



Frequently asked questions

What is the Land Use and Water Quality Project?

The Land Use and Water Quality Project is a Canterbury-wide initiative, focusing on identifying a range of preferred approaches for managing the effects of land use – in particular nutrients – on water quality.

Over the past twenty years rural land use in Canterbury has changed. Over the same time period the amount of nutrients reaching waterways has increased and this has led in some areas to a decline in water quality.

Environment Canterbury is working collaboratively with the primary sector and other stakeholders to find sensible solutions that address the issues raised and take account of the values of the parties involved.

Who is involved in the project?

The collaboration involves Environment Canterbury, DairyNZ, Federated Farmers, Horticulture New Zealand, the Foundation for Arable Research, Fish & Game and Forest & Bird, and is supported by Irrigation NZ and the Crown Research Institutes: AgResearch, Landcare Research, and NIWA. Many other stakeholder groups have been involved in the development of the project and the collaborative process that is being implemented.

Representatives from many of these organisations are also on the Project Governance Group. The purpose of the Governance Group is to act as a forum for strategic discussion and to provide direction for the project.

Why do we need a case study and why the Hurunui?

The project will take a case study approach which will enable the process and information requirements to be tested, reviewed and confirmed before being rolled out in other catchments in Canterbury. It is important that the options are 'tested' in a real situation and the best way to achieve this is through a catchment pilot project.

The case study area consists of the middle and upper Hurunui catchment, Pahau, as well as Dry and Waitohi catchments, which drain into the Hurunui River. This area is generally representative of much of Canterbury's surface and groundwater conditions, the boundaries are well defined, the hydrology is well understood and there are good water records. In addition, Environment Canterbury is already working with some landowners to address water quality problems in this area. The Land Use and Water Quality Project will build on the good work that has already begun with the local community.

When will the catchment workshops be held?

Four catchment workshops will be held in Culverden. These have been scheduled for late August through to December of this year. The four workshops build on each other, with the information gathered informing the next workshop and being the basis for workshop discussions and deliberations.

Who will be involved in the catchment workshops?

A mix of people who live and work within the Hurunui catchment – especially those with a special interest in the area – and representatives of the CWMS Hurunui-Waiiau Zone Committee will be involved in the catchment workshops. Catchment workshop participants will be chosen by the stakeholder groups involved in the project. Strong community participation in the workshops is important as it will bring local knowledge and experience, as well as providing input and discussion on the practical application of any preferred approach options.

If I am not involved in the workshops, how will I know what is happening?

We plan to keep people informed through a range of mechanisms including:

- Feedback, as appropriate, to stakeholder groups from representatives at the workshops.
- A monthly email newsletter update.
- Information and updates on the project website www.ecan.govt.nz/LUWQ

How can we have confidence in the scientific work that underpins this project?

Critical to the project will be: scientific work to establish the implications of different nutrient limits; identifying which parts of the catchment are more susceptible to contaminant losses; modelling to predict the effects of changing land uses; and determining the implications of trends to more intensive land-uses and management practices on surface and groundwater quality.

The science will be extensively reviewed by members of the project team and, where appropriate, by recognised, independent scientists with relevant experience. Key pieces of scientific work will also be presented and considered by the Governance Group, which includes members who have considerable scientific experience.

Will you be taking account of social, economic and cultural considerations as well and environmental aspects?

Yes, through the catchment workshop process and the scientific research work, the project will be considering social, economic and cultural aspects as well as environmental aspects.

How will the information gathered through the catchment workshops be used?

The information from the catchment workshops, alongside the scientific information, will be used to inform the development of the preferred approach. After the completion of the pilot catchment work, the lessons learnt will be incorporated and the project rolled out across Canterbury.

How does this work tie in with all the other things that are happening in the Hurunui?

The Land Use and Water Quality Project is working alongside and complements a number of projects that are occurring in the Hurunui catchment (e.g. environmental flow and allocations and Resource Care projects). Environment Canterbury is working to ensure that the timing and the work plans of the projects are aligned with, and do not duplicate each other.

Where does the CWMS fit?

The Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) identifies the cumulative effects of land use on water quality as one of its most critical challenges. The Strategy sets out water quality targets, requires the establishment of catchment limits for nitrate and other contaminants, and supports primary sector initiatives to improve land management. The recently formed Hurunui-Waiiau Zone Committee will play a key role in implementing the preferred approach to land use and water quality management which is developed through the Land Use and Water Quality Project.

If I want to find out more about the project who do I contact?

Contact the Project Manager: Tina von Pein tina@developmentmatters.co.nz or phone 027 201 1000.

A collaborative project between Environment Canterbury, primary sector and non-governmental organisations.

