



Report 14.255  
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Committee Strategy and Policy Committee  
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## WWUP update

### 1. Purpose

To update the Committee on the Wairarapa Water Use Project (WWUP) pre-feasibility work programme.

A verbal presentation will also be provided on the limits framework advanced by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS) and its relevance for WWUP.

### 2. Background

**Attachment 1** provides the indicative pre-feasibility work programme for WWUP. It has previously been circulated to the Committee but included to assist discussion in this paper.

At the last meeting of the Committee, the WWUP update covered findings at review point 1 of the pre-feasibility work programme. Those findings related to the use of rivers for conveying, on-plains storage investigations, and a command area review.

The project is now in the final stages of workstream 2.

### 3. Workstream 2 – Water storage site geotech assessment

Onsite geotechnical investigations at each of the preferred storage locations were undertaken during April and May. This work involved several days at each site by the project's lead consultant, Tonkin & Taylor, and a WWUP team member to assess geotechnical aspects of the storage sites. Outcomes of this work will be available for the project team in mid-June.

This work will provide a greater degree of clarity about the geotechnical risks and opportunities at each site than has previously been available.

It is anticipated that the WWUP team will need to wait until the end of workstream 3, which looks at geotechnical aspects of the distribution networks,

before it can assess the relative merits of the preferred schemes from a geotechnical aspect.

#### **4. Workstream 3 – Geotech assessment of distribution**

Workstream 3 has been initiated with a workshop to confirm engineering assumptions and work plan to assess geotechnical attributes of the distribution networks of each of the preferred schemes.

The work programme has been refocused to better assess the relative merits of each of the schemes rather than focus on a multi-storage approach. This will allow better optimisation of each scheme on an individual basis – matching reservoir capacity with command area. It will also allow a greater understanding of the viability of each of the schemes for selection for full-feasibility phase investigations.

This work will take into account refinements in the command area identified during workstream 1.

#### **5. Workstream 4 – Non engineering assessments**

In parallel with geotechnical investigations of the preferred sites, a range of non-engineering and non-site specific investigations have been initiated.

These investigations are described briefly below.

**Water resource assessment** – lead by GWRC Environmental Science team, this work will cover: water race system; water allocation regime; ground/surface water interaction; ground water model update and long term effects; current water use to understand over and under allocation; and low flow and consent conditions.

**Social impact assessment** – undertakes a high level assessment of social opportunities and challenges based on scenarios of 10,000 and 30,000 hectares of new irrigation.

**Aquatic ecology** – to be undertaken initially in concert with modelling work for the regional plan and whitua processes using a community values based approach.

**Alternative land uses** – a high level analysis of land use options other than those widely used in the Ruamahanga Valley at present.

**Regional economic impact assessment** – provides a high level regional economic impact assessment based on scenarios of 10,000 and 30,000 hectares of new irrigation.

**Recreation study** – undertakes a high level recreation study on the scenarios of 10,000 and 30,000 hectares of new irrigation.

**Gravity feed and on-plains storage** - currently the Black Creek and Te Mara sites require a degree of in-fill pumping of water to fill reservoirs. Gravity feed options for these reservoirs will be considered by Opus in tandem with Tonkin

& Taylor as part of this workstream. Another iteration of on-plains storage investigations is to be scoped.

## **6. Additional work**

In addition to activity summarised within the workstreams above, other areas of work continue to be progressed, include:

### **Stakeholder engagement**

Members of the project team are engaged in one-on-one and electronic communications with landowners. There is an active stream of work to better define engagement and meet needs requested by landowners. As the project is currently still in the investigatory stage, where it is not known which, if any, schemes are viable. Accordingly, the team is somewhat restricted in the depth of engagement at times requested by landowners. Land owner engagement is an important aspect to the project and the team continues to actively manage this.

The next meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group is on 17 July and the Leadership Group meeting is planned for October (date to be confirmed).

### **Farmer demand**

Another iteration of farmer survey work is about to be initiated. This work will expand on earlier survey work, fill in gaps across the command area and solicit a better understanding from farmers about their interest in using stored water.

The interaction with farmers provides a valuable occasion to bring farmers up to speed with WWUP and assist them understand the opportunities and challenges associated with undertaking farming system change to incorporate irrigation.

Farm case studies are also being planned as part of a broader component of a farmer information programme. These showcase several farms with different land uses and characteristics around best practise irrigation techniques, on-farm economics and farm system conversion considerations. Importantly, with field days and associated activity, they will provide farmers with local and real examples of irrigated farming in Wairarapa.

Through this and other work undertaken by WWUP there is increasing engagement with farmer groups.

## **7. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

## **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

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**Attachments:**

1. Indicative pre-feasibility work programme