

Local Government Engagement in the Water Programme of Action

Briefing from the Water Management
Sub-Committee of Regional Affairs



Local Government New Zealand

le pūtahi matakokiri

The Water Programme of Action

- Part of New Zealand's Sustainable Development Plan of Action
 - Government commitment from Johannesburg & Rio
- Whole of Government process led by MfE and MAF
- Will help Government respond to past & recent criticism in OECD reviews of environmental performance



Government Purposes for the WPoA

- Improve the quality and efficient use of freshwater by building and enhancing partnerships.
- Improve the management of the undesirable effects of land-use on water quality through increased national direction and partnerships.
- Provide for increasing demands on water resources and encourage efficient water management through national direction, working with local government on options for supporting and enhancing local decision making, and developing best practice.



The Government's Principles (1)

- water will continue to be managed as a public resource
- freshwater management will be improved under the Resource Management Act
- regional councils will continue to have primary responsibility for managing freshwater
- clear environmental limits will be set for water quality and the quantity available for allocation
- enhancements to existing mechanisms and the provision of incentives will improve efficiency of water use



The Government's Principles (2)

- resource users will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and will be given the flexibility to develop appropriate solutions
- nationally outstanding natural water bodies will be identified and better protected
- the best available information will be used for decision-making processes
- community involvement and confidence in decision-making processes will be maximised, building on the opportunities for participation in the regional planning process



The Government's Key Projects (1)

- Water measurement NES for metering at point of take
 - Discussion Document has been consulted on, MfE collating views, recommendations to Cabinet
- Recovering the costs for water management
 - Regional council discussion document prepared for input into the Government work on this project
- Ecological Flow Setting NES
 - Technical experts meeting



The Government's Key Projects (2)

- At Risk and/or nationally important catchments and water bodies
 - Investigation work underway by MfE
- National Policy Statement (NPS) for Sustainable Freshwater Management
 - Sector group consultation underway
 - Initial draft being prepared by MfE officials
 - Ministerial advisory group meeting in May
- Primary Industry Sector Targets
 - Reference Group established



The Water Management Sub-Committee

- Established by the RAC to have input into Government WPoA work
- Government work programmes at that time focused on regional council functions
- New focus on a NPS for fresh water management has required extension of membership at political, CE and officer (project) levels to include TA representatives
- Has yet to meet as full Sub-committee with new membership



Sub-committee Membership

- Sir Kerry Burke, Environment Canterbury (chair)
- Jenni Vernon, Environmental Waikato
- Garrick Murfitt, Horizons MW
- Ian Buchanan, Greater Wellington
- Laurence Yule, Hastings District Council
- Stuart Crosby, Tauranga District Council
- Dianne Hale, North Shore City Council (alternate)



Water Management Sub-committee Progress to date

- Local authority technical staff are expert members of most of the MfE project teams
- Paper on water management charging prepared
- Initial list of key desired outcomes identified
- Position statement on local government priorities for any NPS prepared for consultation with all councils
 - consultation underway now
- Input through consultation or direct to Sub-committee

LG Initial Key Desired Outcomes (1)

- A National Policy Statement that
 - Affirms the regional/catchment scale as appropriate level for water management to occur
 - Confirms that water is to be managed as a public resource
 - Emphasises the importance of integrating the management of water quantity and quality with land use



LG Initial Key Desired Outcomes (2)

- Enhanced tools for managing “at risk catchments”
 - Lake Taupo, Canterbury Plains ground water
- Making policy processes more responsive
- Water Measurement
- Private Plan Changes
 - Removal of the water conservation order mechanism
- Economic instruments and polluter pays



Next Steps

- Collate feedback and finalise local government position on NPS
 - Early to mid May
- Water Management Sub-committee to consider and recommend to RAC
 - Next Sub-committee meeting mid/late May
- Local government position on NPS provided to Ministers
- Government expected to release draft NPS in June/July



*The Sub-committee thanks you for
the opportunity to provide you with
this update*

