

LWQS submission on Plan Change 10: Lake Rotorua Nutrient Management

Submission Deadline: 4pm Wed 27th April 2016



*Signatories to the
Oturoa Agreement
18th February 2013*

Perfect solutions like perfect men are very rare

with apologies to Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

Key Point # 1

It's not just about the Lake

The end goal of the Rotorua Lakes Programme is **safe recreational use** of the targeted lakes; for Lake Rotorua this is water quality as experienced in the 1960s.

But this is **not just about an arbitrary water quality standard.**

It also about sustainable agriculture for future generations, sustainable tourism, economic growth, downstream water quality, community pride, and **committed environmental stewardship.**

It is not a coincidence that Rotorua is now enjoying strong tourism growth, 5 new hotels committed, a new Queen Elizabeth Spa Centre, and a strong real estate market.

Key Point # 2

Science based policy

LWQS supports **robust, defensible and reviewable science** as the ongoing reference for future policy.

Currently this translates as support for a **435tN and 6tP sustainable load** to Lake Rotorua, with a 270tN (in-lake) reduction from pastoral farming, to be achieved by 2032 (with 70% by 2022).

Science reviews may yet determine that the sustainable loads to reach TLI 4.2 will vary from the above numbers.

The critical requirement is that the sustainable load figures are backed by robust science.

Key Point # 3

Agreed principles under-pin all policy recommendations from StAG

RPS principles effectively pre-determined policy direction and emphasis – at an early stage StAG added four additional principles to the original RPS list

RPS Principles + additional from StAG

- a) Equity/Fairness, including intergenerational equity;
- b) Extent of the immediate impact;
- c) Public and private benefits and costs;
- d) Future vision for landscape;
- e) Iwi land ownership and its status including any Crown obligation;
- f) Cultural values;
- g) Resource use efficiency;
- h) Existing land use; and
- i) Existing on farm capital investment; and
- j) Ease of transfer of the allocation
- k) There will be **no major windfalls** for any sector
- l) Preference will be given to the allocation approach that has the **least overall economic impact**
- m) **Existing investment will be recognised** (including that in infrastructure, land value, cash investment and in nutrient loss mitigation)
- n) **Practices that cause high nitrogen loss**, relative to sector norms, **will not be rewarded**

An Additional Rule For Exceptions

- Based on the above Principles there is a need to include an additional rule to deal with exceptions
- All complying uses have a **“Right of Survival”** providing they adopt the very best practices in nutrient management.
- StAG focused on the major rural land uses
- Dairying has the highest discharge allowance
- Other intensive uses are minor and not considered by the proposed rules e.g.
 - Nurseries
 - Agistment

Key Point # 4

Collaborative agreements defined scope and confirmed the targets

Waioira Agreement (June 2011) between LWQS and the Primary Sector Collective

- confirmed the 435tN and 6tP sustainable load targets

Oturoa Agreement (Feb 2013)

- resolved RPS appeals by Fed Farmers and the Collective
- agreed target dates to achieve sustainable catchment loads; 70% by 2022; 100% by 2032.

Key Point # 5

Integrated Framework and Gorse Programme were key to pragmatic progress

- Initially proposed land owners responsible for total reduction of 270tN
- Farmer resistance to 100% responsibility
- Shared responsibility promoted and accepted where
 - BoPRC (The Public) took responsibility for
 - 100t N purchase through the Incentive Scheme
 - 30t N from gorse removal
 - Land Owners responsible for residual 140tN

Key Point # 5 (cont'd)

