

## **13 WATER RESOURCES**

### **13.1 Background**

Water resources within Upper Hutt include rivers, streams, ground water, and wetlands. As a resource, water is essential to the City's economic, social and environmental well-being.

The Wellington Regional Council has primary responsibility for the sustainable management of water resources within Upper Hutt by controlling the taking or diversion of water, the discharge of contaminants into water bodies and maintenance and enhancement of water quality. It also manages the use of river and lake beds.

The role of the Upper Hutt City Council is important in managing the effects of land use activities on water resources and the control of activities on the surface of water bodies.

### **13.2 Resource Management Issues**

#### **13.2.1 *Water quality can be adversely affected by land use activities.***

A good standard of water quality is important for the quality of aquatic life and for human use. Any reduction in quality may reduce the health of ecosystems, and require treatment for human consumption and recreation activities.

Streams and rivers flowing from indigenous forests and mature plantation forests which have not been disturbed for a considerable period of time, such as the Wellington Region water supply catchments, generally have the highest natural water quality.

Activities adjoining water bodies may have the greatest effect upon water quality through discharges, point and non-point sources.

Vegetation clearance and earthworks, particularly within steeper slopes of catchment areas, contribute to increased surface water run off and sedimentation and chemicals entering watercourses.

Contamination of water resources may also occur as a result of some agricultural activities. Animal effluent and fertilisers may enter waterways directly or as non-point discharges in groundwater leaching through soils, depending upon soil conditions.

Other activities which impact upon water quality are a result of inadequate management practices, including leachate from landfills, pollution spills, stormwater or leaks from hazardous substance storage and septic tanks.

**13.2.2                    *Activities on river surfaces have the potential to cause a reduction in water quality.***

Activities undertaken on water surfaces have the potential to adversely affect water quality and aquatic habitats through pollution, disturbance of the river bed and food sources, and habitat destruction. Effects may also arise as a result of access to and from the river surface by disturbing bank stability and habitats.

**13.2.3                    *Providing access and recreation along water bodies, whilst avoiding conflict amongst users and minimising the potential adverse effects of these activities on the areas adjoining the water bodies.***

The Hutt River and its four main tributaries, the Whakatiki, Akatarawa, Pakuratahi and Mangaroa Rivers have scenic, recreational and ecological importance. Access to these rivers and riverbank areas, and recreation opportunities along their lengths, are important to the local community. The Hutt River is the main recreation resource, as it has easy access and a large river berm. While activities on the rivers currently do not cause significant conflicts or adverse effects on the surrounding area, it is possible that conflicts or adverse effects may arise as the demand for outdoor sport increases. For example, potential conflict could occur between different water-based recreation activities such as motorised boats and people who are fishing. In addition, water based recreation may introduce adverse effects upon neighbouring land uses such as the safety of adjacent roads and the amenity of reserves. In some instances, public access to water bodies may also be restricted in order to protect assets located alongside the water body or for the protection of water quality in water supply catchment areas.

<b>13.3</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
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**13.3.1                    *The protection and enhancement of the high water quality and diversity of aquatic habitats in the City's water bodies.***

Water quality is important for the health and well-being of the environment and community. Water quality within Upper Hutt is generally of a high standard but it can be affected by adjoining land use activities.

**13.3.2                    *The provision of access to water bodies and the management of activities on water bodies in a manner that does not result in undue adverse effects on the environment and which avoids conflict between users and with adjoining land uses.***

Public access to rivers is important to the community. The Hutt River has public access along the majority of its length. Access to many rural rivers and streams is gained through informal arrangements over private land, or the access is held as public land. As land adjoining rivers and streams is developed, formal access can be obtained through the subdivision process. This allows a City-wide network to be developed. The public benefits gained from enhanced access to rivers must be weighed against the effects (for example, loss of privacy) on adjoining properties.

The City Council is responsible for managing activities on the surface of rivers. It is important that activities which use the surface of water bodies be provided for, while ensuring that the effects of these activities are compatible with the conservation, visual, intrinsic, cultural and other important values of the water body.

<b>13.4</b>	<b>Policies</b>
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**13.4.1                    *To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of land use activities on the quality or quantity of water resources and the diversity of aquatic habitats.***

The focus of the District Plan is on managing the adverse effects of activities on the City's natural and physical resources, including water resources. Land use activities, and any waste products they generate, have the potential to affect the quality and quantity of water resources. Contamination of water resources is of special concern to tangata whenua, not only in that rivers and streams are important as mahinga kai (food sources), but because purity of water resources is also of spiritual and cultural significance. Water resources are essential to the functioning of living systems. The Council will promote responsible land use practices which avoid contamination of water resources.

The District Plan should be consistent with the water resource management approach of the Regional Council when managing land use activities which may affect water resources.

**13.4.2** *To promote the separation of land use activities adjoining water bodies by vegetated riparian areas to assist in filtering contaminants which adversely affect water quality and aquatic habitats.*

Establishing vegetated riparian areas along a water body protects water from sedimentation and nutrient and chemical pollution, maintains stream bank stability, and minimises temperature and light fluctuations by filtering contaminants.

Esplanade reserves provide a formal method of providing vegetated riparian areas but similar areas can also be promoted through resource consent conditions, esplanade strips, or performance standards within the Plan.

**13.4.3** *To ensure that activities on the surface of rivers within the City take place without significant adverse effects on other users and the aquatic habitat.*

River surfaces in Upper Hutt are an important recreation resource. Activities on river surfaces can directly affect the aquatic habitat, river banks and water quality. Potential problems are caused by motorised boats, which may conflict with other people using the river.

