Working Towards a Better Tukituki

Tukituki Plan Change and the Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme

Why are things changing?

In recent decades, most of the pollution of the Tukituki River from factories and businesses has been stopped. However, the river still has water quality issues. The river’s poor health has been due to soil erosion, farm runoff and inadequately treated wastewater. This pollution has a greater impact when the river flow is low.

Over many years the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council has allowed land owners to take water for irrigation from the river, its tributaries and aquifer. In summer the need for irrigation water is at its highest, just when river flows are at their lowest, and when people most want to swim, fish and collect kai. These low summer flows increase the concentration of nutrients in the river and, combined with higher temperatures, grow slime and weed that is harmful to the environment and our enjoyment of the river. To make matters worse, these low flows can’t flush away the slime and so the river stagnates.

The Council has always restricted water takes in times of very low flow but these restrictions haven’t been enough to stop the growth of slime and weed and, a degraded habitat for birds, fish and insects. To make matters worse, these low flows can’t flush away the slime and so the river stagnates. The Council has always restricted water takes in times of very low flow but these restrictions haven’t been enough to stop the growth of slime and weed and a degraded habitat for birds, fish and insects.

What’s changing?

In 2014 the rules controlling the use of water from the Tukituki River and the land surrounding it were updated to improve the health of the river in what is called the ‘Tukituki Plan Change’. These rules are aimed at reducing sediment and nutrients in the river, and improving flows during summer months so the water quality improves.

The Council’s land management team is working with farmers to establish plans to fence waterways, reduce erosion, protect wetlands and manage fertiliser and stock.

What’s happening in the Tukituki catchment?

Big changes are happening in the way the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council manages the Tukituki River and its tributaries. This is the start of a long and challenging journey to improve the health of our treasured Tukituki River.

All Part of the Plan

Restoring the Tukituki to good health

How does the proposed Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme fit in?

The proposed Ruataniwha Scheme is a long-term water supply solution for Central Hawke’s Bay. It is part of a wider programme to better manage water resources in the Tukituki Catchment.

The scheme is a 90 million m³ storage reservoir located in the upper Makaroro river, storing water during periods of high flow and over winter.

Water would be released in summer to improve river flows for aquatic life and recreational river users, while also providing secure water to irrigators.

The scheme would deliver $10 million of ecological benefits.

Storage Scheme fit in?