

Minutes of the Freshwater Leaders Group meeting 16-17 April 2019

Apologies

Apologies were received from Traci Houpapa and Marc Schallenberg

Conflicts of interest

1. John Penno shared an updated conflict of interest form and the group discussed whether the newly identified items should be included.
2. The group agreed that the items should be included.
3. Graeme Gleason asked that it be noted that for all matters he is opposed to, and will not support, grandparenting. This was noted by the group.

Minutes of the March 20-21 meeting

4. The group approved the minutes of the March 20-21 meeting subject to the following changes:
 - i. Agenda item 5 — Update on agricultural package
 - amend paragraph 6 to better reflect that the group supports the use of farm environment plans as a tool to help farmers but is undecided about their use as a national regulatory tool.
 - amend paragraph 8 to show that the group supports the use of a risk based framework for FEPs but is concerned about how FEPs will be implemented and what support would be available for regional councils.
 - ii. Agricultural package — high risk land use
 - remove action 2 from the minutes.
5. The group also discussed how much detail is needed in the minutes to best record the discussion of agenda items.
6. Group members were asked to share their records of meetings with each other to help with the drafting of the group's report.

Martin W and Bryan Smith joined the meeting at 9.58 for Agenda item 5

Update on the timing of National Direction briefings and future meetings.

7. Bryan gave a presentation outlining the major elements in the Taskforce's vision for a freshwater management system at 2025. The vision is based on the current reform process being complete and implementation of the reforms being well underway.

See Bryan's handout for details of the vision.

8. The group did not discuss future meeting dates.
9. The group had a wide ranging discussion about the vision and proposals in the handout. The discussion included:
 - a. What information do other stakeholder groups see, do they see the same information as the advisory groups?
 - i. Officials noted that other groups do not have the access to information that the advisory groups have.
 - b. Whether the vision as presented is something the group is comfortable with and:
 - i. will it deliver a halt in water quality decline?
 - ii. is there a path to restoration of water quality?
 - c. One member noted that the proposals are still addressing contaminants individually not as linked groups with combined outcomes. The Taskforce needs to take an integrated holistic approach to address all issues.

The group agreed with this comment.

Open session for FLG — what might future reports look like?

10. The group had a wide ranging discussion about the draft report to the minister and future reports to the Minister.
11. The outcome of this session has been included in the report to the Minister.
12. The group asked for information on what work is underway to make a difference to water quality quickly and for information about the Water Taskforce's communication and engagement strategies. Mandy Bell offered to work with the Taskforce on the communications action.

Action 1

Officials to report on what work is underway to make a difference to water quality quickly. What will help meet the Minister's stated aim of "seeing material improvements to our freshwater in five years".

Action 2

Officials and group members to discuss what is needed to bring stakeholders and the community on board and build support for the proposals. Share the Ministry's engagement and communications strategy and stakeholder matrix with the group.

Proposals for assisting council implementation of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

13. Officials gave a presentation on proposals to help councils implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management by 2025. See the presentation for details.
14. While supporting the proposal group members made the following comments:
 - a. Maintaining public participation in whatever process is used will be key
 - b. For any panel hearing plans members will need to be/should be accredited commissioners —this raised the issue of are there enough commissioners with the required skills?
 - c. One member recommended appointing panel members rather than using election council officials on panels
 - d. Panels should have an advocate who speaks for future generations to ensure that a true long term view is taken
 - e. An independent science panel should be used to ensure scientific evidence is peer-reviewed. The panel would need to be able to hot tub experts.
 - f. Ensuring meaningful iwi representation will take more than one iwi panel member.
 - g. Panels will need a friend of the court (amicus curiae) to ensure that the public and smaller groups are able to fully participate.
 - h. All data needs to be freely available — no black box models should be allowed

Day two

At Risk Catchment presentation

15. Officials gave an update on the At Risk Catchment project. Key points are;

- a. three exemplar catchments the Pelorus, the Kiapara, and the Manuherikia have been chosen
- b. work is underway to build a detailed understanding of each catchment's vulnerability, values, and what if any work to improve the state of the catchment is underway. Once this information has been gathered interventions will be developed for each catchment.
- c. A mapping tool has been developed that allows detailed mapping of catchment states and the pressures on catchments.

