

Report 11.149
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Committee Council
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Taiao - Natural Resource Management Committee
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Report on the Te Upoko Taiao - Natural Resource Management Committee meeting on 22 March 2011

1. Purpose

To inform council on the Te Upoko Taiao - Natural Resource Management Committee meeting that took place on 22 March 2011.

2. Report

2.1 Wairarapa Valley groundwater resource investigation technical reports

Juliet Milne, Team Leader, Environmental Science, provided a report on Wairarapa Valley groundwater resource investigation.

2.1.1 Background

In 2005, steady increases each year in demand for groundwater in the Wairarapa, coupled with a decline in groundwater levels in some areas, raised concern regarding the potential adverse impacts of abstraction on groundwater dependent ecosystems and whether the present rates of abstraction were sustainable in the long term.

This concern led to the launch of a comprehensive investigation of the Wairarapa Valley groundwater system with the primary purpose of providing a sound scientific platform to re-assess the groundwater allocation limits and management objectives of Wairarapa Valley aquifers.

3. Comment

The Wairarapa Valley groundwater resource investigation represents a comprehensive piece of technical work undertaken over a period of more than six years. We now have calibrated groundwater models for the upper, middle and lower sub-sections of the valley that can be used to test different climatic and water abstraction scenarios. These models have been developed using the best available data; they can and should be refined in the future as new water use, soil moisture and other data become available.

Overall, investigations have significantly advanced our technical understanding of groundwater resources in the Wairarapa Valley, especially the connections between rivers, streams, springs and groundwater systems. The recommended new groundwater zones and surface water interaction categories presented in the Phase 3 technical report represent best-available scientific understanding. As well as informing the review of current water allocation policy for the Wairarapa Valley, they should also be used in technical evaluations of any new or replacement resource consent applications to abstract either surface or groundwater in the valley.

4. Workshop

A workshop followed the committee meeting. The first part of the workshop discussed the draft Guiding Principles developed by the working group of Te Upoko Taiao - Natural Resource Management Committee.

The second part of the workshop was on water allocation and included reports and presentations by:

- Jonathan Streat, on water allocation under the RMA and implications from a cultural perspective
- Mike Thompson on monitoring, science and investigations, and
- Stephen Thawley provided a series of scenarios on how an integrated water management approach might work in a catchment.

5. Unconfirmed minutes

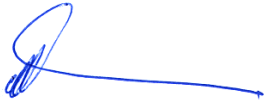
The unconfirmed minutes of the Committee's meeting are attached as **Attachment 1**.

6. Recommendations

That the Council:

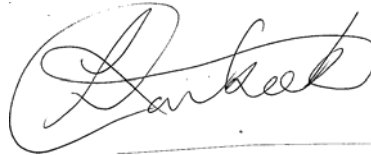
1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

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Attachment 1: Unconfirmed minutes