Integrated Framework and Gorse Programme were key to pragmatic progress

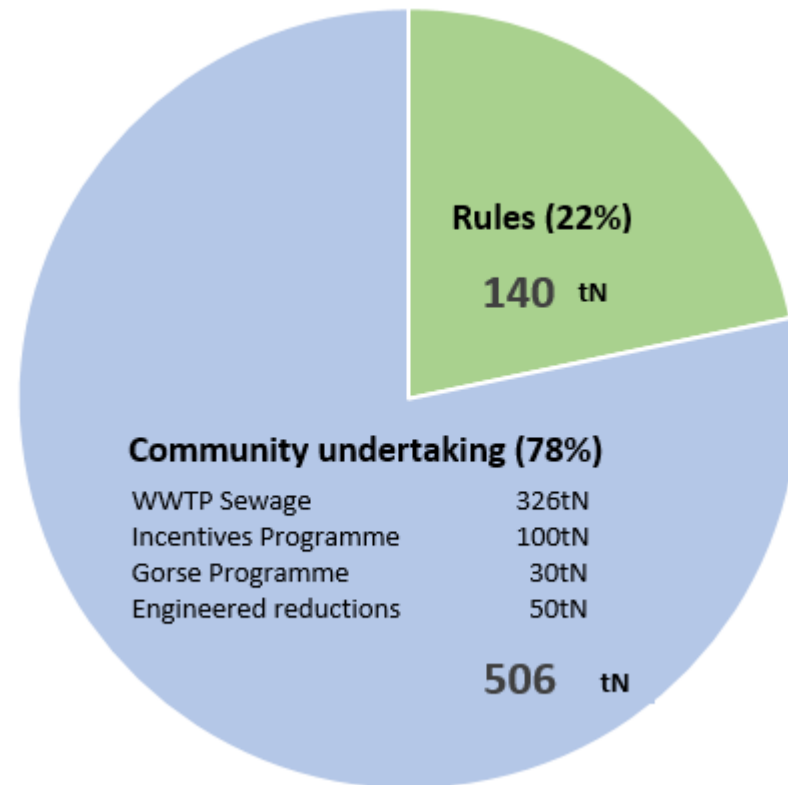
- Substantial concessions to performance deadlines
 - BoPRC to achieve their reductions by 2022
 - Pastoral sector to achieve only 44tN (30%) by 2022 with residual balance of 96tN achieved by managed reductions through to 2032
- Landowner commitment to the Integrated Framework was critical to Central Government Funding
- Any reduction in commitment could jeopardise Government Funding

Key Point # 6

Responsibility for proposed nutrient mitigation is shared across the rural and urban sectors

The Rules Programme anticipates that properties remaining in pastoral agriculture will share 22% of catchment N reduction responsibilities by 2032.

Responsibility for the remaining 78% will remain with the wider community.



Key Point # 7

Support for the proposed Rules & Incentives Programmes

LWQS supports the currently proposed Rules and Incentives Programme (including sector allocation with ranges) as the **most pragmatic solution** to Nitrogen Allocation in the Lake Rotorua catchment.

A sincere effort was made to ensure that :

- the StAG process was inclusive, collaborative, open & transparent
- the greatest reductions were required from dairy properties (mitigation on drystock properties deemed to be more difficult)
- the greatest reductions were required from the highest leaching properties in each sector

Key Point # 8

Challenges in the process

1. The social and economic well-being of our rural community. A key concern. Economic modelling confirmed that **sector allocation with ranges was the least financially disruptive.**
2. Deficits and changes in catchment specific information
 - imprecise nature or unavailability of some benchmarking data
 - lack of specific land use detail on a per property basis (particularly for < 40ha)
 - changes to groundwater boundary and other catchment information
3. Understanding the relationship between geophysical factors and nutrient leaching. There is an poor apparent correlation in the Lake Rotorua catchment

Key Point # 8 (cont'd)

Challenges in the process

4. Impact of *Overseer* version changes.
5. Properties < 40ha are **not** adversely differentiated from other drystock sector units. This was not well understood by small-block owners in particular.
6. Consultation has been widespread. There is a **delicate balance** between the responsibility to adequately consult with the wider community, prematurely going to that community before potential solutions have been well-researched, and embracing information change enroute.

Key Point # 9

Provision for future work & research priorities

1. Are sustainable load targets achievable with other combinations of N and P mitigation?
2. Re-run of ROTAN with revised attenuation factors to confirm catchment targets under revised catchment boundaries and Overseer version changes.
3. Continuing focus on the improvement of *Overseer* for the reliable prediction of nutrient leaching, and it's use as a regulatory tool
4. Improved understanding of the long-term sustainable use of in-lake alum

Key Point # 10

We must stay the course

The end goal for Lake Rotorua is sustainable water quality at community agreed standards.

The **agreed** timeline is to reach these standards by 2032, but commitment must extend well beyond that arbitrary date.

To do less would be to **put at risk** not only the funding commitments of district, regional and central government, but also sustainable economic growth and responsible environmental stewardship.

LWQS supports the proposed Rules & Incentives Programme.

If the science changes then review will be justified.

We must stay the course.