See the presentation for details.

16. The group noted that:

- a. the impact of forestry needs to be included in the work stream.
- b. Taking a longer term view when planting trees would drive increased use of natives.

17. The group noted that the mapping tool was comprehensive and a very useful tool. A useful addition to the tool would be the ability to map council capability and capacity to help the ministry best focus its interventions.

18. Members asked if it would be available for public use. Officials said that it will be available in as an on line tool. The group asked if the assumptions behind the tool could be shared and officials said that they will be shared soon.

19. The group is concerned:

- that the At Risk Catchment project is not clear that exemplar catchments differ from at risk catchments. The project needs to be clear that the exemplar and at risk catchments will be treated differently.
- that the project does not have a strategy for using the mapping tool demonstrated at the meeting. Nor does it seem that there is a clear strategy for At Risk Catchments.
- about the lack of urgency for protecting catchments that are at risk of tipping into a degraded state.

Action 4

Officials to share the assumptions behind the At Risk Catchment modelling tool.

Discussion about water quantity allocation data and maps

20. Officials gave a presentation about allocation data and issues identifying and defining over allocation. The presentation covered:
- a. The term 'over-allocation' has a very specific definition in the NPS-FM (related specifically to resource use), yet is often used quite loosely to indicate pressure on the environment, causing confusion. Research shows that assessing over allocation of water for quality is not straight forward, and Regions have taken different approaches which are not easily comparable.
 - b. Consistent national mapping of water allocation status has so far proven unsatisfactory. However we have workarounds, which we have mapped.
 - c. There are a number of options for gaining a clearer view of over-allocation nationally.
 - d. information about water quality allocation and pressure will be available in the Environment Aotearoa 2019 report which will be available the day after the meeting.

See the presentation for details.

21. The group raised the following points:

- a. Data gathering needs to improve
- b. Lack of good quality national data limits faith in Overseer's use as a regulatory tool
- c. The lack of data is a risk for any allocation system that may be introduced
- d. Do lifestyle blocks need to be included?

Action 5

The Ministry to make updated water quality maps available following the release of Environment Aotearoa 2019.

STAG update on freshwater quality, attributes, over allocation and what is 'healthy water'?

- 21. Ken Taylor and Marc Schallenberg provided an update on STAG's work on freshwater quality, attributes and over allocation. See the presentation for details.
- 22. The group discussed the issues around defining healthy water, monitoring water quality, managing sediments, the impact of lag time and the need to focus on the life supporting capacity of water.

23. The group was supportive of STAG's work and agreed that table 1 is nationally useful but noted that Overseer is unable to model attenuation below the root zone.
24. The remainder of the day was devoted to open sessions for the group the outcome of which are reflected in the group's report to the Minister.

Action	Date to be completed	Responsibility	Comments
General discussion			
1	Officials to report on what work is underway to make a difference to water quality quickly. What will help meet the Minister's stated aim of "seeing material improvements to our freshwater in five years".	Officials	
Communications and engagement			
2	Officials and group members to discuss what is needed to bring stakeholders and the community on board and build support for the proposals. Share the Ministry's engagement and communications strategy and stakeholder matrix with the group.	Update at the May meeting.	Janice Robertson and Mandy Bell
At Risk Catchments			
3	Officials to share the underlying assumptions behind the At Risk Catchment model with the group.	At the May meeting	Officials
This report is still being drafted and will be emailed to the group			
Water quantity allocation data and maps			
4	The Ministry to make updated water quality maps available following the release of Environment Aotearoa 2019.	At the May meeting	Officials

