



Waipaoa Catchment Planning Advisory Group – Hui 3

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Title of report: Freshwater Management Units, Environmental outcomes, Long-Term Vision for the Waipaoa Catchment

Report no: 2

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Purpose of this report

The information provided in this report will guide the Advisory Group through the wānanga at this hui on Freshwater Management Units (FMUs), environmental outcomes, and long-term visions for FMUs. It includes information on:

- Review of the current Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) and how these might look after brainstorming the values of each sub-catchment at the August hui.
- Proposed draft FMUs for the Waipaoa Catchment and what National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) freshwater compulsory values have been identified for them.
- Examples of environmental outcomes for different NPS-FM freshwater values to consider as per the requirements of the National Objectives Framework (NOF) in the NPS-FM.
- What might be good long-term visions for the various FMUs, or a single vision for the catchment as a whole.

Outcomes sought

- Confirm the appropriate FMUs for the catchment, and what the boundaries of these FMUs should be.
- Identify the environmental outcomes in each FMU for the compulsory freshwater values in the NPS-FM.
- Identify what needs to be captured in a long-term vision for freshwater in the catchment and/or each FMU.
- Mana whenua and community input into the development of the Waipaoa Catchment Plan to enable a long-term vision for freshwater to be identified.

Getting ready for the meeting

Please consider the following in advance of the hui:

- What environmental outcomes are appropriate for each of the compulsory values in the NPS-FM for each of the potential FMUs listed in section 2.
 - To assist with this, you can fill in the table (**labelled “Environmental outcome exercise” in the agenda pack**). There are some examples to get you started.
- Are the proposed FMUs in section 2 a reasonable spatial framework for setting limits, targets and action plans? Are there any changes you would make?
- What might be included in a vision for the catchment or an FMU.

Bring these ideas to the hui to share. There will be an opportunity for discussion at the hui so if you haven't thought of all the environmental outcomes in a specific FMU prior to the meeting, we can capture them then.

What is a Freshwater Management Unit (FMU)?

An FMU is a way of organising the catchment plan into areas that can support freshwater management.

A catchment plan can have one FMU or it may have more than one.

The freshwater limits and targets are set at FMU level.

What is an environmental outcome?

An environmental outcome identifies what we want for the future state of our rivers and aquifers in relation to a particular value. It describes what success looks like.

The environmental outcomes also link to the long-term vision - when the outcomes are achieved, the vision is achieved.

What are long-term visions for freshwater?

Long-term visions must set future goals that are ambitious but reasonable (difficult to achieve but not impossible).

It also needs to identify a timeframe to achieve those goals that is both ambitious and reasonable (for example, 30 years after commencement date).

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1. Introduction

At the August hui, we workshopped potential 'Tairāwhiti – Waipaoa catchment-specific freshwater values' that might exist in the catchment. We will continue to work with the Group on these values and develop environmental outcomes for them in future hui.

The Advisory Group's focus at this hui is to review the Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) identified in the current Waipaoa Catchment Plan and start to develop environmental outcomes, based on the national freshwater values required by the NPS-FM.

The current Waipaoa Catchment Plan includes FMUs that were identified during the development of the current Plan in 2015 (see figure 1 below). The Plan does not have a long-term vision or environmental outcomes set; this wasn't required under the NPS-FM at the time.

We have an opportunity to discuss what might be appropriate environmental outcomes for each of the NPS-FM values that gives effect to Te Mana o Te Wai. We also need to develop a long-term vision for freshwater in the catchment. We can also consider a long-term vision for some or all the FMUs, if that is what tangata whenua and the community would prefer.

2. Freshwater Management Units

FMUs provide the spatial framework for managing freshwater within a catchment area. The requirement to have FMUs was introduced to the NPS-FM in 2014 and FMUs were created for the current Waipaoa Catchment Plan.

Freshwater management units:

- Encourage a pragmatic approach to managing freshwater by allowing water bodies to be grouped together where appropriate.
- Allow a single objective to apply to freshwater bodies that are not connected.
- Establish a spatial scale at which management activities are undertaken, including freshwater accounting and setting freshwater objectives and limits.

