

**ISSUES**

This chapter addresses seven broad issues: 1. Adverse effects on ecosystems and habitats; 2. Recognition of the significance of water and water bodies to tangata whenua; 3. Effects of activities on river bed stability and channel efficiency; 4. Impacts on water quality from stock and vehicle access; 5. Risks from hazards; 6. Impacts on natural character, landscape, cultural, recreational and amenity values; and 7. Identification and protection of key uses and values of rivers and lakes.

Provisions are largely concerned with minimising the impacts of activities on river and lake beds and surfaces. In this regard, the provisions have been relatively successful in avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects of activities. There has been an improvement in the provision of fish passage for Council-owned river and stream structures, and changes in Council’s asset management planning have led to less reliance on hard flood and erosion protection to more natural options, including riparian planting and structures that maintain natural river characteristics.

Rivers and lakes within conservation estate are in good condition, however monitoring shows many of our lowland rivers and lakes are not as healthy as they need to be, particularly small streams less than 3m wide. Biodiversity is degraded and declining, with more than half of our native fish species listed as At-Risk or Nationally Vulnerable due to degradation of habitat in waterways and effects of land use activities, particularly in relation to activities that increase sedimentation, nutrient runoff and contamination of waterways. Some fish species such as Giant Kokopu may have become locally extinct in parts of Tasman. Natural character is degraded and lowland rivers and lakes are under pressure from urban and rural land uses, and the need to manage flooding and erosion. Many mahinga kai sites are degraded or unavailable, and localised places have water quality attributes below the NPS-FM ‘D’ band.

Integrated management of water is vital. River and lake beds, their waters and adjacent riparian margins function together to provide for biodiversity, water quality and ecosystem health and resilience. Objectives seeking environmental enhancement for streams, rivers and lakes have proven difficult to achieve through the implementation of rules and could be strengthened in order to require or incentivise restoration and enhancement.

**MANDATORY STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

The Council must recognise and provide for several of the matters addressed by this chapter as matters of national importance under RMA Section 6 or other matters under Section 7. Council must implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) including any amendments, and must ensure the Tasman Environment Plan (TEP) gives effect to Te Mana O Te Wai by placing the needs of water and ecosystem health as a first priority when managing freshwater bodies and their margins. Other key national instruments that must also be implemented include the NZCPS and NPS for Renewable Energy Generation.

A new national environmental standard on Freshwater and national regulations for stock exclusion are anticipated in mid 2020 which Council will need to enforce.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Implement relevant national instruments, including the NPS-FM, ensuring the TEP embeds Te Mana O Te Wai.
2. Update the values and uses of water in line with the NPS-FM and review how these are integrated across the freshwater chapters.
3. Improve the integrated management of waterbodies, including integration with district, regional and coastal chapters and holistic consideration of margin areas and their connected waters, incorporating ki uta ki tai, and having regard to climate change.
4. Better reflect the expectations and aspirations of iwi, including protection of sites of importance, such as culturally significant areas and valued mahinga kai (food gathering sites).
5. Strengthen the rules to require or incentivise restoration and enhancement of waterbodies through the resource consent process.
6. Relocate dam safety aspects to enable this to be considered for all dams and promote and enable off-stream dams for water storage.
7. Review the gravel extraction limits to ensure they avoid over extraction and bed degradation in river systems.
8. Review management of fish passage for private structures.
9. Provide further direction in addressing the conflicts between river bed and channel management for flood and erosion control and ecological outcomes sought, including protections of bird nesting sites in rivers.
10. Clarify and strengthen implementation through non-regulatory methods, including ongoing funding and monitoring, to help achieve the outcomes sought, including channel enhancement and restoration.

**Provisions: extent of change**

