

Submission on GWRC Natural Resources Plan Change 1

15 December 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the NRP Plan Change 1. I live in Mākara and was a member of Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Committee. The scope of my submission on PC1 is limited to those provisions that relate to rural communities and their role as kaitiaki for water. It focuses on an assessment of how effectively PC1 implements the recommendations made by the community through Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Implementation Programme (the WIP). I also support the group submission made by Mākara/Ohariu farmers.

Firstly, thank you for considering and incorporating my feedback provided during the PC1 limited consultation period. At that time, my feedback focused on just two specific provisions, given their unnecessarily severe consequences for my rural community. The revised provision provides a more flexible, tailored and practical approach to meeting the same end outcome.

The whaitua process involved a group of community, mana whenua and council representatives setting targets for water quality and recommending pathways to achieve those targets, informed by advice from GWRC. The Plan Change is one tool for GWRC to implement those recommendations, alongside several other tools. Therefore, the notification of PC1 is an important milestone for the two Whaitua Committees. However, the detail of PC1 is very different to the WIP and therefore requires testing through this consultation process to assess to what degree it reflects community recommendations. This is particularly important given that Whaitua Committee members were not engaged by GWRC in testing the PC1 provisions as they were drafted.

PC1 includes many positive changes based on the WIP's recommendations and my submission acknowledges some of those. It is great to see these incorporated. PC1 also includes several areas where the WIP recommendations appear not to have been incorporated or have been misinterpreted. I have copied the main WIP recommendations that specifically relate to rural areas into Appendix 1. I note that there is a disjoint in how the WIP's rural recommendations and narrative has been interpreted into the Plan Change; my feedback on this falls into several themes:

1. **Council partnering with communities.** GWRC got alongside the community to deliver its Whaitua process. The WIP document itself also recommended that council continue to partner with the community through engagement on WIP implementation and through supporting catchment community groups to deliver local work. This partnership approach has not continued into the PC1 delivery process (other than the brief limited release consultation) and is less prominent in the PC1 document. It is important that PC1 prioritises mechanisms for council to partner with the community, recognise their values (including valuing rural land use for farming and forestry) and provide an equitable and effective approach. It is important that GWRC actively considers the impacts of these provisions on local communities in order to design support. I believe that GWRC has not investigated the extent of waterway protection required under the provisions, land retirement retired (based on lay-of-the-land rather than mapped polygons) or financial implications to farmers. The ETS liabilities for not replanting forest on certain land classes also appears not to have been considered. This is critical information to understand the significant impact that the rules will have on our communities and therefore consider their appropriateness.

2. **Scale of interventions – regional vs national.** The WIP recommends that GWRC rely on the new central government requirements to drive freshwater management on farms, with council providing support for farm plans and catchment context information to help ground the plans. PC1 creates additional regulatory tools at the whitua-scale as one approach to providing catchment context. Instead, PC1 should provide catchment context by incorporating whitua-wide policies and prioritisation tools (e.g. mapping) as non-regulatory support to inform farm plans. The resulting Freshwater Farm Plans will still be robust (certified and audited) but will ensure that farms can identify actual issues and solutions for their unique landscape – and avoid regulatory “by-catch” from broad rules. However, it is worth noting that the Government’s recently announced changes to the NPS-FM and timeframes for implementation may change the effectiveness of this WIP recommendation.
3. **Inconsistencies or gaps in provisions.** There are several areas where the provisions appear to have inconsistencies or gaps within PC1:
 - a. Some properties will be required to reduce stock access to small streams on their properties but not larger streams – if they don’t fall under the MfE “low slope” maps. This reinforces the need to use farm plans to target work rather than current/proposed rules which have gaps in implementation.
 - b. There is inconsistency in the approach to sizing of properties to determine where certain provisions apply. Some farms are based on having over 20ha *effective grazing area* whereas others are based on 4-20ha *total property size*. This could see some smaller properties with 0.5ha of grazing land being regulated but not large properties with 19ha of grazing land.
 - c. It is unclear whether 4-20ha properties are required to have a Small Streams Riparian Programme. PC1 does not explicitly state that they do but advice from GWRC during the consultation process sounded contrary. This needs to be clarified.
 - d. Wetlands are not mentioned in the individual Whitua chapters.
4. **Prioritise non-regulatory measures.** This Plan Change has been prepared swiftly to implement the regulatory measures within the NPS-FM timeframe and also pave the way for GWRC’s longer-term commitment to non-regulatory measures. The development of non-regulatory measures outside of PC1 appears to have not occurred yet. The WIP identified non-regulatory measures as critical to achieving water quality outcomes as they address the fundamental barriers in this geographic area such as: lack of data on the issue and therefore identification of solutions, a need for community catchment group support, a need for additional funding for on-farm works, a current lack of GWRC compliance/enforcement of poor practice, and more. I ask that GWRC gives the non-regulatory measures equal priority to PC1, including outside of the PC1 development process. I also ask that council applies these measures in areas where regulation will be most prominent, despite the fact that in some other regions, councils do not always invest funding in on-farm work that is already required by legislation.

Please note that almost all of the feedback in this submission has previously been provided, at a higher level, to GWRC through the Whitua process. It has been frustrating drafting this feedback and knowing that it duplicates a lot of effort three years through the Whitua process. During the Whitua process, I sought ideas and feedback from my Mākara/Ohariu community and tested our Committee’s thinking with them to ensure that our recommendations would accurately reflect their situation as local kaitiaki. I also engaged with Federated Farmers and advised them that their input

during the Whaitua process (which they provided) would mean that the resulting Plan Change provisions would be well-considered and make for a less adversarial consultation stage. However, given the difference between some of the rural WIP recommendations and the provisions in PC1, more fulsome feedback on the provisions is now required.

The public consultation process for PC1 has been sorely lacking and our community's awareness of the Plan Change's existence and provisions has largely relied on local information channels. GWRC invested a significant level of resource and effort into the three years of our Whaitua process but, at this critical stage of turning our recommendations into actions, council's community engagement was almost non-existent. I am aware of just four webinars (not publicly advertised other than a select email list), one farmer meeting and one early GWRC e-newsletter article to engage with the community on PC1. There appears to have been no PC1 community engagement plan in place to support the policy work. The Plan Change has significant implications for Wellington – particularly for rural landowners – and warranted a much higher level of genuine community engagement.

In saying that, I would also like to thank the GWRC staff who have worked hard on this Plan Change. I acknowledge that councils have been under a lot of pressure to implement the NPS-FM and resourcing has been tight. I look forward to continue working alongside you as you get further direction on how this Plan Change will progress given the Government's recent announcement regarding the NPS-FM.

Regards,
Louise Askin

Appendix 1:

Recommendations from *Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Implementation Programme* relating specifically to rural areas

SUPPORTING CATCHMENT-BASED PLANNING AND LOCAL ACTION

- 10** Greater Wellington, Mana Whenua and territorial authorities establish services to support new and existing catchment or community groups (by 2025), including for:
- » Providing access to easy-to-use data from all relevant sources, including citizen science, especially data that is relevant to each group's locations and needs
 - » Inspiring and supporting the formation of new groups
 - » Funding ongoing organisational and technical support, including lab analysis
 - » Supporting citizen-led science and monitoring with appropriate training and tools
 - » Mātauranga monitoring
 - » Providing specialist support (such as engineering and legal support, help with navigating local government politics, and communication guidance)
 - » Supporting catchment coordinators for catchment-scale projects and help with project management, people facilitation and fundraising (it includes tapping into the wider volunteer base)
 - » Offering guidance on where to put the best efforts and take actions, consistent with the kawa and Te Mana o te Wai.

11	<p>Greater Wellington creates cross-whaitua structures and services that support a coherent and connected approach to local action knowledge-sharing. These should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Spatial and catchment-level planning that helps coordinate efforts aimed at meeting Te Mana o te Wai and community goals, and makes roles and responsibilities clear » Community-to-community knowledge exchange and connecting groups » The provision of transparent and clear mechanisms for accessing and allocating funding and services, including expert knowledge » The provision of frameworks and supports that give community groups confidence that they are working in the interests of Mana Whenua » A strategic approach to the use of council support services (such as Mountains to Sea Wellington) » Providing a single contact point for questions and advice for all the agencies involved.
12	<p>Greater Wellington and Mana Whenua develop resources (by 2024) that community groups can use and adapt for their own communication with local communities, to help build understanding, connections and involvement that complement messages and campaigns by councils and water agencies.</p> <p>Specific themes to include are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Where drinking water comes from, and the relationships between activities in the Hutt Valley and risks to the Waiwhetū aquifer » Awa as tipuna, living entities of distinctive mana and whakapapa » Our responsibility to respect the awa and their mana, and act on this in our behaviour with water » The state of our waterways, including for different places » Action being taken, including for different places » Actions people can take, including those specific to their local areas.
13	<p>Greater Wellington, Mana Whenua and territorial authorities partner with communities in developing catchment plans, co-designing their journeys and sharing the delivery process and roles required to achieve Te Mana o te Wai and local outcomes. This will help groups to know where to put their best efforts and provide clear resourcing strategies to follow through with their plans.</p>
14	<p>Greater Wellington works with Mana Whenua and catchment groups to make data easily available and accessible in a user-friendly way, including through the use of aggregated data.</p>
15	<p>Greater Wellington provides more specific, local information on water quality to communities – through making existing data more readily available and collecting new data, including via citizen science programmes, Greater Wellington monitoring programmes and the integration of the two (where appropriate).</p>

ENSURING RURAL WASTEWATER SYSTEMS ARE WELL MAINTAINED

32

Greater Wellington and territorial authorities provide good-practice information and advice to septic tank owners.

They also develop a programme for regular septic tank investigations undertaken in rural/lifestyle areas in the whitua, with the aim of improving their understanding of the impact of septic tanks on water quality, ecology and public health.

Where septic tanks are identified as affecting water quality, ecology or public health, territorial authorities or Greater Wellington are to work with the relevant landowners to reduce these effects by repairing, replacing or enhancing their septic systems and having an ongoing cycle of maintenance.

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND BEYOND

33

Greater Wellington provides sufficient Land Management advisory resources and funding to:

- » Support the implementation of actions at property and catchment levels to achieve catchment plan objectives
- » Support landowners' implementation of national stock exclusion rules
- » Help link farmers' action (including through their Freshwater Farm Plans) to catchment plans, and help small block owners to link their actions to catchment plans
- » Support the implementation of Freshwater Farm Plans to ensure quality delivery of farm planning services and effective connections to catchment plans
- » Promote the uptake of best management practice, and ensure open communication between landowners and Greater Wellington to keep best practices up to date
- » Integrate advice to landowners with other relevant objectives to achieve co-benefits (e.g., carbon sequestration, biodiversity)

34

Greater Wellington supports landowners to exclude livestock from waterways by:

- » Helping them to develop and implement practices that minimise stock access to streams not covered by regulations
- » Investigating the specific impacts of horses on water quality and considering further stock exclusion regulations if they are identified as a significant source of contaminants.

INCENTIVISING REVEGETATION OF VULNERABLE LAND

35 Greater Wellington investigates alternative incentives (e.g., rates rebates) to increase landowners' uptake of revegetation projects, including projects using native plant species.

This applies particularly to landowners with marginal and erosion-prone land (to reduce erosion and sediment loss), wetlands (for nutrient stripping, etc), and rural catchments generally (to slow flood flows further down the catchment).

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPERTY LEVEL INFORMATION

36 Greater Wellington supports the development of property-specific information to inform Freshwater Farm Plan development, particularly for managing diffuse discharges, CSA (Critical Source Area, i.e., hotspot) management, riparian planting (to complement stream fencing regs), and management methods for those streams where stock exclusion rules do not apply.

SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICE AND COMPLIANCE OF FORESTRY OPERATIONS

37 Greater Wellington provides enough staff and resources to:

- » Work with forestry groups (New Zealand Farm Forestry Association, New Zealand Forest Owners Association) and contractors to provide proactive advisory support that includes ensuring all forestry operators are aware (by 2023) of relevant regulatory requirements and good practice
- » Ensure all forestry operators in the whitua are monitored for compliance with the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) and other relevant requirements from 2023 onwards, and share this monitoring information with the community
- » Take enforcement action on non-compliance.

COUNCILS LEADING BY EXAMPLE

38 Greater Wellington and territorial authorities:

- » Are exemplars of good practice on all council-owned land and infrastructure, including contaminated land, farms, forestry land, wetlands and golf courses.
- » Provide information on how good-practice decisions have been made.
- » Report publicly on their year-on-year improvements.

WETLANDS

69	Greater Wellington supports and incentivises landowners wanting to restore wetlands and removes barriers for best-practice restoration of the mauri of degraded wetlands.
70	Greater Wellington increases the resourcing available to implement and enforce the NPS-FM 2020, National Environment Standards and PNRP provisions about wetland identification, protection and restoration.
71	Greater Wellington supports positive relationships with wetland owners, including those with wetlands above the Parangārehu Lakes and at Mangaroa. It also provides assistance to protect and restore those wetlands.
72	Greater Wellington and Mana Whenua seek opportunities to develop and restore wetland habitat when managing and designing flood protection works and developing green spaces.
73	Greater Wellington maps all natural wetlands in the whaitua, as required by the NPS-FM 2020. This is to be completed by 2024, rather than the NPS-FM deadline of 2030.
74	Greater Wellington addresses the issues raised in Te Mahere Wai on the recommendations about the Parangārehu Lakes area.

FISH PASSAGE

75	Greater Wellington identifies all fish passage barriers on public land by 2025 and private land by 2030.
76	<p>Greater Wellington, together with Mana Whenua, community groups and territorial authorities, works with owners of fish passage barriers to remediate the highest-risk sites by 2040 and all other sites as soon as practical, but no later than 2045.</p> <p>Catchments highly valued for their indigenous fish and mahinga kai species are prioritised and Greater Wellington reports publicly on the identification and remediation progress.</p>
77	Greater Wellington and Mana Whenua work with territorial authorities to identify (by 2025) and restore (by 2035) the spawning habitats of indigenous fish and mahinga kai species (e.g., inanga) in their rohe.

REMOVING PERMITTED WATER TAKES

- 86** Greater Wellington amends the PNRP policy and rule framework in Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara so the region-wide permitted activity rule (R136) no longer applies to this whaitua.

Note: Water takes for reasonable domestic use and animal drinking water are still authorised under section 14(3)(b) of the Resource Management Act. All other takes will require a resource consent.

SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REGULATIONS AROUND WATER TAKES

- 87** Greater Wellington amends the PNRP through a plan change (by 2022) to ensure that all water takes requiring resource consent within Te Whanganui-a-Tara require metering. Electronic metering is required by 2027.

- 88** Greater Wellington reviews all existing consents in catchments outside the major water supply catchments that haven't expired within five years of the whaitua plan change, to ensure that any updated allocation limits are applied to consents.

- 89** In collaboration with catchment communities, Greater Wellington develops a work programme designed for and with landowners (particularly for lifestyle block owners), to ensure they are aware of regulations on the use of water.

- 90** Greater Wellington undertakes assessments (e.g., through rural engagement surveys and targeted catchment investigations) to understand any potential changes in the way people are taking unconsented water (section 14(3)(b) of the Resource Management Act about takes).

- 91** Greater Wellington increases its flow monitoring in small streams in catchments where land use is changing significantly, or there is thought to be a relatively high potential for change (e.g., rural intensification). This is to establish whether any increase in water use is affecting flows and therefore values.

Specific Provisions in PC1

Provision	Support / Oppose / Amend / Neutral	Decision Sought	Reasons
Methods			
Method M42: Small farm property registration	Amend	Clarify the scope and purpose of this method and either strengthen or remove. Oppose if there is no appropriate benefit from this process shown.	It is unclear why this is listed as a key method when the design of the associated policies and rules appears to have low impact. This will have high compliance cost with seemingly low outcomes.
Method M44: Supporting the health of rural waterbodies	Support	Support but include “in partnership with community” in the description. Progress implementation with haste.	Implements WIP recs 33, 35, 37. - It is good to see commitment to support good practice, including in forestry. The WIP recommendations highlight the need to partner with community and industry, rather than take a top-down approach. - It is particularly good to see the new focus on small rural properties now included as these properties don't always have the same information channels as farms do. - At present, GWRC appears to have been progressing development of the regulatory tools (i.e. PC1) but not the additional non-regulatory tools proposed in the WIP. This was a lost communication opportunity at the PC1 consultation stage – where GWRC could have presented communities with a complete package of both regulatory tools and non-regulatory support, rather than just the new rules. This may have helped communities feel more respected and provided a helpful picture of how changes might be incorporated on farms.
Method M44: Supporting the	Amend	Expand the list to include the other	Need to implement WIP recs 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 36.

health of rural waterbodies		important non-regulatory measures proposed in the WIP, including support for catchment groups, additional water quality monitoring programmes, provision of local information/data, development of “catchment context, challenges and values”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of water quality monitoring data and information on sources of contaminants is a key limitation on the community’s ability to effect change in Mākara/Ohariu. - Support for catchment groups (both urban and rural) is lacking in PC1 but was a strong theme in the WIP recommendations. - Support community development of local catchment context – not just relying on the WIP (too large scale) or Freshwater Action Plans (stated as not owned by community – just “informed” by them).
Objectives			
WH.02:	Amend	Add one further point: <i>(i) Rural communities are thriving and integrating productive land use and healthy waterways on farms, forests and lifestyle blocks.</i>	The objectives reflect many of those in the WIP very well and this submission supports them. However, the wording does not acknowledge the value that our rural communities place on productive land use (reliant on water) or the role that they have as direct kaitiaki for a large number of Wellington’s waterways.
Policies			
WH.P2 (e): Mgt of activities to acheive target attribute states	Amend	Change “excluding livestock from waterbodies” to “reducing livestock access to waterbodies”.	Other sections of the Plan Change do not drive total stock exclusion from all waterways but instead apply a practical assessment that also allows for alternative methods.
WH.P3: Freshwater Action Plans	Amend	Include the rural community in the development of Action Plans.	WIP recs 10 and 13 clearly state the need for communities to be a part of catchment planning. - It is unclear whether Freshwater Action Plans are intended to take the place of catchment plans, but presumably not due to being larger scale. If the Action Plans are to include on-farm actions then it is essential that farmers and rural communities are key partners in developing that.
8.2.3: Wastewater	Amend	Include a policy on septic tanks.	Need to implement WIP rec 32.

			This doesn't appear to be picked up elsewhere in PC1.
WH.P21: Diffuse discharges of nutrients and e-coli	Amend	Add "Identification of sources of e-coli specific to individual catchments".	Need to implement WIP rec 15. The source of high e-coli levels in the Mākara Stream is unknown and there are several potential sources (livestock, septic tanks, waterfowl). The sources and levels of e-coli need to be known for each catchment in order for them to be effectively addressed.
WH.P21: Diffuse discharges of nutrients and e-coli	Amend	Add "Incorporate e-coli reduction in catchment context and farm environment plans, based on monitored data" – to allow a farm-scale approach as already proposed for nitrogen and sediment.	Need to implement WIP rec 33. - Lack of consistency with WH.P22 (nitrogen) and WH.P23 (sediment). Work to reduce e-coli levels should only target areas where e-coli is shown to be an issue. There is not currently sufficient monitoring data to determine the levels and sources of e-coli across the area's multiple catchments. It is inappropriate to extrapolate the results of one monitoring site across all of Mākara and Ohariu, given the diversity in catchments/sub-catchments. - Local water quality studies need to be carried out and the option for landowner-led, farm-scale monitoring provided for – including feedback loops to monitor the impact of actions taken.
WH.P23 (a): Sediment – identifying high risk land	Amend	Remove section (a) or modify to say "identifying highest erosion risk land (pasture)... at a farm-scale." Reword this section to focus on identifying "sediment sources" rather than solely erosion risk.	Need to implement WIP rec 36 – <i>"development of property-specific information to inform Freshwater Farm Plan development"</i> . - PC1 currently includes an "erosion risk map" which requires landowners to revegetate land mapped as the top 10% of unvegetated land at risk or erosion across a whaitua. Given the geology in this area, using a 10% figure will likely capture some areas where erosion risk is not high (this observation is confirmed by local landowners). When applied at a property-scale, this then creates a significant cost to landowners but without smart targeting of work.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-farm actions need to be based on a farm-scale assessment of erosion risks. This is common practice across the country - including in GWRC's existing erosion control programme in the Wairarapa. - Regional mapping is used in other regions mainly to prioritise landowner engagement and farm investment in land treatment. It is only rarely used to regulate land treatment – in regions where erosion risk is extreme e.g. Gisborne. - This policy assumes erosion from steep land is the key source of sediment (plus stock movement on streambanks). Anecdotally, streambank erosion from high flood flows is a key contributor of sediment in the Mākara Stream catchment. - The area for retirement will be much bigger than the mapped polygons due to the need to aggregate areas and work with the landscape to locate sensible fencelines.
WH.P23 (b): Sediment – Erosion Risk Mgt Plans	Amend	Refocus (b) from “erosion risk treatment plan” to “erosion and sediment risk treatment plan”.	<p>This policy implements WIP rec 36.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support sediment/erosion risk treatment plans, but based on farm-scale assessment not whaitua-scale mapping. - The sources of sediment are likely broader than erosion on hillsides in the Mākara and Ohariu catchments. Focusing on the broader topic of “sediment” will also acknowledge the role of other existing sediment sources and also management techniques such as low stocking rates and maintaining good pasture cover.
WH.P23 (c): Sediment – requirement for revegetation	Amend	Oppose (c). Instead, use erosion/sediment risk treatment plans to identify the most appropriate methods and timeframes for	<p>Need to implement WIP recs 33 and 36.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Woody vegetation” is only one option for land treatment. Mākara/Ohariu has its unique challenge in establishing woody vegetation on these incredibly

		managing sediment loss on each unique site.	exposed areas. In addition, Meridian Energy does not allow revegetation with plants over 1m on many ridgelines across several of the largest local farms due to their disruption of windflow. - The provision's requirement to "maintain" the woody vegetation will be unviable, given the large-scale land retirement and reduced farm income from reduced production and high fencing costs incurred. Another challenge to revegetation projects is working alongside Meridian's wind farms (crossing six of our farms) where afforestation needs to be designed to not impede wind flow.
WH.P24: Phasing of FEPs	Amend	Potentially revise the date for FEPs to be prepared and certified – if this is inconsistent with the FWFP roll out.	Need to implement WIP rec 34. Ensure that this phasing is timed to best integrate with the national roll out of Freshwater Farm Plans so that farmers are not duplicating effort.
WH.P26: Livestock access to small rivers	Amend	Replace "restrict" with "reduce through non-regulatory means". Shift the focus on non-regulatory drivers, as per the WIP recommendation. Amend the wording to clarify what size river is covered in this policy – and ensure that the title and policy wording are consistent.	Need to implement WIP rec 34 – <i>"help them to develop and implement practices that minimise stock access to streams not covered by regulations."</i> Make this policy consistent with the associated rule (or broader intent) regarding <i>reduced</i> access rather than restricted access. The Mākara and Ohariu areas are incredibly hilly which limits the option of fencing as a tool. Be aware that a good portion of Mākara and Ohariu's <i>large</i> streams won't be covered in the national stock exclusion regulations. Need to focus this on actual risk from stock access to rivers in low intensity farms – both in terms of frequency of livestock access and actual impact on streambanks and water quality.

WH.P27: Promoting stream shading	Support	Retain	This policy can be enacted through native reversion, native planting or poplar/willow pole planting.
Rules			
WH.R17: Vegetation clearance	Amend	Note “high erosion risk land as identified in individual erosion risk management plans”.	Need to implement WIP rec 36. Use farm-scale assessment of high risk land rather than current whitua-wide mapping.
WH.R18: Vegetation clearance	Amend	Note “highest erosion risk land as identified in individual erosion risk management plans”.	Need to implement WIP rec 36. Use farm-scale assessment of highest risk land rather than current whitua-wide mapping.
WH.R20 (a): Plantation forestry	Amend	Review whether mapping is fit for purpose.	Partially implements WIP rec 37. It is unclear whether this mapping is fit for purpose and I suggest a comparison against best practice mapping tools. Forestry is an effective soil conservation tool on erosion-prone land, depending on severity of erosion risk and forestry type. Prioritise productive/protective options for erosion-prone land where suitable, including use of coppicing tree species and/or small-scale harvesting. Note that in Mākara/Ohariu, pine is one of the only tree species that will grow in the most wind-exposed areas (other than low native scrub).
WH.R26: 4-20ha properties	Amend	Include assessment of e-coli risk. Remove farm registration requirement – limited benefit. Clarify 4-20ha based on “effective grazing area” or similar.	Implements WIP recs 33 and 34. - This provision has a very strong focus on nitrogen management whereas the WIP notes that small properties might also be contributing to e-coli levels. Need to focus the work with small properties on catchment issues – e.g. e-coli and sediment in the Mākara Stream catchment. - Support the use of “stock units” rather than livestock to determine farming intensity – this takes into account the often diverse livestock species on smaller properties. - There does not appear to be a good rationale for farm registration, particularly if the N

			<p>monitoring is not required to be reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The PC1 wording does not include a requirement for any form of livestock exclusion from waterways, other than national rules. The smaller properties should have the same level of stock exclusion requirements as larger farms do, even if not through a full FEP. - Approach to determining what properties the provision apply to is inconsistent with the larger farms – should be based on effective grazing area.
<p>WH.R27: Farming activities on 20+ ha</p>	<p>Amend</p>	<p>Ensure that the details of this rule are consistent with the content and timeframes for Freshwater Farm Plans.</p> <p>Remove the requirement for a Small Stream Riparian Programme.</p> <p>Retain inclusion of an erosion/sediment risk treatment plan – as detail to inform the FWFP.</p>	<p>Implements WIP rec 34 – <i>“Help them to develop and implement practices that minimise stock access to streams not covered by regulations.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any farm environment plan work above and beyond the national regulations can contribute to the FWFP as catchment context – recommend that, if retained, these two plans/programmes are designed in such a way – to inform the FWFP. - This provision is disproportionate to the treatment of larger streams. In Mākara/Ohariu, only a minor portion of the larger streams will be required for livestock exclusion under national regulations, due to the difficult topography. Small streams should instead be one part of a farm’s assessment of waterway health and contaminant sources (including larger streams), rather than a standalone programme. This is particularly relevant given the low farm stocking rates in Mākara/Ohariu and difficult topography for fencing.
<p>WH.R28: Access to small rivers</p>	<p>Amend</p>	<p>Remove (b) since farm environment plans can pick up planning for all streams and non-</p>	<p>Implements WIP rec 33</p> <p>The WIP recommends that farm plans incorporate more streams rather than just the MfE “low slope” map (regardless of size) but</p>

		regulatory measures can support on-farm work.	does not propose a regulatory approach. Also refer to comments against Policy WH.P26.
WH.R30: Use of land for farming	Amend	Adjust the scale at which this is applied – from FMU-scale to small catchments/farm – to allow for local differences in stream contaminant levels to be assessed.	Implements WIP rec 15. There aren't enough water quality monitoring sites to make this provision useful or fair. There is currently one GWRC data monitoring point for the 8,000ha Mākara Steam catchment and no monitoring for catchments outside of that one, yet very different land use. Limitations on farming should only be placed on the properties where N is shown to be a problem – not across the whole FMU.

View Submitter Details

Submitter No.	S9
Submitter Name	Louise Askin
Online submitter	Yes
Raw submission lodged	Yes

Raw submission points

These are submission points that were lodged as part of an online submission. They have not been summarised.

Raw sub point number	Provision	Support/oppose	Decision sought	Reasons
S9.1	Method M42: Small farm property registration within Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Te Awanua-o-Porirua Whaitua.	Amend	Clarify the scope and purpose of this method. Clarify the scope and purpose of this method and either strengthen or remove. Oppose if there is no appropriate benefit from this process shown.	It is unclear why this is listed as a key method when the design of the associated policies and rules appears to have low impact. This will have high compliance cost with seemingly low outcomes.
S9.2	Method M44: Supporting the health of rural waterbodies.	Support	Support but include "in partnership with community" in the description. Progress implementation with haste.	Implements WIP recs 33, 35, 37. - It is good to see commitment to support good practice, including in forestry. The WIP recommendations highlight the need to partner with community and industry, rather than take a top-down approach. - It is particularly good to see the new focus on small rural properties now included as these properties don't always have the same information channels as farms do. - At present, GWRC appears to have been progressing development of the regulatory tools (i.e. PC1) but not the additional non-regulatory tools proposed in the WIP. This was a lost communication opportunity at the PC1 consultation stage – where GWRC could have presented communities with a complete package of both regulatory tools and non-regulatory support, rather than just the new rules. This may have helped communities feel more respected and provided a helpful picture of how changes might be incorporated on farms.
S9.3	Method M44: Supporting the health of rural waterbodies.	Amend	Expand the list to include the other important non-regulatory measures proposed in the WIP, including support for catchment groups, additional water quality monitoring programmes, provision of local information/data, development of "catchment context, challenges and values".	Need to implement WIP recs 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 36. - The lack of water quality monitoring data and information on sources of contaminants is a key limitation on the community's ability to effect change in Makara/Ohariu. - Support for catchment groups (both urban and rural) is lacking in PC1 but was a strong theme in the WIP recommendations. - Support community development of local catchment context – not just relying on the WIP (too large scale) or Freshwater Action Plans (stated as not owned by community – just "informed" by them).
S9.4	Objective WH.O2: The health and wellbeing of Te Whanganui-a-Tara's groundwater, rivers and natural wetlands and their margins are on a trajectory of measurable improvement towards wai ora.	Amend	Add one further point. (i) Rural communities are thriving and integrating productive land use and healthy waterways on farms, forests and lifestyle blocks.	The objectives reflect many of those in the WIP very well and this submission supports them. However, the wording does not acknowledge the value that our rural communities place on productive land use (reliant on water) or the role that they have as direct kaitiaki for a large number of Wellington's waterways.
S9.5	Policy WH.P2: Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water objectives.	Amend	Change "excluding livestock from waterbodies" to "reducing livestock access to waterbodies".	Other sections of the Plan Change do not drive total stock exclusion from all waterways but instead apply a practical assessment that also allows for alternative methods.
S9.6	Policy WH.P3: Freshwater Action Plans role in the health and wellbeing of waterways.	Amend	Include the rural community in the development of Action Plans.	WIP recs 10 and 13 clearly state the need for communities to be a part of catchment planning. - It is unclear whether Freshwater Action Plans are intended to take the place of catchment plans, but presumably not due to being larger scale. If the Action Plans are to include on-farm actions then it is essential that farmers and rural communities are key partners in developing that.
S9.7	8.2 Policies	Amend	Include a policy on septic tanks somewhere in 8.2.	Need to implement WIP rec 32. This doesn't appear to be picked up elsewhere in PC1.
S9.8	Policy WH.P21: Managing diffuse discharges of nutrients and Escherichia coli from farming activities.	Amend	Add "identification of sources of e-coli specific to individual catchments".	Need to implement WIP rec 15. The source of high e-coli levels in the Makara Stream is unknown and there are several potential sources (livestock, septic tanks, waterfowl). The sources and levels of e-coli need to be known for each catchment in order for them to be effectively addressed.
S9.9	Policy WH.P21: Managing diffuse discharges of nutrients and Escherichia coli from farming activities.	Amend	Add "incorporate e-coli reduction in catchment context and farm environment plans, based on monitored data" – to allow a farm-scale approach as already proposed for nitrogen and sediment.	Need to implement WIP rec 33. - Lack of consistency with WH.P22 (nitrogen) and WH.P23 (sediment). - Work to reduce e-coli levels should only target areas where e-coli is shown to be an issue. There is not currently sufficient monitoring data to determine the levels and sources of e-coli across the area's multiple catchments. It is inappropriate to extrapolate the results of one monitoring site across all of Makara and Ohariu, given the diversity in catchments/sub-catchments. - Local water quality studies need to be carried out and the option for landowner-led, farm-scale monitoring provided for – including feedback loops to monitor the impact of actions taken.
S9.10	Policy WH.P23: Achieving reductions in sediment discharges from farming activities on land with high risk of erosion.	Amend	Remove section (a) or modify to say "identifying highest erosion risk land (pasture)... at a farm-scale." Reword this section to focus on identifying "sediment sources" rather than solely erosion risk.	Need to implement WIP rec 36 – "development of property-specific information to inform Freshwater Farm Plan development". - PC1 currently includes an "erosion risk map" which requires landowners to revegetate land mapped as the top 10% of unvegetated land at risk or erosion across a whaitua. Given the geology in this area, using a % figure has captured some areas where erosion risk is not high (this observation is confirmed by local landowners). When applied at a property-scale, this then creates a significant cost to landowners but without smart targeting of work. - On-farm actions need to be based on a farm-scale assessment of erosion risks. This is common practice across the country - including in GWRC's existing erosion control programme in the Wairarapa. - Regional mapping is used in other regions mainly to prioritise landowner engagement and farm investment in land treatment. It is only rarely used to regulate land treatment in regions where erosion risk is extreme e.g. Gisborne. - This policy assumes erosion from steep land is the key source of sediment (plus stock movement on streambanks). Anecdotally, streambank erosion from high flood flows is a key contributor of sediment in the Makara Stream catchment. - The area for retirement will be much bigger than the mapped polygons due to the need to aggregate areas and work with the landscape to locate sensible fencelines.
S9.11	Policy WH.P23: Achieving reductions in sediment discharges from farming activities on land with high risk of erosion.	Amend	Refocus (b) from "erosion risk treatment plan" to "erosion and sediment risk treatment plan".	This policy implements WIP rec 36. - Support sediment/erosion risk treatment plans, but based on farm-scale assessment not whaitua-scale mapping. - The sources of sediment are likely broader than erosion on hillsides in the Makara and Ohariu catchments. Focusing on the broader topic of "sediment" will also acknowledge the role of other existing sediment sources and also management techniques such as low stocking rates and maintaining good pasture cover.
