

Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Background

Environment Canterbury has announced it intends to review over 600 consents in the Rakaia-Selwyn groundwater zone to ensure groundwater abstraction does not result in groundwater-fed streams drying up or falling below environmental flow requirements while ensuring an appropriate level of supply reliability to existing consent holders.

Through this programme, called *the Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams*, the intention is to ensure that all relevant consents in the ground water zone include conditions that:

- place clear annual limits on the amount of water every consent holder in red zones can abstract;
- create the ability to vary those limits year-by-year depending on how much water is in the groundwater system;
- require consent holders to measure how much water they are taking by metering their wells; and
- control the rate of abstraction from wells that directly affect stream flows to ensure abstraction does not cause streams to go below minimum environmental flows.

Environment Canterbury is now developing the implementation strategy for this process and seeks to do this with community input. Environment Canterbury believes that for the implementation strategy to be a success, it needs to be developed with active participation by the community, local government, Tangata Whenua and other interested stakeholders. An Advisory Group will support the development of the implementation strategy by providing Environment Canterbury with advice and informed perspectives that will assist in the development and prioritisation of the implementation strategy.

Purpose

The role of the Advisory Group is to provide advice. In making decisions, Environment Canterbury will consider that advice as an integral part of its overall stream of advice.

Functions

The Advisory Group will:

- meet with the Environment Canterbury *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams* Steering Group.
- provide independent perspectives on the development of the implementation strategy and the prioritisation and management of work streams that will be developed within that strategy.
- act as a sounding board for Environment Canterbury in the implementation of the restorative programme for Lowland streams.
- assist, where appropriate, with communication and liaison with consent holders and stakeholders.

Membership

The Advisory Group will have nine members. Members will be drawn from Water User Groups and residents with the Rakaia-Selwyn Zone, Ngai Tahu, Selwyn District Council, Fish and Game NZ, Federated Farmers, Irrigation New Zealand, the Water Rights Trust and the Waihora Ellesmere Trust.

Protocols

The members of the advisory group are expected to:

- Have a good understanding of water issues in the Rakaia-Selwyn groundwater zone.
- Be able to take an overall view of the implementation plan rather than an individual or sector view.

1. Servicing

Environment Canterbury will provide meeting venues and services for the Advisory Group through the *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams* Steering Group. The *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams* Steering Group comprises senior managers of Environment Canterbury and support staff.

2. Meetings

The Advisory Group will hold working meetings about (but not limited to) three times over the next two to three months. Generally advice given by the Advisory Group will have been reached by consensus, however where there are differing views that the Advisory Group wishes to have presented, then these will be summarised in any reports or minutes.

No proxies for attendances are permitted should members be unable to attend a meeting.

3. Communications and Advocacy

The Advisory Group will only make public media comments on its collective advice or views after discussion and agreement with the *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams* Steering Group.

The Advisory Group may, however, individually act as advocates for the *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams*, engaging with interested parties and acting as a sounding board with communities.

4. Confidentiality

The Advisory Group members must be able to offer free and frank advice to the Steering Group.

It is expected that (unless required to do so in response to a request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act) members will:

- treat with confidentiality information acquired by them in their role as members, unless it is public information;
- not disclose to or discuss with any other person, information which if disclosed, might be harmful to the Advisory Group;
- not disclose the outcome of any Steering Group decision prior to them been publicly notified by Council, and
- not disclose the nature of discussions held within meetings unless expressly asked to do so by the *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams* Steering Group.

5. Duration

The Advisory Group's role will cease when the implementation plan has been adopted by the Steering Group.

6. Fees

Members of the Advisory group will be reimbursed actual and reasonable travel costs. Expense claims will be managed by the *Restorative Programme for Lowland Streams* Steering Group.