

Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas Management Plan

INFORMATION SHEET

MANAGING WELLINGTON'S DRINKING WATER CATCHMENTS

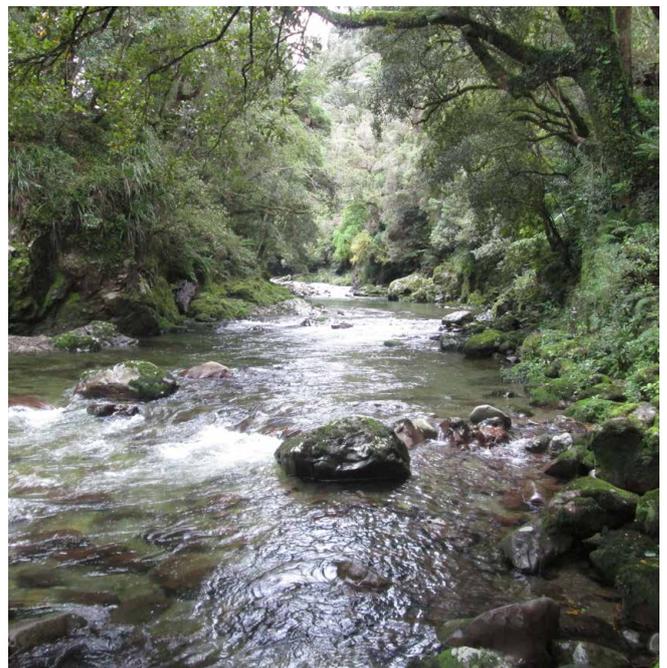
Wellington relies on safe and reliable drinking water, most of which comes from the forested water catchments of the Hutt and Wainuiomata / Orongorongo water collection areas. These unique areas of old growth forest were chosen in the early years of European settlement for their high rainfall and then protected for water collection. This protection has allowed the biodiversity of these forests and aquatic ecosystems to flourish, and mana whenua kaitiakitanga values to be maintained. Together the water collection areas annually supply approximately 60% of Wellington's water, with the remainder drawn from the Waiwhetu aquifer system below the Hutt Valley.

A focussed and significant effort is required to minimise threats to providing an uninterrupted supply of high quality drinking water. Management of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem health threats helps to protect water quality and supply, and minimises the need for more expensive treatment to remove impurities. Management activities such as an active pest plant and animal control programme and significantly limiting public access to the water collection areas also assists in managing threats to help protect biodiversity and ensure optimum water quality. The threat management framework outlined in the water collection areas Management Plan represents international good practice, encompassing the 'multiple barrier' approach.

The quality of drinking water is guided by National Standards and the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act. In these catchments, national environmental standards and regulations for the sources of drinking water, made under the Resource Management Act 1991, set requirements for protecting drinking water from contamination. The water collection area land

is held under Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 for water supply purposes. The development of management plans is not required by this Act. However, the two agencies responsible for managing the catchments - Wellington Water and Greater Wellington Regional Council work together on the shared goal of ensuring an uninterrupted supply of quality drinking water and see a strategic need for the plan. The agencies have collaborated to develop the Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas Management Plan (the Plan).

The Plan guides and informs operational plans and management procedures for the water collection areas, such as key native ecosystem plans and service level agreements between agencies.



ABOUT THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Plan focuses on management of the water catchments of the Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo rivers **upstream of the water intakes** to address **primary goals** of achieving:

- water quality which meets or exceeds drinking water standards
- catchment management to maximise volumes of raw water.

Secondary goals of:

- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and heritage values
- Providing for limited recreation opportunities
- Maintaining collaborative working relationships between agencies.

The Plan identifies and documents key threats to achieving optimum drinking water quality and supply and identifies important values to be conserved. It is structured as four parts:

- Core **goals** for management
- The **Planning context** and the important and **unique natural and cultural values** of the water collection areas.

- The **key threats to water quality and supply** and actions to minimise or mitigate them, referencing water safety plans.
- A **management framework** and detail of **decision making responsibilities**, as well as **actions** to be achieved which are based on the overarching goals. **Rules for permitted activities** are presented in a quick reference format which is consistent with approach of the Parks Network Plan (2011).

A key challenge in management of the water collection areas is the overarching context of a changing climate and the need to build as much resilience as possible into the manageable aspects of water quality and supply.

Given the closed and limited public access to the water collection areas, the Plan is also intended to act as a general reference document for people with an interest in these areas. An action in the Plan is to complete and publish the Draft Resource Statement for the water collection areas which will provide further detail of the significant values of these areas.

Ki uta ki tai – from the mountains to the sea, water is life