S9.12	Policy WH.P23: Achieving reductions in sediment discharges from farming activities on land with high risk of erosion.	Amend	Oppose (c). Instead, use erosion/sediment risk treatment plans to identify the most appropriate methods and timeframes for managing sediment loss on each unique site.	Need to implement WIP rec 33 and 36. - "Woody vegetation" is only one option for land treatment. Makara/Ohariu has its unique challenge in establishing woody vegetation on these incredibly exposed areas. In addition, Meridian Energy does not allow revegetation with plants over 1m on many ridgelines across several of the largest local farms due to their disruption of windflow. - The provision's requirement to "maintain" the woody vegetation will be unviable, given the large-scale land retirement and reduced farm income from reduced production and high fencing costs incurred. Another challenge to revegetation projects is working alongside Meridian's wind farms (crossing six of our farms) where afforestation needs to be designed to not impede wind flow.
S9.13	Policy WH.P24: Phasing of farm environment plans.	Amend	Potentially revise the date for FEPs to be prepared and certified – if this is inconsistent with the FWFP roll out.	Need to implement WIP rec 34. Ensure that this phasing is timed to best integrate with the national roll out of Freshwater Farm Plans so that farmers are not duplicating effort.
S9.14	Policy WH.P26: Managing livestock access to small rivers.	Amend	Replace "restrict" with "reduce through non-regulatory means". Shift the focus on non-regulatory drivers, as per the WIP recommendation. Amend the wording to clarify what size river is covered in this policy – and ensure that the title and policy wording are consistent.	Need to implement WIP rec 34 – "help them to develop and implement practices that minimise stock access to streams not covered by regulations." Make this policy consistent with the associated rule (or broader intent) regarding reduced access rather than restricted access. The Makara and Ohariu areas are incredibly hilly which limits the option of fencing as a tool. Be aware that a good portion of Makara and Ohariu's large streams won't be covered in the national stock exclusion regulations. Need to focus this on actual risk from stock access to rivers in low intensity farms – both in terms of frequency of livestock access and actual impact on streambanks and water quality.
S9.15	Policy WH.P27: Promoting stream shading.	Support	Retain	This policy can be enacted through native reversion, native planting or poplar/willow pole planting.
S9.16	Rule WH.R17: Vegetation clearance on highest erosion risk land – permitted activity.	Amend	Note "high erosion risk land as identified in individual erosion risk management plans".	Need to implement WIP rec 36. Use farm-scale assessment of high risk land rather than current whaitua-wide mapping.
S9.17	Rule WH.R18: Vegetation clearance on highest erosion risk land – controlled activity.	Amend	Note "highest erosion risk land as identified in individual erosion risk management plans".	Need to implement WIP rec 36. Use farm-scale assessment of highest risk land rather than current whaitua-wide mapping.
S9.18	Rule WH.R20: Plantation forestry – controlled activity.	Amend	Review whether mapping is fit for purpose.	Partially implements WIP rec 37. It is unclear whether this mapping is fit for purpose and I suggest a comparison against best practice mapping tools. Forestry is an effective soil conservation tool on erosion-prone land, depending on severity of erosion risk and forestry type. Prioritise productive/protective options for erosion-prone land where suitable, including use of coppicing tree species and/or small-scale harvesting. Note that in Makara/Ohariu, pine is one of the only tree species that will grow in the most wind-exposed areas (other than low native scrub).
S9.19	Rule WH.R26: Farming activities on a property of between 4 hectares and 20 hectares – permitted activity.	Amend	Include assessment of e-coli risk. Remove farm registration requirement – limited benefit. Clarify 4-20ha based on "effective grazing area" or similar.	Implements WIP recs 33 and 34. - This provision has a very strong focus on nitrogen management whereas the WIP notes that small properties might also be contributing to e-coli levels. Need to focus the work with small properties on catchment issues – e.g. e-coli and sediment in the Makara Stream catchment. - Support the use of "stock units" rather than livestock to determine farming intensity – this takes into account the often diverse livestock species on smaller properties. - There does not appear to be a good rationale for farm registration, particularly if the N monitoring is not required to be reported. - The PC1 wording does not include a requirement for any form of livestock exclusion from waterways, other than national rules. The smaller properties should have the same level of stock exclusion requirements as larger farms do, even if not through a full FEP. - Approach to determining what properties the provision apply to is inconsistent with the larger farms – should be based on effective grazing area.
S9.20	Rule WH.R27: Farming activities on 20 hectares or more of land – permitted activity.	Amend	Ensure that the details of this rule are consistent with the content and timeframes for Freshwater Farm Plans. Remove the requirement for a Small Stream Riparian Programme. Retain inclusion of an erosion/sediment risk treatment plan – as detail to inform the FWFP.	Implements WIP rec 34 – "Help them to develop and implement practices that minimise stock access to streams not covered by regulations." - Any farm environment plan work above and beyond the national regulations can contribute to the FWFP as catchment context. I recommend that, if retained, these two plans/programmes are designed in such a way – to inform the FWFP. - This provision is disproportionate to the treatment of larger streams. In Makara/Ohariu, only a minor portion of the larger streams will be required for livestock exclusion under national regulations, due to the difficult topography. Small streams should instead be one part of a farm's assessment of waterway health and contaminant sources (including larger streams), rather than a standalone programme. This is particularly relevant given the low farm stocking rates in Makara/Ohariu and difficult topography for fencing.

59.21	Rule WH.R28: Livestock access to a small river – permitted activity.	Amend	Remove (b) since farm environment plans can pick up planning for all streams and non-regulatory measures can support on-farm work.	<p>Implements WIP rec 33</p> <p>The WIP recommends that farm plans incorporate more streams rather than just the MIE "low slope" map (regardless of size) but does not propose a regulatory approach. Also refer to comments against Policy WH.P26.</p>
59.22	Rule WH.R30: The use of land for farming activities – discretionary activity.	Amend	Adjust the scale at which this is applied – from FMU-scale to small catchments/farm – to allow for local differences in stream contaminant levels to be assessed.	<p>Implements WIP rec 15.</p> <p>There aren't enough water quality monitoring sites to make this provision useful or fair. There is currently one GWRC data monitoring point for the 8,000ha Mākara Steam catchment and no monitoring for catchments outside of that one, yet very different land use. Limitations on farming should only be placed on the properties where N is shown to be a problem – not across the whole FMU.</p>

Raw submission documents

These are files that were uploaded as part of an online submission.

Document name	File	Description	Upload date
PC1 Submission Cover Letter - Louise Askin	pc1submissionlouiseaskin.pdf		15/12/2023 16:34