

Water allocation policy package story

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee has been working to construct a draft policy package for water allocation that recognises the many values of water in the catchment. From the understanding that the mauri of the wai supports the mauri of the people, the Committee is aiming to deliver a policy package that recognises water sustains people's livelihoods and that the sustainable use of water brings resilience and prosperity. All people of the whaitua need to be involved in efforts to ensure water is used efficiently and with care.

The key parts of the Committee's draft water allocation policy package and why the Committee have reached this point are summarised below. Details on specific areas of the policy package and how the policy package comes together for eight large rivers are described in supporting documents (see diagram over page). The next step for the Committee is to seek feedback from the whaitua community in order to finalise a water allocation policy package by the end of 2017.

The key parts of the draft policy package for water allocation in the Ruamāhanga whaitua are:

- To adjust minimum flows on the major rivers to provide for greater protection of fish habitat and to better protect rivers from the pressure of climate change that will, over time, drive drier summers and lower flows in rivers. The largest shifts in minimum flows are on the Upper Ruamāhanga River and Waipoua River
- To keep allocation limits for surface water and directly connected groundwater the same as they are currently consented in order to provide for the sustainable use of water
- That all changes to water quantity limits and how they affect users are phased in through time, particularly where changes are significant
- To require users of water to manage their take and use in a more equitable manner and to ensure good management practice, including to:
 - Seek efficiency gains when consents are renewed across all water use activities
 - Promote small-scale storage on urban and rural properties in order to increase resilience and to encourage everyone to take part in improving water use efficiency
 - Require takes from directly connected groundwater to reduce and cease at times of low flows in rivers in the same way that surface water takes are managed
 - Require community supply takes to do more to reduce take at minimum flows, while protecting the ability to take water for people's domestic needs
 - Reduce water races takes at minimum flows to only that water required to provide for people's domestic needs and stock drinking needs

- How water is allocated on consent expiry – TBC at 25.09.2017 workshop
- To change permitted activity take rules to provide for certainty in taking water for domestic and stock drinking needs, and to more tightly restrict other permitted takes, including to require these to cease take at minimum flow as is required of consented takes
- To collect better information on water take and use, including of permitted activity takes, in order to provide for more transparent accounting of water use and better management into the future
- Recognition that the achievement of freshwater objectives is dependent on the health of a river being addressed as a whole, and consequently the need to integrate policy tools for river management and managing discharges and land use with water allocation tools as these are developed

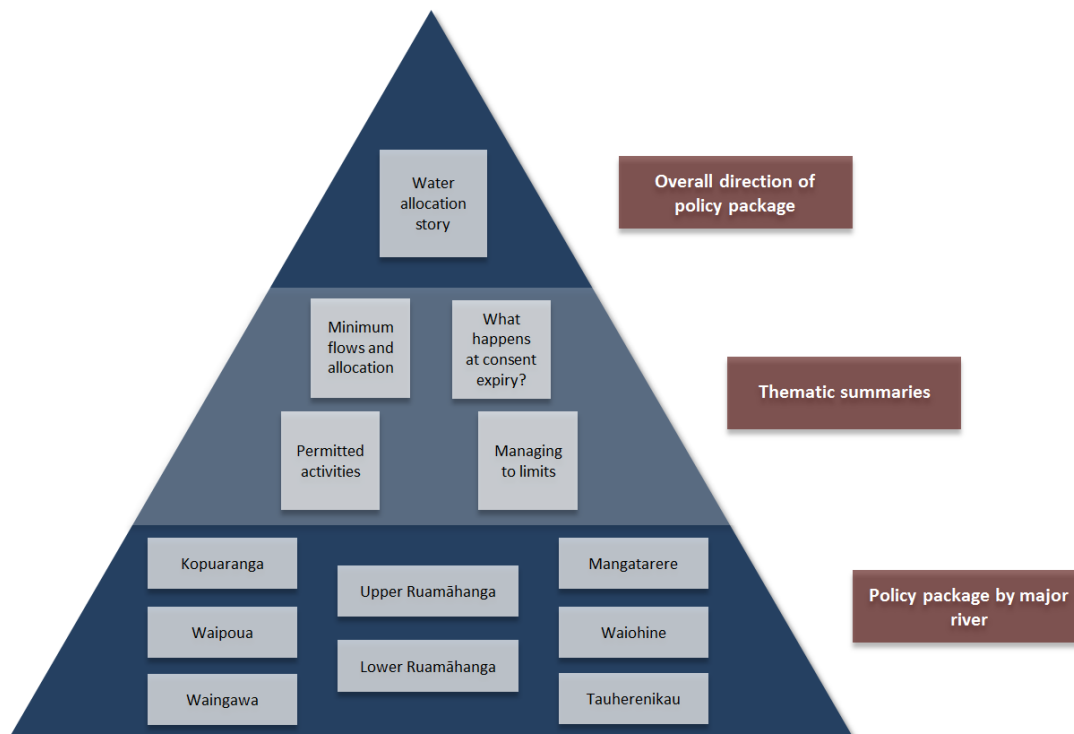


Figure 1 Draft water allocation package documents