

# ***SUMMARY***



## *Draft Issues and Options for Bay of Plenty Regional Natural Resources Plan Water Quantity and Allocation chapter*

The Water Quantity and Allocation (WQ) chapter Bay of Plenty Regional Natural Resources Plan (RNRP) concerns policy and rules to be applied to water takes, and also damming. Limits and other local matters will be identified in the FMU chapters and a separate issues and options paper. This issues and options paper makes extensive use of the work and consultation undertaken as part of the now withdrawn Proposed Plan Change 9 (PPC). The Tarawera River Catchment Plan, which needs to be incorporated into the RNRP, was part of this review.

Further assessment and consideration will be given to draft recommendations throughout 2023, and particularly in response to engagement with tangata whenua and the community.

As noted during the PPC9 process, many streams are over-allocated when compared to current operative RNRP default limits. However, these limits are generally conservative and based on a 'one size fits all' approach. A revised methodology has therefore been proposed for setting minimum flows and allocation limits for surface water, which seeks to achieve a more consistent level of habitat protection across the region. The actual draft minimum flows and take limits are identified in a separate report and will be included in draft Freshwater Management Unit chapters. Groundwater limits are addressed in a separate paper.

As directed by the NPSFM, proposed provisions to phase out over allocation and improve the efficiency of allocation and use are set out. Consistent with the Regional Policy Statement, common catchment review dates are also proposed.

The NPSFM requires environmental flows and levels to be identified, and when taking damming or diversion is restricted or no longer allowed to be stated. Alternative options to implement minimum flows, especially addressing how constraints are placed on certain takes where ceasing would have very serious implications are identified. The paper sets out draft criteria for deciding on applications to transfer water between users.

It is proposed that all permitted activity takes be registered and electronic metering and reporting for all consented takes and some permitted takes be required. The permitted activity limit for groundwater is proposed to be reduced from 35m<sup>3</sup>/property/day to 15m<sup>3</sup>/property/day. More restrictive damming provisions are also proposed.

Consistent with the NPSREG and provisions in the Regional Policy Statement, draft policy is recommended to ensure the generating capacity of hydro-electric power schemes is maintained by retaining provisions that restrict any new water takes above recognised schemes. This is recognised to be a contentious issue, and some further analysis will continue into options. Proposed special rules relating to municipal and domestic water supplies recognise the priority of takes related to human health and are largely retained from PPC9.