

## **Media Release**

24 February 2017

For immediate release

### **Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee consider resource management complexities**

Wairarapa's Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee (RWC), charged with developing a community-led plan for land and water management in the Ruamahanga River catchment are pleased to see the water quality debate raised again following yesterday's Ministry for the Environment 'swimability' announcement for NZ's rivers and lakes.

The RWC have been talking extensively to individuals, groups, industry representatives, district councils and governing bodies as they work towards a land and water management plan for the Ruamahanga River catchment. The committee's work will reach a significant milestone within the next two months as a way forward for the Ruamahanga River catchment is debated widely.

"This renewed focus on water management is great timing for the Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee's work. We are about to reach a point where we can reflect back to the community a clear picture of the current status of the Ruamahanga River catchment – not just from a water quality perspective but considering social, cultural, environmental and economic factors," says Peter Gawith, RWC chair.

"We have developed a thorough understanding of community aspirations and believe there is widespread understanding across our catchment that urban needs, agricultural economy and ecology must find a way to balance their often competing interests in the long-term. I believe there is a depth of understanding and willingness to be solutions-oriented locally," says Gawith.

The RWC is working alongside a body of environmental, economic and social scientists to develop a picture of the Ruamahanga River whaitua called a catchment model. This work to develop the model has been a focus for committee and community discussion. Two key RWC streams of work, community values and catchment modelling, will underpin land and water management options that will be discussed widely in the coming months. The resulting Ruamahanga Whaitua Implementation

Programme will form a special chapter in the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Natural Resources Plan, the blueprint for managing natural resources in the region.

"I urge anyone interested in local land and water management that hasn't yet taken part in discussion to take a look at the existing information on the Ruamahanga Whaitua web page and begin to understand some of the complexities of land and water management in our catchment. This will put them in a good position to get involved in some of the critical discussion and decision-making ahead," says Gawith.

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#### NOTES

The Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee is a group of community, iwi, local and regional council representatives developing some local solutions for land and water management in the Ruamahanga River. Part of their work will inform a Ruamahanga Whaitua 'chapter' of the GWRC Natural Resources Plan. [www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua/)

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