

Whaingaroa Harbour Care
P O BOX 60
RAGLAN 3265

7 March 2017

Waikato Regional Council
Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Dear Councillors

RE: SUBMISSION ON WAI ORA PLAN CHANGE

Twenty two years ago, Whaingaroa Harbour Care was a lone voice in the Waikato calling for landowners to riparian plant their farms in our catchment to improve water quality in streams and the Whaingaroa / Raglan harbours.

What we are seeing now, is a huge groundswell of New Zealanders deeply concerned about the health of their rivers. People want improvement in fresh water quality now, not in 80 years and our kiwi kids deserve real swimmable rivers, not Nick Smith's definition of swimmable.

Currently, the National Government is proposing a swimmable E coli guideline for rivers of **540 E coli per 100** mls. We believe this is far too high, as 550/100ml is considered a red alert level in NZ and other countries. Waikato Regional Council should keep its green level alert for E Coli at less than 55/100ml and reduce its orange level alert to 55-100ml. International evidence shows unacceptable levels of illness occur when E Coli rates are greater than 100/100ml.

Of the monitored rivers in the Waikato, few are ranked excellent or good and most are ranked either poor, intermittent or fair. It's just not good enough. How many streams have improved in the past 20 years? How many streams will improve in the next 20 years under the current Wai Ora proposals?

We support strategies, policies, rules and actions that will improve freshwater quality sooner, rather than later.

We support dairy cattle exclusion from streams from 1 July 2017 but believe that a single wire fence 0.5-1m away from a stream is insufficient. Whaingaroa Harbour Care calls for landowners to erect fences so that riparian areas can be planted to absorb sediment and nutrient run-off.

Whaingaroa Harbour Care also calls for a moratorium on new conversions of land to dairy farms, until water quality is improved and streams are swimmable.

Whaingaroa Harbour Care also supports the exclusion of other stock from riparian areas, particularly beef cattle and encourages Waikato Regional Council to implement this urgently, before another 20 years pass by.

In our experience, most landowners want to do the right thing and they want consistency and fairness of policies and rules. All stock should be excluded from waterways. Every farm should riparian plant and fence their waterways and aim to get this done in the next 20 years. All New Zealanders want swimmable streams and healthy rivers as soon as possible.

Let's get alongside our farmers, roll up our sleeves, suck in our pot-bellies and get the job done today, not tomorrow.

Yes, I'd like to be heard. Please email fionaedwards@internet.co.nz or phone 07 825 8569.

Many thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "F".

Fiona Edwards
Chairperson