



Freshwater

O ngā taonga katoa o te whenua, ko te wai te mea tino ohoho o ngā mea katoa
Of all the treasures of the earth, none is more precious than water

Tasman District has more than 9,000 kms of rivers and streams, numerous lakes, wetlands, springs and aquifers, plus two pristine alpine lakes, and Te Waikoropupū springs with the clearest water in the Southern Hemisphere. These waterways are valued for cultural reasons and their inherent qualities, as well as being places for swimming, boating, fishing, mahinga kai for food and resource gathering, a home for aquatic plants and animals, water for drinking, hydroelectricity, water for industry and irrigation.

As water moves around the land surface and through the ground, it transports pollutants like bacteria, sediment, and nutrients. Because all our water is connected, contaminants in surface water (water above the ground) have the potential to enter our precious groundwater (water beneath the ground) and vice versa.

When we take more from a waterbody than it can naturally support, we compromise that ecosystem.



Health-check: Tasman's freshwater

Tasman District Council monitors over 50 freshwater quality sites, covering groundwater and surface water. This monitoring reveals that while the overall state of freshwater quality in the Tasman District is good, outside of national parks it is under pressure.

Some of our rivers and streams have changed dramatically since European settlement. They may have been dammed, had water pumped out or diverted, waste discharged into them, or invasive plants introduced. The land draining into these rivers (their catchment area) has likely been cleared for agriculture, forestry, and urban development. These activities all increase the amount of runoff entering our freshwater.

There is evidence that small lowland streams near human activity have degrading water quality and there is an increasing public health risk from groundwater contamination. In many waterbodies natural character and processes have been degraded from vegetation loss and channel modification. There is also pressure on water availability. There is still a lot to learn about the drivers of change and the effects of land use and interventions on freshwater, however the data we have combined with local knowledge demonstrates the need for improved protection and restoration effects.

Towards protection and restoration

Tasman District Council aims to manage freshwater so that our freshwater ecosystems are healthy and there's enough water of good quality for people and communities to thrive, both now and in the future. Our work is guided by national policy, regulations and standards for water that outline processes for setting requirements and rules. Council employs scientists, engineers, and policy advisers to support good management.

There are challenges in maintaining and protecting our water. In Tasman, there are many different views about what activities and water/land uses and practices are acceptable, differing levels of acceptable risk in our decision making, and differing ideas about appropriate, affordable, and practicable timeframes to achieve change.

Looking after and restoring Tasman's freshwater will require an all of community response. A lot of work has already been done but more is needed to implement new national freshwater standards and set our own local environmental objectives. Council is preparing to partner with iwi, industry, landowners, and communities to do this. We need to discuss desired outcomes for local freshwater and find shared approaches.

What we learn will make a difference to the way the new Aorere ki uta, Aorere ki tai - Tasman Environment Plan (the district's key resource management document) provides for freshwater protection and restoration, community resilience, and appropriate development of our towns, local centres, rural areas, and coastal places. The plan will include rules that direct water allocation and manage contamination discharges, along with policies to promote waterbody enhancement projects, water storage solutions, and hydroelectricity.



Get involved

This is an important time for freshwater management. We need to know what you value about our waterways so that we can manage them well. Next year, we will be working with community members to find out what we need to protect and restore.

You can also make a difference now by letting us know your views about freshwater in our district. Visit us online (www.environmentplan.tasman.govt.nz).

We will keep you informed as we progress the Aorere ki uta, Aore ki tai - Tasman Environment Plan and provide regular opportunities for your input and feedback on the matters that are important to you.

Contact details

Web: www.environmentplan.tasman.govt.nz

Email: environmentplan@tasman.govt.nz

Post: 189 Queen Street, Private Bag 4, Richmond, Nelson, 7050

Phone: 03 543 8400