

## Minutes of the Freshwater Leaders Group meeting 8 May 2019

Venue the Terrace Conference Centre

Attendees: John Penno (chair), Alison Dewes, Allen Lim, Nicola Shadbolt, Stephanie Howard, Bryce Johnson, Gary Taylor, Marnie Prickett, Mandy Bell, Graeme Gleeson

### Item 1:

Apologies: Traci Houpapa, Marc Schallenberg, Tom Lambie, Corina Jordan

### Item 2: Conflicts of interest

The following members made declarations of interest in water allocation issues:

Mandy Bell, Graeme Gleason, Allen Lim, Bryce Johnson

#### Action 1:

All to update conflict of interest forms if needed, Nick to send conflict of interest forms to all group members.

### Item 3: Minutes of the 20 -21 March meeting

1. The group confirmed the minutes of the April 16 -17 meeting subject to the following amendments:
2. Paragraph 6 is changed, and action 1 is removed, so that group members share their records of meetings amongst themselves, for use in drafting the group's report, not with Nick Vincent.

#### At Risk Catchments

3. 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.

### Item 4: Matters arising

#### Meeting with the Minister

4. The chair noted that he, Graeme, Hugh, and Stephanie would meet with the Minister on 9 May to discuss the interim report.

#### Update to the agenda for May 8 meeting

5. The chair noted that following a request by a group member an item on *E.coli* had been added to the agenda see item 6: update on microbiological attribute tables.

### Item 5: Communications and engagement strategy

6. Officials led a discussion about the Water Taskforce's communications and engagement strategy.

See the presentation on the portal for details.

7. The group discussed how best to consult widely and meaningfully on the Essential Freshwater Programme. Members raised the following points for consideration in the consultation processes:

- the Taskforce/Ministry for the Environment needs to link all communications about policy proposals
- does the timing of the Biodiversity review and other pieces of work align
- information about the work being done on urban water issues needs to be included in communications
- because of the impact and seriousness of sedimentation the group would like to see forestry and the NES - PF review included in the consultation

8. The group considers that three waters work stream has potential for a bigger impact than the Essential Freshwater policy it is being consulted on.

9. Key to the success of the process will be communicating with regional councils as they will be implementing most changes. The taskforce also needs to talk to the groups who will be strongest in their opposition to the proposal.

10. The group was asked to help identify who the ministry should contact during the consultation period. Members suggested the following groups and individuals:

- Elected councillors
- Agronomists and farm consultants
- District Health Boards and Medical Officers of Health
- Grey Power
- DCANZ
- DELG
- Deer NZ
- Fish and Game
- Forest and Bird
- Major primary sector industries
- Kiwi ambassadors
- New Zealand Farm Environment Trust
- NZ Landcare Trust
- Federated Farmers of New Zealand

- NZVA (New Zealand Veterinary Association)

11. Members feel that the Taskforce/Ministry will need to engage actively with social media, and that there is no point in just making a post and then stepping back. The group agreed that social media is an important tool and the Taskforce needs more social media engagement and a communication strategy that is adequately resourced. It was suggested that the Taskforce look at the Department of Conservation and their social media ambassador Nicola Told, she is able to work across the entire department and responds to posts directly. Minutes approved at the 24 May 2019 meeting of the Freshwater Leaders Group.
12. The group is willing to help engage with the community/NZ at the correct time. Not all members want, or are able, to take a public role in the consultation period.

**Action 2:**

Officials to provide an updated communications strategy at the meeting following the meeting on 24 May 2019.

**Action 3:**

The Primary Sector Council representative to provide an update on the council's work and thoughts about the Essential Freshwater Programme.

