

# Waitaki RAP

Update on the Waitaki Catchment  
Water Allocation Regional Plan

April 2006

## Introduction

Waitaki RAP is a newsletter published by Environment Canterbury. It aims to keep people in touch with issues relating to the Waitaki Catchment Water Allocation Regional Plan.



## Implementation

Work is continuing in readiness for the Waitaki Catchment Water Allocation Regional Plan (the Plan) becoming fully operative. There are a significant number of tasks that need to be completed prior to Environment Canterbury being able to consider the applications deferred by the Resource Management (Waitaki Catchment) Amendment Act 2004 (the Waitaki Act). Given the large number of consent applications to be considered, and the unique nature of the Plan, these tasks will take time to complete to ensure all legal requirements are met.

Environment Canterbury is working towards considering the deferred resource consent applications when the Plan becomes fully operative. This cannot happen until there is a final decision on the High Court Appeal by Mackenzie Irrigation Company and Meridian Energy Limited.

The Ministry for the Environment will shortly update the list of resource consent applications deferred by the Waitaki Act, by including those received by Environment Canterbury up to October 21, 2005. This will place these applications on the same footing as the earlier deferred applications.

## The High Court Appeal

The appeal by Mackenzie Irrigation Company and Meridian Energy Ltd to the High Court is continuing. There are now, in total, seven parties involved in the appeal, with Central South Island Fish and Game Council being recently granted leave to participate.

A preliminary issue about the involvement of the Waitaki Catchment Water Allocation Board was recently heard and determined by the High Court. The High Court has limited the Board's involvement to a 'watching' brief but with readiness to assist the High Court on any matter if necessary and required. Any hearing of the main appeal is unlikely to happen before the middle of this year.



Waitaki Rap is also available electronically.

If you are keen to receive Waitaki RAP via email or know someone else who would like to be added to the distribution list, contact Environment Canterbury's Customer Services at 0800 EC INFO (0800 324 636) or email [info@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:info@ecan.govt.nz). You can also contact us if you want to be taken off our mailing list.



## Additional information

While Environment Canterbury is unlikely to formally request additional information on consent applications under Section 92 of the Resource Management Act until the Plan is fully operative, providing information prior to this will enable Environment Canterbury to consider applications faster once the Plan is operative. Environment Canterbury is currently assessing consent applications and will send a letter to each applicant informing them of the information needed to complete the processing of their application(s). This could include the following:

- annual volume of water sought
- whether water sought to be taken, diverted, dammed or used would contravene the minimum flow and level regime in the Plan
- effects of the activity on water quality
- proposed efficiency of use.



## Current allocation

The Plan allocates water by specifying annual amounts (millions of cubic metres per year) to different activities in six different areas of the Waitaki catchment. There are up to six different classes of activities, including:

- town and community water supply
- industrial and commercial
- tourism and recreation
- agricultural and horticultural
- hydro-electric generation.

This is important because if the volume of water set out in the Plan is exceeded, resource consent applications must be considered as non-complying activities, which requires that a more rigorous 'test' be applied. Therefore, before considering resource consent applications, it is important Environment Canterbury can calculate how much water is currently allocated in the different parts of the Waitaki catchment.

The calculation of the amount of water currently allocated annually is made up by adding together the amount of water each existing resource consent holder may take in a 12-month period. At present, most resource consents do not include specific reference to an annual allocation volume. Environment Canterbury is considering how to determine the amount of water currently allocated by each consent. A number of different options are being explored, ranging from formally reviewing each resource consent to estimating the annual volumes by different calculation methods.

## Water quality

Water quality is a matter that any consent authority needs to consider when processing a consent to take and use water whether it is sourced from aquifers or rivers.

There is concern about the possible adverse groundwater and surface water quality outcomes resulting from land use intensification, particularly when this involves irrigation. Environment Canterbury scientists, ideally with stakeholder involvement, will monitor water quality and examine the effects of land use intensification within the Waitaki catchment.

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