A FMU is defined as:

"A water body, multiple water bodies or any part of a water body determined by the regional council as the appropriate spatial scale for setting freshwater objectives and limits and for freshwater accounting and management".

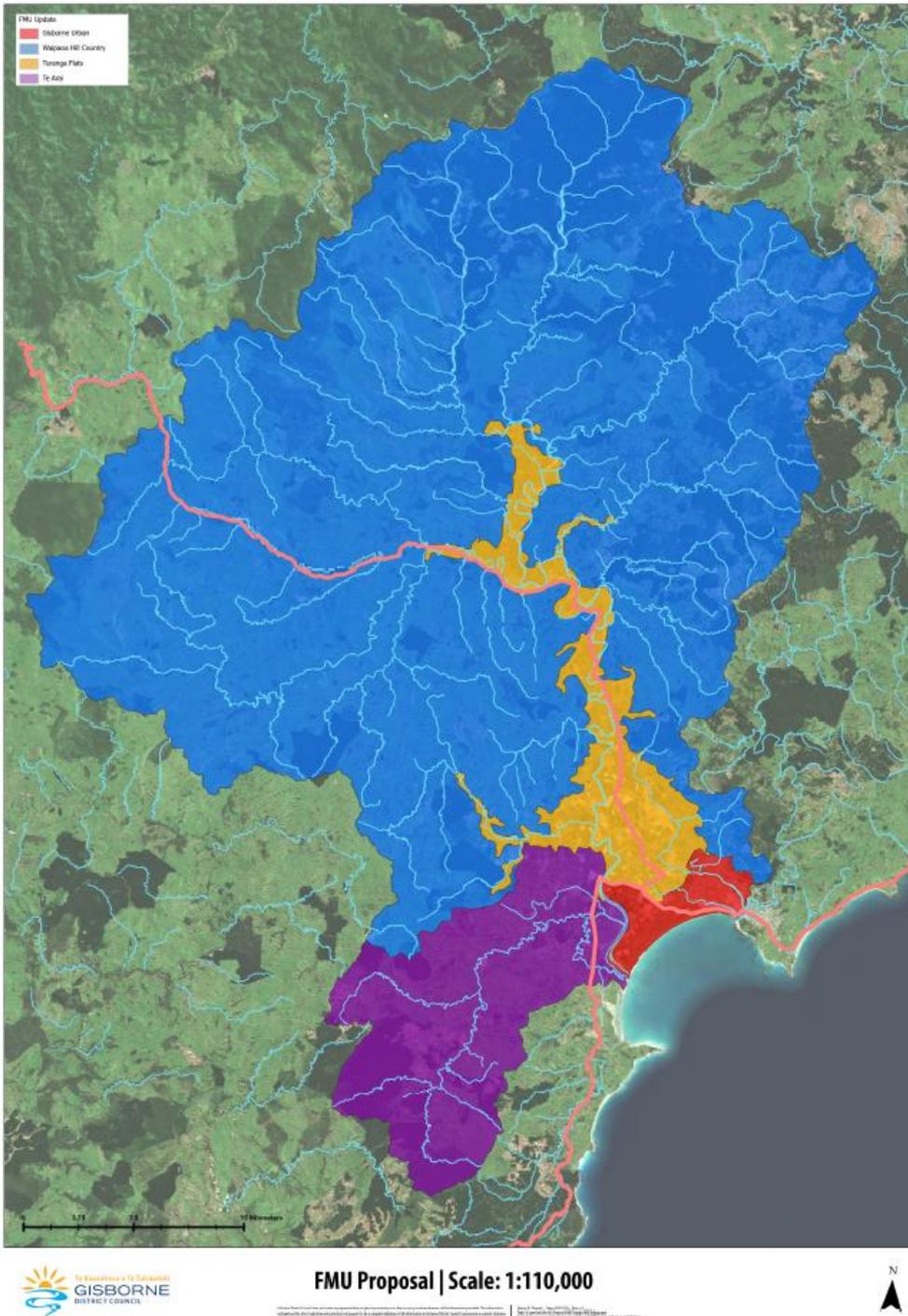
The definition of FMUs is flexible so councils, tangata whenua and communities can determine how best to manage freshwater in their region.

