

ISSUES

This chapter addresses five broad issues: 1. Effects of point-source and diffuse contaminant discharges to land and water; 2. Emergency or accidental discharges of contaminants; 3. The capacity of urban stormwater networks and the effects of contaminants discharged in stormwater; 4. Effects of onsite disposal of domestic wastewater; and 5. Management of contaminated sites.

Assessment of effects through the resource consent processes has enabled Council to control the impacts of discharges on water quality in many instances, typically in relation to point source (i.e. end of pipe) discharges. Key shortcomings with the Chapter include the challenge of managing non-point source discharges (particularly sediment, nutrients and microbial pathogens), the lack of provisions addressing tangata whenua interests in water management, the lack of policies addressing the effects of discharges to land (as opposed to water), and the need to update the schedules relating to water body uses and values.

Review is needed to ensure stormwater provisions enable council to control the quality of water discharged to public owned networks and reflect the more holistic catchment management approaches being adopted. Review is also needed with regard to the changed functions of council for hazardous substances and contaminated soils and consideration of options for more efficient and effective management of on-site wastewater.

Overall, monitoring data shows that Tasman District has relatively few water quality issues compared to other parts of New Zealand, due to the District’s large rivers having a significant proportion of native forest in their headwaters. Therefore, any inputs of pollutants from developed land in the middle and lower reaches are substantially diluted by the large volume of high quality water from upstream. Nevertheless, there has been a deterioration in the health of water quality and associated habitats and native fish stock, particularly for small streams. This is linked to intensive land uses, including agriculture, horticulture and residential development, and related activities that lead to an increase in sedimentation, nutrient runoff and contamination of waterways. The close connection between land use activities and effects on fresh and coastal water quality therefore requires stronger integration between regional and district provisions in the TRMP.

MANDATORY STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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. 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, in addition to anticipated amendments of the NES for drinking water sources.

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 rules to require or incentivise restoration and enhancement of waterbodies through the resource consent process.
6. Provide supporting objectives and policies addressing discharges to land and non-point discharges, and provide clear implementation pathways through rules (including compliance), and non-regulatory methods.
7. Ensure consistency with the Water Conservations Orders in Buller, Motueka and anticipated for Te Waikoropupū
8. Consider rules for small contaminant discharges and emerging contaminants
9. Review the provisions for on-site wastewater, hazardous substances, contaminated soils and stormwater to reflect changes to both legislation and best practice.

