ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS AND CATCHMENT LOAD LIMITS

The collaborative process is at the heart of the CWMS. It empowers communities to make their own decisions about how best to meet agreed, regionwide and local targets. Through the CWMS, the process of setting environmental limits (including environmental flows, allocation limits and nutrient loads) provides an opportunity for the community to take local ownership of water management, and to work together through complex information, to reach decisions around priority outcomes and values.

Zone Committees and communities are working collaboratively through the Resource Management Act (RMA) plan development timetable. This intensive process transfers the priority outcomes and values into resource management plans, supports Environment Canterbury to meet its statutory responsibilities, achieves sustainable management of the region's water and land resources and aligns the planning framework to CWMS targets.

T1, T2

Targets

By 2015:

Target 1: Set environmental flows for surface streams, rivers and groundwater that are consistent with the fundamental principles of the CWMS. Set catchment load limits for nutrients for each water management zone that are consistent with the fundamental principles of the CWMS. Established and began to implement a programme to apply environmental flows to existing consents.

By 2020:

Target 2: Review of environmental flows and catchment load limits in response to changing monitoring information, new understanding and technologies, and if requested by Regional and Zone Committees.

Target 3: Established and began to implement a programme to review existing consents where such review is necessary in order to achieve catchment load limits.

By 2040:

Review of environmental flows and catchment load limits in response to changing monitoring information, new understanding and technologies, and if requested by Regional and Zone Committees. Environmental flow and catchment load limits achieved in all water bodies.

Progress to 2020

Not started

Started

Progress

Good progress

Achieving

- Target 1: Environment Canterbury has made significant progress towards setting environmental limits through the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP). The LWRP, effective from January 2012, sets environmental limits that require farmers and other land users to 'hold the line' and not increase nitrate losses.
- The LWRP provides a region wide planning framework within which catchment specific plan changes (sub-regional chapters) are added which introduce local limits. These sub-regional chapters are developed via a detailed and intensive community engagement process taking up to 2-3 years to complete. Most catchments now have a specific planning framework in place. See fig 2 for progress on these numbered plan changes.
- Plan Change 7 (under consultation in 2019) focuses on the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora (OTOP) and the Waimakariri Zones. Both zones are looking to make further reductions beyond 'Good Management Practice' (GMP) and improve minimum flows. There is also an omnibus component to this plan change which covers regionwide issues including; greater protection to habitats of freshwater species, enabling consideration of Ngāi Tahu values in relation to a broader range of activities, supporting the use of managed aquifer recharge, and providing a revised nutrient framework for commercial vegetable growing operations.
- In addition to sub-regional plan changes, a suite of improvements was made to the LWRP through the previous Omnibus change (Plan Change 4), relating to improved biodiversity outcomes, protection of inanga spawning habitat, storm-water management, drinking water source

- protection, and the exclusion of livestock from lakes and rivers. Plan Change 4 was made operative in March 2017.
- Plan Change 5 to the LWRP requires farmers to reduce nutrient losses and manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way. Environment Canterbury has worked with the primary sector over several years to define acceptable farming practices. GMP now provides farmers and council with a shared understanding of how to limit nutrient losses and manage environmental impacts. Plan Change 5 was made operative in March 2019.
- A series of sub-regional plan changes have now put into effect localised rules for nutrient management across Canterbury – See fig 2.
- Zone Committees have been central to developing the sub-region planning framework and are now increasingly focused on delivery of a work programme.
- Target 2: Catchment loads and flows are being monitored by Environment Canterbury through its regular state-ofthe-environment monitoring programme at more than 400 groundwater sites and 160 surface water sites. Water levels and river flows and water quality are monitored monthly and include over 90 recreational sites. Zone Committees are regularly updated with this information.
- Target 3: Specific catchment load limits have been, or are being, set in sub-regional plans; for progress, see fig 2.
 Environment Canterbury continues to monitor and model catchment loads and work through Zone Committees to determine whether consent reviews are necessary to achieve catchment load limits.

FIG 2: PROGRESS ON CATCHMENT LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL LIMIT SETTING

Hurunui Waiau

• Environmental limits for Hurunui and Waiau Uwha rivers established in 2013 in the Hurunui Waiau Rivers Regional Plan (HWRRP).

· Plan Change 1 is a targeted plan change addressing the cumulative effects of land use on water quality for dryland farmers.

Waimakariri

Zone Committee completed a solutions package with environmental limits and complementary on-the-ground actions at the end of 2018. The plan change will incorporate part of the Waimakariri River Regional Plan (WRRP) into the LWRP.

Plan change was notified on 20 July 2019.

Selwyn Waihora/Wairewa (Plan Change 1 and 6)

Selwyn Te Waihora Plan Change 1 to the LWRP made operative February 2016.
 Implementation of Selwyn Waihora Plan Change is underway, progressing on-the-ground actions.

Wairewa Plan Change 6 to the LWRP made operative February 2017.
 Implementation of Wairewa Plan Change is underway, progressing on-the-ground actions.

Ashburton to Rakaia Catchment

A consent review on the Hakatere/Ashburton
 River is being undertaken by the Ashburton Zone Committee.

Hinds Catchment (Plan Change 2)

Hinds Plan Change 2 to the LWRP made operative from June 2018.
 Implementation of Hinds Plan Change is underway, progressing on-the-ground actions.

Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora

- Zone Committee completed a solutions package with environmental limits and complementary on-the-ground actions at the end of 2018.
 The plan change will incorporate the Opihi and Pareora catchment plans into the LWRP.
- · Plan change was notified on 20 July 2019.

South Coastal Canterbury (Plan Change 3)

 South Coastal Canterbury Plan Change made operative September 2017. Implementation of South Coastal Canterbury Plan Change is underway, progressing on-the-ground actions.

Waitaki (Plan Change 5, Part B)

Waitaki Plan Change 5 to the LWRP made operative from February 2019.
 Implementation of Waitaki Plan Change is underway, progressing on-the-ground actions.

These Zone Committees are working towards recommending a Solutions Package with environmental limits for their zones:

- Christchurch West Melton
- Kaikōura
- Banks Peninsula

