

WATER FORUM 3RD – 4TH AUGUST 2006
METHODS – Report Back

Priority 1

The RMA is cumbersome and slow. Can we address this to provide agility.

- We need a mechanism to incorporate minimum flows into regional plans without having full plan changes.
- We need a procedure to deem the minimum flows into resource consents.
- Consideration needs to be given to using the Local Government Act processes (e.g. the special consultative procedure) into RMA processes.
- National environmental standards should be considered, in partnership between regional and central government, for:
 - How to set minimum flows, but not the specific minimum flow
 - Septic tanks (or a New Zealand Standard; also self-certification and use of targeted rates to fund permitted activity monitoring regimes)
 - Water metering (specificity and accuracy)

Priority 2

Central government needs to speak with one voice.

- Use of National Policy Statements to achieve whole of government approaches
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Priority 3

Scientific uncertainty is causing issues in the Environment Court; precision is difficult. This having economic implications and regional plans are losing meaning.

- Consider using peer review panels to guide and accredit the scientific evidence presented before Councils and the Environment Court.
- Consider providing legislative authority to give greater flexibility for the Chair to determine hearing procedures.
 - e.g. 'hot tubbing' expert witnesses
- Ensure expert witnesses are not advocates

Priority 4

Solutions needs to have realistic and achievable timeframes for implementation.

- Leadership needs to be provided so that the community understands and appreciates the long-term timeframes to achieve water management solutions
- Mechanisms (such as Trusts) should be considered to provide long-term implementation structures
- 30 - 30 - 30: 30% change in land use brings about 30% change in water quality in 30 years time

Priority 5

Integrated catchment management.

- This was covered in the Catchment discussion

Priority 6

Storage infrastructure funding is a difficult issue for central government.

- There is a need for central government to consider its role in infrastructure development for water storage, considering the economic transformation that could result

Priority 7

Involve communities in management and decision making.

- This is considered self-evident