different flows to develop an understanding of the habitats that are lost at lower flows.
- If we were to start over with a new allocation framework today, likely to be more precautionary.
- The expert panel assessments were ecologically focussed and suggest that an incremental increase in the minimum flow would have modest gains.
 - It is unclear how much of an increase to the minimum flow would be necessary to see a meaningful benefit/response in the river.
 - A substantial increase would make a difference but at a major cost/risk to the community. Need to fill knowledge gaps before making a comprehensive change to the system.
- Consider other values that impact on the health of the river. Is the flow causing a decline or is it other factors such as wastewater or stormwater inputs? There is not a direct correlation between more flow and greater benefits for the river. Large rivers can cope with changes to the flow regime.
- Climate change will mean that low flow periods are more sustained and population growth will put more demand on the river. There isn't evidence in the data to suggest that flow rates are significantly decreasing or that summer rainfall has changed, but projections signal that these changes are coming. Stress and pressures expected to increase.
- If moving toward less reliance on flows, it would require more storage lakes.
- There's a limit to the water we can take from the aquifer because it takes a few months for it to recharge.
- Could recommend that resource consents are reviewed before the next renewal for drinking water allocation in 2035.
- There would be lots of appeals if the minimum flow were to be raised in the next plan change. Consider whether to increase flow now or with more evidence and confidence later.
- Long term vision to store more water at high flows and put water back into the system when needed during low flows, idea of a "seasonal" regime. "High flow harvesting" refers to taking more water when the river is more resilient.
- Both more storage and more conservation will be necessary. Narrative to reference efficiency. Building additional lakes would cost \$200-500m, consider cost to ratepayers on top of fixing pipes and staging of solutions.
- Signal direction to increase minimum flow to a more natural flow over time. Allow time to meaningfully engage with councils and communities, and get infrastructure in place to enable a change.
- Need to deal with wastage in the system and consider extra supply needed for population growth. Priority for communities is for councils to fix pipes.
- Will raising the minimum flow now be at the cost of getting wastewater out of streams? Need to put planning in place now for changes to come.
- Value of qualitative and quantitative data, important to consider what people can see/feel/touch, etc. Kawa should be applied to future decisions about minimum flows.
- Consider increasing minimum flow with further data for 2035 consent renewal.
- Set vision for end target and date but leave flexibility for how to achieve over time. There may be new funding and mechanisms in place.

D: The narrative in this section of the WIP needs to refer to the efficiency WIP recommendations.

D: The following direction in relation to minimum flows was agreed:

- The Committee wants to raise the minimum flows over time (not immediately). This is partly due to other priorities that are more immediate.

- The minimum flows should increase over time to achieve 80% of MALF in 50 years' time.
- The first minimum flow increase is to happen in the upcoming plan change cycles (2022 or 2024) so the infrastructure provider knows what the minimum flows will be when the municipal supply consents are renewed in the mid-2030s.
- Increases to the minimum flow are being signalled now to incentivise the necessary changes to water supply infrastructure.
- Increases in minimum flows must be linked to consent cycles so the infrastructure provider has certainty with which to plan.
- This pathway forward will be revised based on the outcome of the further investigation work outlined in recommendations F, G and I.

A: PT to draft a strawperson WIP recommendation for Wellington Water to build additional storage. Allow for future proofing as current work is underway to determine whether the additional storage lake at Te Marua is still the best option.

Wrap up and next steps

Workshop closed with a karakia.

A: Discuss at the follow up evening session on 19 May the agenda items that weren't completed today.