Importantly, FMUs are the level at which environmental outcomes, limits and targets are set. FMUs should have similar values so that the environmental outcomes, limits and targets make sense, and the required outcomes are achievable.

We have used the outputs from hui 2, a review of what's in the existing catchment plan and a technical review of water quality and land use, to propose some draft FMUs. These differ from the FMUs in the current Waipaoa Catchment Plan.

2.1. Draft Freshwater Management Units

We propose that there are four FMUs in the draft Plan, similar to the current Waipaoa Catchment Plan, but with some boundary changes to better reflect the freshwater values.



Feedback is sought on the following potential boundary changes:

Waipaoa Hill Country FMU

- **What is the proposed change?** Making small changes so that land which is not currently used for horticulture, and fits with the character of the Waipaoa Hill Country FMU, is included in that FMU.
- **Where?** The previous boundary was based on the Land Use Capability Classes at a 1:50,000 scale and included some thin river terraces and riparian areas along some of the tributaries within the existing Poverty Bay Flats FMU.

Te Arai FMU

- **What is the proposed change?** Include land which originally drained into Te Arai, prior to its straightening for the flood control scheme, that are intrinsically connected to the waterway in terms of their Māori values, as well as having a similar mosaic of land use.
- **Where?** This is the land west of the Waipaoa River and south of Manutuke, including that which drains into the Karaua Stream and Old Te Arai Loop and the Manutuke East Main Drain.

Gisborne Urban FMU

- **What is the proposed change?** Moving Te Maungarongo o Te Kooti wetland and the catchment area that drains into it out of the Poverty Bay Flats FMU into the Gisborne Urban FMU. This will include land that by virtue of the flood scheme flow into Awapuni Moana and are currently in the Poverty Bay Flats FMU.
- **Where?** The new boundary of the Gisborne Urban FMU would include all land between Waipaoa River and Wharerata Road and Awapuni Road.

Turanga Flats FMU

- **What is the proposed change?** Change the name of the Poverty Bay Flats FMU, to Turanga Flats FMU. The spatial boundary of this FMU will be slightly amended to reflect the changes proposed above.

2.2. Assessment of national level NPS-FM freshwater values and where they apply

At hui 2 held in August 2023, the Group workshopped Waipaoa catchment-specific freshwater values. More work is planned on this in the next few months.

We need to assess each FMU against the national NPS-FM values. Some values are compulsory for all catchments, but we are also required to assess whether the other national values are relevant to an FMU.

Based on the feedback to date, the review of the current Waipaoa Catchment Plan and technical analysis by staff, a draft assessment of the NPS-FM values by FMU has been undertaken. This is shown in the table below:

Freshwater values	Waipaoa Hill Country FMU	Turanga Flats FMU	Gisborne Urban FMU	Te Arai FMU
Compulsory values				
Ecosystem health	✓	✓	✓	✓
Human contact	✓	✓	✓	✓
Threatened species	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mahinga kai	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other NPS-FM values				
Natural form and character	✓	✓	✓	✓

Drinking water supply		✓		✓
Transport and Tauranga waka			✓	✓
Fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Irrigation and food production		✓		✓
Hydro-electric power generation	✓			
Animal drinking water	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wai tapu	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other values identified by the existing Waipaoa Catchment Plan				
Mauri	✓	✓	✓	✓

Questions for the Advisory Group

- ❓ Have we correctly identified the prioritisation of the national NPS-FM values?
- ❓ Have we correctly identified these values by FMU? This will be part of the work we cover at hui 3.

3. Environmental outcomes

The NPS–FM requires that an environmental outcome is identified for every value that applies to an FMU.

Environmental outcomes must be included as objectives in the catchment plan. This means that the environmental outcomes need to read as objectives which have a specific way of being written in 'policy and planning speak'.

