

2. Research Methods

After consultation with some members of WWAC and an internal workshop, ESR researchers made the decision to employ qualitative methods. While a survey questionnaire would have been able to access the views of more Tasman residents, it was felt that a variety of qualitative methods would enable exploration of the issues in more depth providing a better understanding of the values and views articulated by participants. In the context of this decision, the process of stakeholder mapping was important in order to ensure that those who had an identifiable stake in the outcome of the feasibility study were included. There were a number of methods used to gather different forms of information and data. The reasons for this were partly practical, driven by time and budget constraints. The other advantage of exploring the same issues through different methods is to make sure that all the relevant issues have been articulated through providing a variety of opportunities and mechanisms to promote people's involvement, rather than relying on just one method with which people may or may not feel comfortable. The research methods used to date are outlined below.

Literature Review

The literature review included relevant reports and documents for Tasman District Council, nationally relevant data, especially literature and discussion documents relating to the Water Programme of Action (a current programme of work led by MfE and MAF) ; and other relevant documents and literature accessed in relation to past and current work undertaken by members of the ESR 'water group' (Allen & Kilvington, 2004; Baker et al, 2004; Furuseth & Lapping, 1999; Jennings & Lockie, 2002; MAF 1997, 2004; Moore, 2000; Pomeroy, 1994; PWC, 2004; Robb et al, 2001; RSNZ, 2003; SLIM, 2004).

Ongoing observation and involvement

It was very important for the researchers to familiarise themselves with the Waimea region and to get a general feel of the area – the ways in which the Tasman area is experiencing growth and the issues associated with that; to visit the Wairoa, Lee and Waimea Rivers; and to learn about the characteristics of the underground aquifers on the plains, such as how and where the aquifers are recharged with water from the Wairoa/Waimea Rivers.

Developing research relationships requires researchers to respond to listen to and demonstrate genuine interest in people's concerns and understanding of the issues involved. It also means being open to opportunities for learning, such as:

- Attending the Integrated Catchment Management field day.
- Learning about the Wai-iti storage project which has informed development of the Feasibility Study.
- Being open to suggestions of who else the research team should talk with.
- Attending the Water Programme of Action consultation meetings in Tasman in February.

Stakeholder mapping

This was a structured exercise to identify the stakeholders of the Feasibility Study. This mapping exercise included examining where stakeholders best 'fitted' in the context of the Feasibility study and how others might see them in relation to the categories below. This mapping exercise provided a method for identifying and prioritising who, or what groups, the research team should talk with, although the aim was to include as many stakeholders or stakeholder groups as possible within budget and time constraints.

'Urgency' referred to those stakeholders who would be directly affected by a proposed storage dam; 'legitimacy' referred to those stakeholders who have a 'right' to be consulted whether through legal, statutory or institutional positions. 'Power' referred to those who potentially could affect decision-making (or RMA consent outcomes). Most stakeholders identified fell into overlapping areas. This exercise enabled identifying the 'stake' different groups or individuals had in the potential dam option, and provided a framework for selecting appropriate research methods.

Individual interviews

Eighteen individual interviews were carried out with a cross section of stakeholders. These provided contextual understanding of the water issues facing the Tasman District Council, productive growers in the Waimea region, business interests and a range of government and NGO agencies. A meeting with NIRMAK (Nelson Iwi Resource Management Komiti) and attending the ICM field day also provided opportunities to talk with iwi representatives about water issues that are of concern to M?ori.

Family survey

A family survey has been available to those interviewed and others who have expressed an interest, as well as enlisting the help of schools in the Waimea area (primary, intermediate and secondary) to distribute thirty surveys to pupils who have a recreational (or other) interest in the Wairoa, Lee and/or Waimea Rivers. The aim of the survey was to include family-based activities and values related to the rivers, and provide a space for the voices of parents and youth in the wider Waimea area. Thirty-three survey responses were received and analysed. The intent of the survey was not to obtain representative generalisable data, but to get a feel for the kinds of activities in which families engaged and the frequency with which they carried out those activities. The summarised data from the family surveys is included in Appendix Two.

Focus groups

Focus group discussions were held with seven Lee Valley residents and fifteen Wairoa Valley residents. The aim of the focus groups was to identify their activities and values relating to the two rivers as well as their perceptions of the activities and values relating to freshwater in the region of people living on the Waimea plains (outside the valleys). Issues around ongoing consultation and access to information were also discussed. The information from focus groups was captured in the form of field notes and 'rich pictures' (Checkland & Scholes, 1990) such as the one below.

Workshops

Two public workshops were held on the 26th and 27th of January 2005, the first for water permit holders (productive land owners) on the Waimea Plain, and the second for interested members of the public. This workshop included representation from iwi, as well as approximately seven participants who identified themselves in terms of environmental interests, seven with a recreational interest, and several who defined themselves as residents of the Waimea region with interests in both productive land use and recreational activities associated with the rivers (such as hunting, fishing, and kayaking). Attendance at these workshops was through researcher-initiated invitation (based on the stakeholder mapping exercise) and through public notices in the Nelson Daily Mail over a two-week period. These were structured workshops aimed at exploring participants' core values relating to freshwater in the region, reflecting on the possible impact of drought (and water shortages), and finally identifying the impact of water management options on the core values identified. Included – or 'compulsory' – in the water management options was a storage dam or dams, the focus of the Feasibility Study. Participants were also asked to state what surety of supply the different options identified could provide and how they should be financed.