

Waituna Interim Policy Framework Development

There has been pressure to develop and get Council approval for an interim policy framework for Waituna in order to meet the likely criteria for, and timing of, an application to the Clean Up Fund.

While we have been working with representatives of some of the stakeholders, this has only been of limited extent due to the timing issue.

Staff have developed a draft interim policy framework that would enable intensification of land use within the catchment to be controlled and the impacts of land drainage, nutrient leakage and winter grazing to be mitigated.

There is however strong concern about the process, and in particular the lack of consultation on proposed rules that may take effect immediately without a submission process, by Federated Farmers and other farmers in the catchment.

I can understand this concern and consider that the timelines need to be amended, as we are in danger of losing the support of one of our significant stakeholders, representing farmers in the catchment.

At the special Council meeting today I will be requesting Council, under urgency, to delay consideration of the interim policy framework until 19 October 2011, to enable further consultation with Federated Farmers representatives.

I will further request that the Chairman of the Environmental Management Committee is a part of this consultation.

Done in a timely manner, this should not compromise the Clean Up Fund application and, in any event, the criteria for the fund will likely require an application to be prepared in collaboration with the stakeholders.

If we don't acknowledge Federated Farmers' concerns and amend the interim policy framework timetable, we are likely to lose its support for not only the funding application, but also the Waituna response.

We are unable to mount an effective response without this support.

Warren Tuckey
Director of Environmental Management
7 September 2011