

Frequently Asked Questions

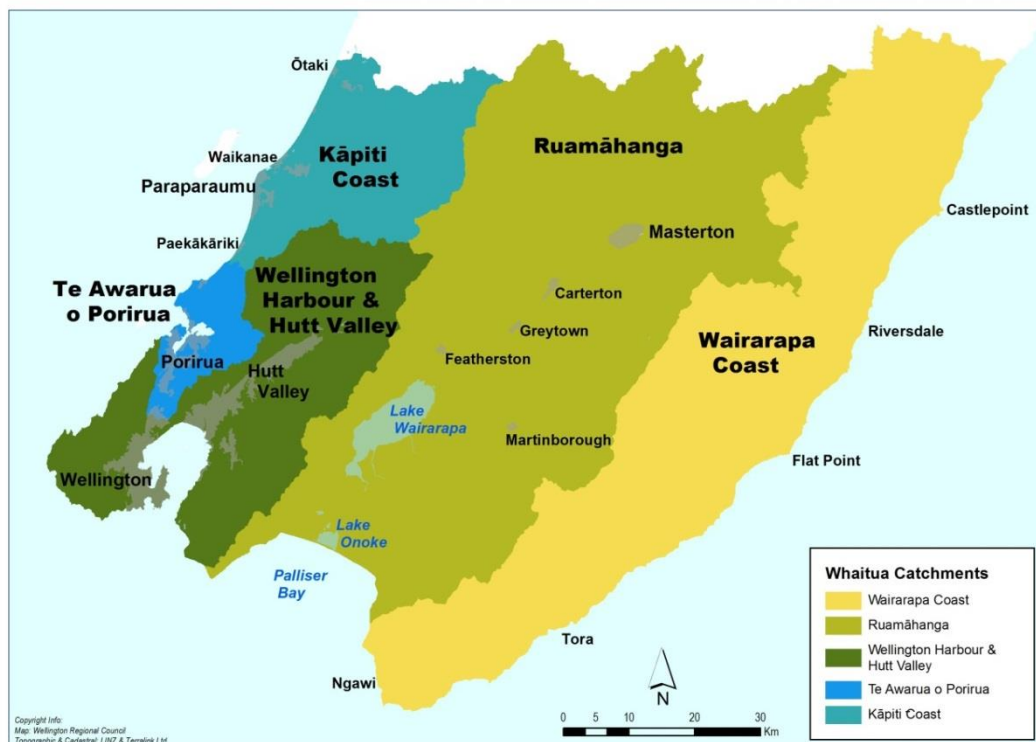
Proposed changes to minimum flows and Category A groundwater restrictions

- **Who are the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee and what are they trying to achieve?**

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee are a group of local people tasked with recommending how land and water should be managed in the future in the Ruamāhanga catchment (the whaitua). They will also recommend water quality and water quantity limits – the maximum resource use allowing environmental outcomes for the catchment to be met. The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) requires water quality and water quantity limits to be set.

The Committee was established by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and combines the knowledge and experience of the community. The Committee consists of representatives from the community, each of the district councils, both local iwi and Greater Wellington Regional Council.

The Committee are working towards producing a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) report which will describe how people in the catchment want to manage their land and water. The Ruamāhanga catchment is shown in light green on the map below.



The Committee will present their Whaitua Implementation Programme to Greater Wellington Regional Council in mid-2018. A plan change will then be drafted to turn the relevant recommendations into a chapter in the regional plan (the proposed Natural Resources Plan).

To find out more about the Committee and their work visit: www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua.

- **What is the proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP)?**

The proposed Natural Resources Plan is a regional document that allows Greater Wellington Regional Council to carry out its obligations under the Resource Management Act (RMA) to sustainably manage the physical and natural resources in the Wellington Region.

The provisions in the pNRP are currently being assessed by an independent hearings panel. The hearings process will be continuing through 2018. This is occurring concurrently to the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee's review of the water allocation provisions for their catchment.

Policies and rules in the pNRP dictate what can be done without a resource consent (permitted activities) and how resource consent applications are assessed and the nature of any conditions on the consent granted.

- **How do the potential water allocation changes proposed by the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee interact with the water allocation parts of the proposed Plan?**

Water allocation parts of the pNRP which have been submitted on will continue to be assessed separately by the hearings panel from the proposals of the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee. If you have submitted on the pNRP this doesn't affect your ability to engage on the Whaitua Committee's potential changes. A separate (and later) submission and hearing process will also be undertaken for the policy direction recommended by the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee.

- **Where can I find out more information on the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee's potential water allocation changes?**

In the next couple of weeks you'll receive a letter with the dates and times of community meetings and drop in sessions where you can learn more about the detailed potential changes. We'll also provide information about how the changes could affect you as a consent holder. The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee really want to hear your feedback and ideas for transitioning any change.

There is more information on our website at: www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua.

- **Does any of this affect how I use my water?**

No. Conditions on your resource consent remain unchanged including any restrictions at times of low flows. Changes to the pNRP or the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee's potential changes may affect your resource consent in the future.

- **When would any potential changes come into effect?**

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee will recommend any changes to water allocation policies to GWRC as part of their WIP in mid-2018. If accepted, the changes will then be part of a future plan change (using another submission and hearing process) to the proposed Natural Resources Plan. Changes would be implemented over a period of time.