



# Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee

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## COMMUNITY INPUT VITAL TO DISCUSSION

From its source in the Tararua Ranges the Ruamahanga River winds its way down the Wairarapa valley, through bush, farmland and towns until it meets the sea at Onoke Spit. It is joined by other rivers and streams on its journey.

The Ruamahanga River is enjoyed by swimmers, walkers and fishermen, supports town drinking and waste water needs, is used by farmers and valued for its spiritual significance.

But the river carries pollutants and sediment eroded from some of the 130kms of river banks – affecting river habitat along its length. Water quality decreases as the river reaches the lower valley and the Wairarapa Moana wetlands.

From her rural Carterton home in the centre of the Wairarapa Valley, Esther Dijkstra works in environmental education and runs an environmental science/sustainable soil consultancy. Originally from the Netherlands Esther has lived in New Zealand for 20 years, raised her family here and been heavily involved in

local community-led water quality and restoration projects. Now as deputy chair of the Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee she is involved in progressing land and water management planning and is pleased to see the community becoming well informed about the main issues.

“I am looking forward to the community meeting in Carterton. There has been plenty of discussion in the immediate area about waste water management, water allocation, monitoring and of course the impacts of possibly increased irrigation. Our community has really got to grips with some of the detail, for example how soil type might be factored in to best practice for irrigation.”

“Over the next six months it will be important to develop a well-balanced, well-thought through plan that the community understands and is connected too. Working towards sustainable land and water management for our shared future is a big responsibility. Community input is vital – I really

enjoy that people locally come up with creative solutions and are prepared to ‘think outside the box’.”

The Wairarapa landscape has been modified significantly by townspeople and landowners over time. Balancing the needs of our native species and human use is challenging. The Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee is working to understand how the catchment community wants land and water resources managed into the future. They will bring this information together into a guiding document for the Ruamahanga River catchment.



## TALK TO US

The Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee has a vision for the Ruamahanga River catchment - a Wairarapa where water glistens.

We all want a resilient and connected community that is responsible for the water flowing through our catchment. You can help shape the future of land and water management.

The Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee is asking for community feedback on a number of key questions:

- What is the fairest way of restricting water use during the summer?
- What do we need to do to make our rivers swimmable and how long should it take to get there?
- How should we manage rivers to improve natural character while safe guarding community assets, income and households?

Join the conversation online or talk to committee members at a meeting near you. In July and August meetings will be held in Pirinoa, Kopuaranga, Whangaehu, Gladstone, Featherston, Carterton, Masterton, Martinborough and Greytown.

**Discuss land and water management with the committee:**  
**Thursday 4 August Carterton Events Centre 6.30-8.30pm**  
**Tuesday 9 August, Senior Citizens Club, Masterton 6.30-8.30pm**

Want to know more?

Go to: <http://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua>