



# Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee



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## COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS WILL IMPROVE OUR WATERWAYS

**Last week a series of nine face-to-face discussions hosted by the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee (RWC) drew to a close. The committee has held meetings from Kopuaranga in the north of the catchment to Pirinoa in the south. Around two hundred and fifty people have participated in the conversations which have also included an online and postal option.**

Each committee member brings their own perspective to the development of integrated land and water management in the Ruamāhanga River catchment, community discussions have confirmed some ideas and raised others.

“Talking to members of the community has revealed just how much people really do care about the natural world they inhabit and that when it is threatened they want to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. It is interesting to people beginning to realise that the issue of water quality isn’t just because of

negligent farmers or inadequate town stormwater or sewerage management, but that all of us are responsible and the problems won’t be fixed unless all of us take action,” said Chris Laidlaw, RWC member and Greater Wellington Regional Council Chair.

Themes that resonated with some committee members were quite similar. Committee member David Holmes identified wastewater discharge as a community priority, along with water storage, metering and irrigation, he heard the need to balance flood protection and river character coming out of the meetings.

And similar themes were reflected by Committee Member Mike Ashby, who also saw a need for more community involvement with water issues, the need for more education and school participation in schemes to improve water quality.

Whilst they were happy to discuss the wider issues the committee were particularly looking for practical solutions towards better land and water management. Andy Duncan,

an RWC member based in Gladstone felt that thinking innovatively and not being limited by historical positions or attitudes is the most productive way forward. He found people in his local area to be open and to have a constructive approach to achieving this. They wanted fairness and would consider charging for water to achieve this.

Vanessa Tipoki particularly enjoyed hearing from the Featherston community about their connection with Wairarapa Moana. “There was passionate debate about its importance and a really interesting discussion around innovative solutions for conserving water (both urban and rural) - including the use of apps to keep track of how much water the household was using, and where,” she said.

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee will bring the community thinking, along with data, research and knowledge into the next stage of their work – designing and testing options for land and water management.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS

**The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee has just finished a series of meetings with people from across the Ruamāhanga River catchment to hear their solutions for land and water management locally. The committee is working towards a vision: the Ruamāhanga River catchment - a Wairarapa where water glistens.**

Last year the committee held meetings to learn more about what people valued about their waterways – what they thought was important for cultural, economic and recreational reasons. Through July and August this year a series of community meetings discussed some important questions about water quality, water allocation and how river management can balance flood protection and the natural character of our waterways.

The committee would like to extend a big ‘Thank you!’ to everyone who came along to a meeting or took the time to give us their feedback through the post or online. Summaries from each of the nine community meetings and from the postal responses are available online at [www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua/).

### WE ARE STILL LISTENING!

**Want to join the conversation?**

**Want to know more?**

The committee is still keen to hear your solutions for land and water management, go online and tell them what you think:

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

As the committee’s whaitua implementation programme is developed there will be further opportunities to put your view forward.