The environmental outcomes must:

- a. *Describe the environmental outcome sought for the value in a way that enables an assessment of the effectiveness of the Regional Policy Statement and plans (including limits and methods) and action plans in achieving the environmental outcome.*
- b. *When achieved, fulfil the relevant long-term visions developed under clause 3.3 and the objective of the National Policy Statement.*

Every value must have one or more environmental outcomes linked to it. Where a value describes a particular thing our community cares about, the environmental outcome describes what success looks like. The environmental outcomes also link to the visions for the catchment, so when the outcomes are achieved, the vision is achieved.

The Group will go through an exercise at this hui to set environmental outcomes for each of the draft FMUs. To do this we need to look at the “baseline state” of our rivers and aquifers and begin the conversations about our “target state”. **Report 4** from hui 1 on 14 July 2023 includes

information on the baseline state of the rivers. We will use this information to help inform the environmental outcomes setting exercise.

Below are some examples from the recently developed draft Mōtū Catchment Plan. These are provided as a recent example - there is no requirement for them to be the same or aligned.

Mōtū Catchment – Te Wai o Ngahere FMU

Ecosystem health

Outcome statement: The very high water quality and healthy flows in the rivers, streams and wetlands continue to support a diverse and abundant range of freshwater biodiversity including invertebrates, plants, fish and birds

Mahinga kai

Outcome Statement: The rivers and streams offer rich habitat for mahinga kai species which thrive within and around water. Kai and other resources are plentiful and safe to harvest and eat and are able to provide food for the people of the rohe.

Mōtū Catchment – Farmlands and Settlements FMU

Natural Form and Character

Outcome statement: The existing natural character of rivers and streams is retained. Further straightening or relocation of the rivers and streams is minimised and the damming of the main rivers is avoided. The riparian environment is improved to enhance natural form and character and reduce the impact of bank erosion on this value.

Animal drinking water

Outcome statement: The catchment supports the health and wellbeing and provides for the healthy drinking water needs for livestock. This is done in such a way that other values of the river are not compromised.

4. Long-term vision

The NPS-FM requires long-term visions for freshwater within a region. In Tairāwhiti, long-term visions are being set at the catchment level. This allows goals to be set across the region that respond to catchment relevant issues and aspirations. The following requirements are outlined in the NPS-FM 2020:

2) Long-term visions:

...

b) Must set goals that are ambitious but reasonable (that is, difficult to achieve but not impossible); and

c) Identify a timeframe to achieve those goals that is both ambitious and reasonable (for example, 30 years after the commencement date)

3) Every long-term vision must:

- a) Be developed through engagement with communities and tangata whenua about their long-term wishes for water bodies and freshwater ecosystems in their region; and
- b) Be informed by an understanding of the history or, and environmental pressures on, the FMU, part of the FMU, or catchment; and
- c) Express what communities and tangata whenua want the FMU, part of FMU, or catchment to be like in the future.

4) Every regional council must assess whether each FMU, part of an FMU, or catchment (as relevant) can provide for its long-term vision, or whether improvement to the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is required to achieve the vision.

We will go through a vision setting exercise at this hui 3 for the Waipaoa Catchment.

Questions for the Advisory Group

◇ What are the things you would like to see in a vision for the Waipaoa Catchment? It will be good if you can think about this ahead of the meeting.

5. Next step: water quality

Once we have determined the vision, values, FMUs and environmental outcomes for the catchment, we need to look at how well the current state of the catchment is meeting these and what is required to ensure the vision and environmental outcomes are met.

We do this by looking at ways to measure water quality, which the NPS-FM refers to as attributes. These are things like the amount of nutrients, bacteria and sediment in the water. We also need to consider the life and health of aquatic ecosystems, using attributes such as Macroinvertebrate Community Indicator (MCI) (for aquatic insects) and the fish biotic index.

The focus of the next hui on 11 October (hui 4) will be on developing an understanding of water quality in each FMU and whether it is meeting the environmental outcomes. From this we will develop target attribute states for each water quality attribute.