**13.4.4** *To promote the establishment of esplanade reserves and esplanade strips for the purposes of enhancing public access, recreation, riparian protection, water quality and ecological values along the main rivers and waterways adjoining specified watercourses.*

Esplanade reserves represent the formal means of ensuring protection of water bodies from the adverse effects of activities and should be set aside where possible for protection of public access and for water quality reasons. Esplanade reserves and strips have recreational potential, high conservation values, or provide continuity with adjoining reserves and land uses. For access and conservation purposes, esplanade reserves and strips may be acquired upon subdivision along specified watercourses.

Along stretches of the Hutt River, there are continuous esplanade reserves and informal trails. From north of Birchville, to where the Hutt River exits the Kaitoke Regional Park, there is a significant gap in the esplanade corridor. Council may seek to create esplanade reserves here to enhance the access to provide for recreation, and to promote the environmental qualities of the river margin.

The Mangaroa River has significant conservation values. It is identified as an important spawning area for fish. The river below Mangaroa Road has considerable scenic value and offers many recreational opportunities. Apart from small isolated pockets at the junction of Wallaceville and Mangaroa Roads, there is no esplanade reserve.

Fishing in the Akatarawa River at the Birchville junction is a major attraction. Opportunities to create additional esplanade reserves through subdivision are restricted because the land is already held in small parcels. To enable public access and protection of river banks and water quality, Council may promote the provision of esplanade reserves and strips where practicable.

The Pakuratahi River and the Whakatiki River offer a natural fishing location that is close to the urban area. When water levels are appropriate, the Whakatiki is popular with kayakers. Currently, there are few esplanade reserves along these rivers, but demand for these may become more important in the future. Esplanade reserves along the Pakuratahi River will not be necessary within Kaitoke Regional Park unless the Wellington Regional Council withdraws from the area.

The Mawaihakona Stream is a natural link between several of the City's major recreational facilities, specifically the Hutt River, Heretaunga Park and Trentham Memorial Park. As this stream is a habitat for significant wildlife, management of the stream margins is desirable.

Hull's Creek has been modified in shape and orientation and consequently it has limited conservation values to protect. The creek provides a logical aesthetic pedestrian link from central Silverstream to the Hutt River.

The land adjoining Cooleys Creek, Huia Stream and Narrow Neck Stream has relatively intensive stock usage. The potential downstream effects by stock, from the uninterrupted access to the water and its margins, are substantial. Esplanade strips would assist in managing the water margin areas to produce improved water quality and natural habitats. With the exception of Narrow Neck stream, public access or recreational activities are not necessary. However, there is potential for the course of Narrow Neck Stream up from Whitemans Valley Road to link into Wellington Regional Council and Department of Conservation land along the Rimutaka Ranges. Such a link would be for access purposes so it need only be a minimum width and confined to one bank. Farming activities need not be interrupted.

Council already owns reserves along the lower reaches of Collins Creek adjoining the Mangaroa River, in its mid portion along Plateau Road and near the end of Plateau Road. The creek is a natural pedestrian link from the Hutt River to Tunnel Gully recreational area. Tunnel Gully links in with the abandoned rail line route that leads to the Rimutaka Incline Walkway. This walkway could connect with the Hutt River trail via Collins Creek, thus connecting the Wairarapa with Wellington Harbour. This pedestrian route should be guaranteed in perpetual public ownership. As the link is principally for access purposes, it need not be wide or on both sides of the creek, with the exception of the lower reaches of Collins Creek near Mangaroa Road due to the environmental qualities confined to one bank of this section of the Creek.

<b>13.5</b>	<b>Methods</b>
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- 13.5.1** District Plan provisions consisting of the following:
1. Provision of setbacks to act as buffer zones to protect water bodies from earthworks and vegetation clearance.
  2. Subdivision requirements for esplanade reserves and strips along specified water bodies.
  3. Management of the effects generated by activities on river surfaces.
  4. Setbacks of buildings from the banks of water bodies.
- 13.5.2** Liaison with the Wellington Regional Council to develop guidelines on safe land use practices as part of any relevant Regional Plan.
- 13.5.3** The management of riparian strips along water bodies for protection and maintenance of water quality. Where it is not possible to formally obtain esplanade reserves or strips, the Council may enter into negotiations with landowners as to the management of such areas. Management may involve retiring the area from production, restricting stock access or re-vegetating the area.
- 13.5.4** Public education on land use practices that enhance water quality and reduce opportunities for pollution and sedimentation of water bodies.
- 13.5.5** Council's reserve management plans for reserves in the Council's ownership.
- 13.5.6** Management of Council's works and services. This would include Council ensuring that stormwater and sewage disposal systems (public and private systems) protect the City's water resources.

### 13.6 Anticipated environmental results and monitoring

The following results are expected to be achieved by the objectives, policies and methods of this Chapter. The means of monitoring whether this Plan achieves the anticipated environmental results are also set out below.

Anticipated environmental results	Monitoring indicators	Data source
Minimal adverse effects on the City's water resources and the associated ecosystems and values	Type and compliance with conditions of land use consents  Number of allotments and compliance with conditions of subdivision consents	Council resource consent records and Wellington Regional Council records
Minimal conflict between activities occurring on the surface of water bodies	Complaints and enforcement proceedings  Consultation	Council and Police records and Wellington Regional Council records
A balance between the public desire for access and the protection of the environmental values of the water body, its margins and adjoining land uses	Complaints and enforcement proceedings.  Any adverse effects on resources  Additions to reserves, esplanades, access strips and voluntary establishment thereof  Consultation regarding access requirements	Council records and Wellington Regional Council records      Department of Conservation and community groups