

Report 15.204
Date 7 May 2015
File E/12/01/04

Committee Council
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Report on Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Management Committee meeting, 7 May 2015

1. Purpose

To inform the Council of Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Management Committee (the Committee) meeting of 31 March 2015.

2. Public participation

The Committee received a presentation from Dr Mike Joy, senior lecturer from Massey University. Dr Joy outlined current trends in nitrate levels in New Zealand freshwater catchments and the impacts of these trends on ecosystems. The presentation also highlighted the impact of the 2014 National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management on the classification of nitrate levels.

3. Reports

3.1 Performance report for the quarter ended 31 March 2015

The Committee reviewed the performance report for the quarter ended 31 March 2015, which provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Environmental Policy, Environmental Regulation and Environmental Science departments.

The Committee discussed the issue of caps on nitrate levels in New Zealand freshwater catchments. It was agreed that specific catchment based limits were a better option than a general limit.

The committee noted that nitrogen is not the sole determinant of the health of a freshwater ecosystem and agreed that a more complex approach, taking into account nitrogen levels along with other factors needs to be considered. This meant that setting specific catchment based limits rather than general limits should be preferred as part of the Whaitua process.

The committee further noted the development of the Collaborative Modelling Project (CMP). The project, co-ordinated by the SSI team, is aimed at developing a knowledge framework which will ensure that the committee has all the knowledge and experience to answer the questions that the Whaitua will likely to have about land use and the impacts on water quality.

4. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

4.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

5. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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Report approved by:

Cr Chris Laidlaw
Co-Chair, Te Upoko Taiao –
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Committee