



STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Subcommittee

FROM: Neil Tyson, Consent Planner - Water

REFERENCE: W326

SUBJECT: **UPPER MOTUEKA WATER METERING / WATER USER COMMITTEE - REPORT EP06/08/14** – Report Prepared for 28 August Meeting

1. WATER METERING

Water metering by consent holders in Upper Motueka Zone (UMZ) was signaled by Council in Schedule 31.1B PTRMP with an implementation/meter installation date of 2006. The policy basis for water metering is set out in Policy 30.2.11 of the Tasman Resource Management Plan (PTRMP) and states:

- a) to ensure compliance with permit allocations or allocation limits; or
- b) when there is full allocation of water in a zone; or
- c) when there is a need for water use data to assess effects of abstraction on a water resource or in relation to an allocation limit; or
- d) in any zone where there is a rationing trigger.

All the above apply in the UMZ where there is an operative Water Conservation (Motueka River) Order 2004 and where the allocation limit for three of the four subzones has now been reached as can be seen in the following table.

Table 1:

UPPER MOTUEKA ZONE		
ALLOCATION STATUS (JUNE 2006)	ALLOCATION	CURRENT
	LIMIT	
Wangapeka Subzone	265	265
Motupiko Subzone	110	110
Tadmor Subzone (total augmented flow)	56	56
Tapawera Plains Subzone	515	395
Unnamed Subzone (inc Baton, Dove to)	<u>54</u>	<u>105</u>
	1000	931

From Table 1, the total allocation for the UMZ under the PTRMP is 1000 l/sec. The Dove catchment, Stanley Brook, Baton and the small area down to Woodstock also fall within the UMZ. Including all current water permits, 931 l/sec (+/-10 l/sec) of the 1000 l/sec is currently allocated as of June 2006. Since then three additional consents have been granted and two-four applications are pending (e.g “further information” status) in the Tapawera Subzone. In other words, we are close to full allocation in the UMZ if the Dove catchment, where consents total approx 95 l/sec, continues to be included.

Accurate and timely water meter data is an essential tool in managing the District’s valuable and limited water resource. The information is used for:

- Management of the districts water resources and improving/enhancing future understanding of the system;
- Monitor the effectiveness and suitability of the policy provisions within the TRMP and the exercise of resource consents;
- Bona fide review/renewal of existing consents; and
- Compliance with drought restrictions

Where meters are not already installed, they are required for all consented takes in the UMZ by 1 October 2006, in time for this 2006/7 summer. The need for meters was confirmed when the majority of UMZ water permits expired and were renewed during 2004, and consent conditions to this effect were imposed at that time. Approximately eight consents did not expire in 2004 as they have 2026 expiry dates under the RMA.

During 2006, staff wrote to all UMZ consent holders reminding them of the water meter requirement and advising that no exceptions or exemptions had been granted. This letter also included an invitation to consent holders still requiring a meter to contact Council staff if they wanted to be involved in a bulk purchase of meters which Council staff offered to arrange. Bulk buying has been common practice where metering is proposed in a new zone. Staff visit the users who express an interest and identify the optimal location for a meter and the meter size required. Staff then collate the numbers and arrange for the bulk purchase of meters through a local supplier. Incidentally, the invitation was extended to new consent holders in the Waiti Dam Service Zone (WDSZ). Of the potential 100 or so meters required for both (ie UMZ and WDSZ) zones, 18 meters were ordered through this process and these will be available for installation prior to October 2006.

The bulk buy process is considered win-win, as users obtain meters at a good price and Council benefits in that we get a good quality meter that complies with the Council’s *Water Meter Specifications* as stated in the PTRMP.

2. METER INSPECTIONS AND DATA COLLECTION

Prior to summer 2006, users will be posted forms for recording weekly meter readings. These forms are then required to be returned (postage paid) each month, November to April inclusive. Even if consent holders are not irrigating they are asked to advise via a NIL USE form so that Council has a complete record and compliance action doesn't result.

Once the meter is installed, a Council staff person will call to check the installation and meter details. Users don't need to be present for these checks unless the meter is in a locked shed or otherwise difficult to locate.

This summer water users will have a great tool for getting the best out of their irrigation system and Council will get accurate data on actual water use.

3. (UMZ) WATER USER COMMITTEE

Water Rationing in the UMZ requires consultation with the Upper Motueka Zone Water User Committee regarding possible water rationing when the flow of the Motueka River at Council's Woodstock recorder site falls to 7,500 litres per second.

Rationing in the UMZ pursuant to the WCO and the PTRMP, requires actual consumptive use to not exceed 12% of the flow at Council's Woodstock recorder and, for Wangapeka users, to not exceed 6% of the flow at Council's Walters Peak recorder. In fact, when the Tapawera Subzone becomes fully allocated, Step 1 is unlikely to be triggered earlier than a 12 year low flow (approximately 6,250 litres per second). Until full allocation is reached, rationing will occur less frequently than this. To implement rationing, Council needs to review total allocations in each zone at least annually to determine the river flow at which rationing would be triggered and this trigger flow needs to be made available to the user committee and permit holders prior to the irrigation season.

The meeting of UMZ users planned for 7.00pm, 28 August 2006, Tapawera Community Centre, is therefore both timely and opportune as it provides for an election of user representatives for the UMZ, with the aim of representation from each subzone.

Under Policy 30.1.26 PTRMP, Council encourages and supports the functioning of water user committees in water management zones with representatives, as appropriate, from abstractive users, iwi, dischargers of contaminants, those affected by the water extraction or diversion, and those with an interest in instream uses and values, including the Department of Conservation and the Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council, to:

- a) advise the Council in the development and implementation of water management policies;
- b) assist the Council in managing water usage during drought periods, including assistance with rationing or rostering arrangements;
- c) assist the Council in implementing programmes of education and advocacy for good practice methods of water use;

d) assist the Council in the development of water classification standards

It is understood the current water user committee was elected in 1999.

N Tyson

Consent Planner, Water