



Report 03.545
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File Y12/2/5

Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Water Metering in Stressed Aquifers

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the requirement for water meters to be installed on groundwater takes in additional stressed aquifers.

2. Background

- 2.1 Within the Planning and Resources Department, a Water Allocation Planning Group is tasked with reviewing the sustainable management of surface and underground water resources.
- 2.2 At its 4 December 2001 meeting, the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee approved the application of moratoriums on several stressed catchments and aquifers, and the requirement for water metering in four groundwater zones and for takes greater than 40 litres per second elsewhere. This has been fully implemented.
- 2.3 At the April 2003 Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee meeting, water-metering requirements were extended to all new underground and surface water takes of 20 litres per second or greater and for all takes of this size upon renewal. This is being progressively implemented as renewal applications are lodged.

As part of its decision the Committee noted that “...*The development of water metering is part of the long term approach for improved water utilisation in the Wairarapa.*”

3. Current Situation

- 3.1 The Water Allocation Planning Group have identified aquifers in a further seven groundwater zones that are approaching full allocation. Whilst the aquifers at this stage are stable and not declining, allocation cannot exceed 100% under the Regional Freshwater Plan. These are given in the following table.

Groundwater Zone	Aquifer	Allocation Level
Battersea	All aquifers	78%
Lower Valley	Aquifer 2	91%
Middle Ruamahanga	Aquifer 1	96%
Middle Ruamahanga	Aquifer 2	78%
Riverside	Aquifer 1	79%
Tawaha	Aquifer 1	87%
Te Ore Ore	Aquifer 2	65%

- 3.2 The method that was employed to determine safe yields for the above aquifers is now recognised as high risk. The safeguard is that consent holders do not usually use the full allocation as allowed for in their resource consent. However, we do not know the actual usage of water and therefore how much more additional water can be allocated.
- 3.3 Installation and recordings from water meters will be a proactive step towards reviewing and establishing sustainable allocations of groundwater before consents require renewal.
- 3.4 Each resource consent in the above zones contains a condition stating that “*If so requested by the Manager, Planning and Resources (Divisional Manager, Wairarapa¹) a water meter shall be installed.*” Acting under delegated authority, management approval has been given to exercise this requirement.
- 3.5 This decision will require some 100 consent holders to install meters before 31 August 2004, in time for the 2004/05 irrigation season.

4. Communications

No additional publicity is planned. The requirements will be directly communicated to individual consent holders.

5. Recommendation

That the Committee receive the report and note its contents.

Report prepared by:

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¹ On older consents