

Appendix 1 : Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Outstanding Water Body Plan Change?

The OWB Plan Change is a small but important plan change which provides stakeholders and the community with an assurance that those special and exceptional water bodies (both freshwater and coastal areas) within the region will be protected and provided for well into the future.

The OWB Plan Change ensures the requirements to protect the significant values of OWB as required by Objectives A2 and B4 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) are met.

Why protect outstanding water bodies

It cannot be assumed that because a water body is outstanding today that it will still be outstanding in 10 years, particularly if the correct policy protection is not in regional planning documents.

What does the term 'outstanding' mean?

Being outstanding is a high test. The term 'outstanding' distinguishes something from others based on its exceptional qualities and is typically used to describe the 'best of the best'.

In order for a water body to be classed as outstanding, it must contain at least one cultural, spiritual, recreation, landscape or ecology value which stands out from the rest.

If a water body is not listed as an OWB does this mean it is not important?

Just because a water body is not on the list does not mean it is not important.

There are many rivers, lakes and coastal areas within Hawke's Bay which are of high value to the people who live in this region. Additionally, Tāngata whenua have special cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional associations with all water bodies.

The NPSFM and councils overall work programme will continue to recognise water bodies within Hawke's Bay which are of high value, together with Tāngata whenua's special cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional associations with all water bodies.

Can a past or potential value be classed as outstanding?

No. A water body can only be reviewed in the context of its present condition, it cannot be assessed on its past condition or its potential.

The NPSFM definition of OWB is clear in that it refers to those outstanding water bodies which have an outstanding value, not those water bodies which potentially have an outstanding value, nor had high value. The purpose of the NPSFM OWB provisions is to identify water bodies that currently have outstanding qualities.

Notwithstanding, there are many 'potential values' for each water body, this is better determined by the relevant catchment management groups so that the costs and benefits of regaining such values are fully assessed.

What happens if my water body is not identified as outstanding?

Just because a waterbody is not recognised as 'outstanding' does not mean it is not important. The NPSFM and councils overall work programme will continue to recognise, and provide for, waterbodies within Hawke's Bay which are of high value, together with Tāngata whenua's special cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional associations with all waterbodies.

The catchment-based work programmes will focus on improving the management of freshwater to protect the life supporting capacity of our rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and aquifers. These programmes will identify values, set objectives and develop policies and methods (including rules) for managing all water bodies – regardless of 'outstandingness' to ensure overall water quality is maintained or improved. Degraded water bodies will be addressed during those catchment based processes.

Should HBRC be focussing on restoring degraded water bodies instead of protecting water bodies which are already outstanding?

Both of these work streams are important. The regions degraded water bodies need to be restored, and the regions outstanding waterbodies need to be protected to ensure they are still around to be enjoyed by future generations.

It cannot be assumed that because a water body is outstanding today that it will still be outstanding in 10 years, particularly if the correct supporting management regime is not put in place.

The OWB plan change puts in place an important framework to ensure the region's most treasured water bodies are protected for future generations. It achieves this by ensuring that each of the catchment management plans in the region protect the significant values of OWB moving forward.