

NPS-FM 2020 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - ROUND TWO.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed values, visions and environmental outcomes as defined after the first round of consultation. As you can see in our earlier submission our focus is on the Wairau FMU, specifically on the health of the Wairau aquifer and how we best manage our efforts to maintain the health of the aquifer, particularly considering the observed ongoing, declining trend in the aquifer. Our original submission lays out our belief that "*ecosystem health*" must always be given the highest priority above the other three compulsory values in all freshwater management decisions throughout all the FMU's.

We have a concern that the incoming government may wish to diminish the "*Hierarchy of Obligations*" laid out in the National Objectives Framework (NOF) and would be dismayed if this should happen. We ask the MDC to be alert to and to resist any such diminishment.

Do you agree with the proposed values?

Climate Karanga Marlborough (CKM) agree with the proposed values that have resulted from the first round of consultation. We give our support to these values on the understanding that "*ecosystem health*" always be given highest priority. We believe that any pressure exerted by people who wish to interfere with values related to ecosystem health should be resisted.

We do wonder if something essential has been missed in defining the values. We absolutely support the importance of giving consideration to Wai Tapu. Yet beyond that we see an overarching value, which may be defined as the *Mauri*, the Life force, of the Wairau River and all its associated tributaries and aquifers. Vibrant ecosystem health is the means of knowing if that *Mauri* is healthy and intact. In our first submission we stated that "*the goal of human freshwater management practice must be to respect te Mana o te Wai, to recognise water as having needs beyond just being a resource for human beings, and for us to work with Nature and processes natural to Aotearoa rather than against them.*" Naturally we believe this value should apply equally to all FMU's. Water is Life – it's as simple as that.

Do you agree with the proposed visions?

Overall, CKM support and agree with them and we would go further. The statement in your document, "*The health of the waterbodies and freshwater ecosystems are maintained, protected, and enhanced for current and future generations*" implies current and future generations of humankind. From our perspective the maintenance, protection and enhancement must be done primarily for the ecosystem itself, for *Papatūānuku*. Human beings are just one of the multitude of current and future generations of living species that rely on "*the waterbodies and freshwater ecosystems*" for their survival. We are inextricably connected with all the other species. We would encourage removing any expression of a dominating human supremacist view that can tend to take precedence in vision statements such as this. A recognition of our role as stewards would not go amiss.

Do you think we are meeting these visions now?

In regard to the Wairau Aquifer we would have to say no. Our concerns are well laid out in our earlier submission.

In the proposed vision you state - "*The Wairau River and its tributaries, the Wairau Aquifer and Wairau Plain Springs are protected and enhanced, continuing to be highly valued throughout Marlborough for the wide range of benefits they bring to the region.*" We fully support this vision, but we note once more that there is no recognition of the specific issue of the declining trend in the aquifer. The significant impact on the *Mauri* and health of the springs in particular, and aquifer in

general, should this trend continue, let alone the potential impact on users of the aquifer water seems relevant to us. Thanks to the wisdom of the MDC in commissioning scientific research work on the Wairau aquifer, we now have a good knowledge of what the main contributors to the declining trend are, but still don't know if the recharge of the aquifer can be improved enough to reverse this trend. It seems possible to us after studying the Gravel Beds River research that the historic confining of the river between its stop banks may be a factor that cannot be overcome just with changed management methods and that the decline may continue despite all our best efforts. This begs the question - to what degree can we allow nature and the river itself to take their course in restoring the health of the aquifer? We are not clear how this knowledge can be best expressed within the values, visions and environmental outcomes categories?

Do you agree with the proposed environmental outcomes?

We note in your document's statement, "*Healthy functioning ecological processes occur in waterbodies and their margins, including primary production, nutrient cycling, trophic connectivity as well as life cycle functions such as feeding, migration, reproduction*", that primary production takes precedence. We accept that this list of "*healthy functioning ecological processes*" may not be in any particular order of priority, but we find it telling that primary production comes first. From our perspective "*life cycle functions such as feeding, migration, reproduction*" are of the highest priority. Primary production must be subservient to these functions. In other words, if compromises are required, then they should be made first by those wanting to engage in primary production not the other way around. The statement of environmental outcomes should reflect this.

Conclusion.

There is a human tendency for making grand statements of intent, yet when the pressure builds for utilisation of nature and its resources, too often human needs are prioritised above those of Papatūānuku. So, CKM is encouraging vigilance at all times to ensure that ecosystem health always comes top priority, even if that means we have to forgo previously assumed rights over freshwater and access to freshwater. If we can do this, then all species reliant on these lifegiving waters, not only humankind, will reap the rewards.