



Local Government New Zealand
te pūtahi matukōiri

Local Government New Zealand Desired Contents of a National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management Preamble

Local Government New Zealand understand that it is the government's intent to prepare an NPS on Fresh Water Management

Local Government New Zealand notes that for the most part, the role of managing water allocation and quality rests with local authorities through their Regional Policy Statements and Regional and District Plans. Many of the Regional Policy Statements are reaching their mandatory ten year review and an NPS completed before these reviews have commenced too far would be timely. In undertaking these reviews, local authorities will need to consider how they link the resource management objectives of these RMA policy documents with the broader sustainable development considerations required under the LGA 2002. An NPS provides a powerful mechanism to integrate these approaches.

As a fundamental principle, any NPS must recognize that water will continue to be managed as a public resource for the good of all New Zealanders via Regional Policy Statements and Regional and District Plans.

LGNZ welcomes a targeted NPS which;

- Reinforces and strengthens the linkages between the community based sustainable development approach of the LGA with the sustainable management of natural and physical resources under the RMA.
- Is enabling, not prescriptive. An NPS should enables local decision making so that individual communities are able to arrive at solutions that meet their needs and aspirations for social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing.
- recognises that local authorities have a role in reflecting the needs, preferences and aspirations of their communities as well as the unique characteristics of each region's environment and therefore a "one-size-fits-all" approach is often not an appropriate policy response.
- Facilitates and encourages integration and partnerships between government, regional authorities and territorial authorities.
- Focuses on the future.
- Focuses the management of water quality and quantity and integration of these factors with land use at a catchment or individual ground water resource level.

LGNZ notes that an NPS should not be seen as the "final solution". Central government needs to engage over the long term in collaborative processes at both a national and local policy level through mechanisms such as development of non statutory guidelines, partnerships with Councils, whole of government submissions on issues that affect the national interest, provision of water related infrastructure and development of tools.

Contents of an NPS

Managing water under the RMA and the LGA

The NPS should strengthen and reinforce the strong linkages between the Resource Management Act and the Local Government Act. In particular, the NPS should reflect a sustainable development framework and must take account the four well beings.

The policy framework should:

- Ensure that when allocating volumes or setting sustainable limits for water bodies local authorities give appropriate consideration of social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing.
- Require that water management plans take adequate account of the foreseeable needs of future generations and also the impacts of future changes in the nature of the water resource due to factors such as climate change or metropolitan growth as required under the LGA.
- Ensure that when allocating the water resource primacy is given to the needs of domestic and community water supplies and stock water. This is on the basis that the managing authority - can demonstrate an efficient use of the water (eg via demand management) and that adverse effects can be adequately managed.

Integrating the management of land use with water quality and water allocation

The integration of land use and water management is essential to solve many of the issues facing water managers today. Regional Policy Statements, Regional Plans and District Plans play a critical role in the integration of land use management with water quality and water allocation. The next generation of planning documents need to:

- Identify targets for water quality and flow characteristics necessary to provide for the current and foreseeable aspirations of local communities in terms of the social, cultural, economic and environmental well beings as required under the LGA.
- Identify catchments where achievement of these well beings are at risk or potentially at risk due to short term and long term changes in land use, climate etc and identify mechanisms and means to be employed to address those risks.
- Develop catchment and/or water body specific policies with respect to water allocation, efficiency of water use, management of discharges and land use to manage cumulative effects, climate change and scientific uncertainty and require these factors to be considered when processing resource consent applications
- Provide support for design and implementation of policy responsiveness mechanisms that allow both central government and local authorities to respond more effectively to large scale shifts in land use and/or water use patterns.

Managing current uses of water whilst preparing for the future

The economic, social and climatic drivers for water use vary between regions and over time. Any NPS should require local authorities to ensure that policy frameworks for managing water use, water quality and land use are sufficiently flexible and precautionary to allow for changes in circumstances of the community or the environment. Terms such as adaptive management may describe the types of policies to be provided here.