

Submission of: Friends of Waiwhetu Stream

To: Greater Wellington Regional Council

On: Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

11 December 2023

The Friends support the plan change and commend the Council for taking a long-term view on improving water quality. We support the specific targets in the plan to be completed by 2040 and the vision set out for water quality in streams and rivers for year 2100.

Introduction

The Friends of Waiwhetū Stream are a local community group that began in 2011 with a vision to ensure that Waiwhetū Stream is a healthy functioning ecosystem and is treasured and enjoyed by our community. We are supported by the Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Our activities include riparian planting and maintaining those plantings, regularly removing rubbish, citizen science monitoring of the health of Waiwhetū Stream and a forest restoration project in the Rishworth Reserve.

Chapter 6 - Supporting improved water quality outcomes

The Friends of Waiwhetū Stream are fully supportive of the intended policies set out in chapter 6.16 and are willing to contribute to the development of the intended policies contained therein. Our concern is that proposed treatments to improve water quality are already known – such as retention tanks and rainwater gardens – that the plans should be progressed more quickly than the timeframe of December 2026 indicated in the proposed plan change could be brought forward.

Waiwhetu Stream targets

As noted in the plan change, the health of Waiwhetū Stream is poor. Contamination from sewage leaking into Waiwhetū Stream means that only species that are highly tolerant to pollution are found in Waiwhetū Stream and this means recreation in Waiwhetū Stream is not possible.

Traditionally, Waiwhetū Stream has been an important food source for local Hapu and Iwi. The levels of contamination mean that kai gathering in Waiwhetu Stream has become an ancient story.

The Friends of Waiwhetu Stream welcome the new targets for reduced contamination that are replicated in Appendix 1 of this submission, especially for E Coli. The Friends of Waiwhetu Stream note that this will require the Local Territorial Authority to repair and maintain its wastewater pipes and detect and remediate leaks and cross connections at properties and has been advocating for this activity with Hutt City Council for over a decade and are supportive of the plan including assisting in finding alternative funding options for Councils for this work.

Appendix 1: Waiwhetu Stream targets for 2040.

Waiwhetu Stream									
Waiwhetu S. @ Whites Line East						Part FMU default TAS ¹			
Parameter	Unit	Statistic	Timeframe	Baseline			TAS ¹		
				Numeric	State	Numeric	State		
Periphyton biomass ²	mg chl-a/m ²	92 nd %ile	By 2040	Insufficient data		≤200	C	M	
Ammonia (toxicity)	mg/L	Median		0.027	B	≤0.02	A	I	
		95 th %ile		0.076		≤0.05			
Nitrate (toxicity)	mg/L	Median		0.5	A	M	A	M	
		95 th %ile		0.9					
Suspended fine sediment	Black disc(m)	Median		1.1	A		A		
Escherichia coli (E. coli)	/100mL	Median		495	E	≤130	C	I	
		%>260/100mL		73		≤34			
		%>540/100mL		42		≤20			
		95 th %ile		5,800		≤1200			
Fish	Fish-IBI	Latest				≥34	A	M	
Fish community health (abundance, structure and composition)		Expert assessment ³				Insufficient data		N/A ³	C
Macroinvertebrates (1 of 2)	MCI	Median		55.4	D	≥90	C	I	
	QMCI	Median		2.2		≥4.5			
Macroinvertebrates (2 of 2)	ASPM	Median		0.1	D	≥0.3	C		
Deposited fine sediment ²	%cover	Median		30	D	≤29	C		
Dissolved oxygen	mg/L	1-day minimum		Insufficient data		≥7.5	A		
		7-day mean minimum				≥8.0			
Dissolved inorganic nitrogen ⁴	mg/L	Median		0.56		M		M	
Dissolved reactive phosphorus ⁴	mg/L	Median		0.024		≤0.018		I	
		95 th %ile		0.049		≤0.049			
Dissolved copper	µg/L	Median		1.0	C	≤1	A	I	
		95 th %ile		4.0		≤1.4			
Dissolved zinc	µg/L	Median	18.3	D	≤8	B			
		95 th %ile	51.5		≤15				
Ecosystem metabolism	g O ₂ m ⁻² d ⁻¹	N/A ⁵							