**Action 4:**

Members who want to help should contact Janice Rodenburg at [Janice.Rodenburg@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Janice.Rodenburg@mfe.govt.nz)

**Update on microbial attributes table**

13. Officials gave an update on *E.coli* and the microbial attributes table. See the presentation on the portal for details.
14. It is not possible to use source tracking to identify the animal[s] responsible for *E.coli* contamination. In some locations there is no link to livestock as *E.coli* is replicating in the environment as such it cannot be used as a marker for contamination source[s].
15. The discussion included the following points:
  - Primary contact is not the only reason for monitoring *E.coli* it also impacts on mahinga kai and groundwater.
  - The group asked why the focus is on *E.coli* only. Officials noted that there is research on cyanobacteria but the tools needed to manage it are lacking.
  - Members noted that making values for mahinga kai compulsory (while difficult) could recognise food gathering and fishing/aquatic life.

**Action 5:**

Officials to provide information on HRC work on *E.coli*.

**Action 6:**

Gary Taylor to draft recommendations for making mahinga kai a compulsory value and share them with the group.

### **Nitrogen allocation/pressure state maps**

16. Officials gave an introduction to the 2019 State of the Environment Report (AE19). See the presentation on the portal for details.
17. Discussion included:
  - the group was surprised about the time taken to get the allocation data
- some members felt that it is irrelevant comparing the current state against the pristine or natural state. Others felt that a baseline that excludes degradation is needed if water quality is to be improved.
  - some group members' disagree with setting the baseline comparison against a pristine/natural state
  - documents use both nitrate and nitrogen when talking about contaminants this can be confusing and it would be useful if only one term were used
  - the n leaching reductions needed to make a real difference will drive substantial land use change
  - how over allocated are over allocated catchments or sub catchments?
  - A hard N cap sends a message to land users and regional councils that they must change their practices and can be set quickly.
  - will a 2025 deadline for implementation of the NPS-FM achieve the desired improvements in water quality?

#### **Action 7:**

Officials to provide a composite map of At Risk Catchment and over allocation data to identify areas that need immediate focus to prevent them tipping. A map of the magnitude of over allocation in catchments is also to be provided as soon as possible.

#### **Action 8:**

Officials to consider whether 2025 plan timelines are likely to achieve change quickly enough.

### **Item 8: Allocation proposals**

18. Officials presented a draft allocation paper for the group to comment on, see the paper on the portal for details.
19. The discussion of the proposals in the paper included:
  - will the proposals change the (long term) institutional failure that has resulted in the current poor outcomes
  - the proposals must be clear that "New Zealand must maintain sovereign ability over water and environmental outcomes
  - have take and discharge consents have become property rights, and whether or not property right per say exist in New Zealand. The group noted that the right to take or discharge cannot be treated as a property right.

- trading and its impact on an allocation system
- transitional issues for the rural and urban sectors
- data about attenuation is getting better and needs to be used
- sediment needs to be included as it has a major detrimental impact on water quality
- given that the cost of real time monitoring is coming down all the time why not include monitoring in the proposals

20. The group will provide comment on further drafts of allocation papers at later meetings.

**The meeting finished at 5**

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<b>Actions from Freshwater Leaders Group meeting 8 May</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Date due</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	
<b>General discussion</b>			
1	All to update conflict of interest forms if needed, Nick to send conflict of interest forms to all group members.	24 May	All
<b>Communications and engagement strategy</b>			
2	Officials to provide an updated communications strategy at the meeting	TBC	Officials
3	The Primary Sector Council representative to provide an update on the council's work and thoughts about the Essential Freshwater Programme.	Next meeting	Primary Sector Council representative
4	Members who want to help should contact Janice Rodenburg at	By end of June	Done
<b>Update on microbial attributes table</b>			
5	Officials to provide information on HRC work on <i>E.coli</i> .	24 May	Done
6	Gary Taylor to draft recommendations for making mahinga kai a compulsory value and share them with the group.	As soon as	Done
<b>Nitrogen allocation/pressure state maps</b>			
7	Officials to provide a composite map of At Risk Catchment and over allocation data to identify areas that need immediate focus to prevent them tipping. A map of the magnitude of over allocation in catchments is also to be proved as soon as possible.	As soon as possible	Officials
8	Officials to consider whether 2025 plan timelines are likely to achieve change quickly enough.	As soon as	Officials

