

## 5.0 Socio-economic Impact

The use and protection of the Tukituki River has long been a topic of debate.

Since 2008 Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been working on a range of plans and actions in the catchment to provide positive environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes for the region, now and into the future.

A combination of water storage and higher minimum flows set by HBRC will release the potential for the Lower Tukituki River to be returned to more natural flows in summer, especially if current irrigators can be moved to storage.

A significant amount of work has gone into a wide range of investigations assessing the possibility of large-scale water storage in the Ruataniwha basin. The scheme, coupled with the Proposed Tukituki Plan Change provisions aims to improve water security for farmers, unlock economic potential for Hawke's Bay and improve water quality and quantity in the Tukituki River.

### Improve the region's employment, wealth and economic wellbeing

The Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme (RWS) has potential to deliver significant environmental, economic and social benefits for Hawke's Bay. It would provide reliable irrigation water to approximately 25,000 hectares of land, create new job opportunities and give a real boost to the region's economy, especially in Central Hawke's Bay. It is estimated:

- The scheme's construction period is expected to require four thousand job years of work.
- The scheme has the potential to create 2,250 jobs through increased farming activity and its flow-on impacts
- Boost GDP by approximately \$235 million a year by full water uptake
- Provide farmers, orchardists and viticulturalists with the water security they need for their operations
- Provide food processors the certainty of supply they require to maintain and grow their businesses
- Such a large project would also fulfil the business community's desire for more inwards investment.

We believe the RWS Scheme has real potential to provide a range of positive results for Hawke's Bay in the next 10 to 15 years; in particular it would drive renewed growth in Central Hawke's Bay.

Over time it is expected the community profile and farm ownership will change. New families will come into the area leading to a subsequent rise in school rolls. There's likely to be great demand on social services and increased participation in sport and recreation.

Hastings District Council and Central Hawke's Bay District Council are considering a social management plan to ensure that community needs, both existing and new, are catered for. This may include migrant assistance programmes for families moving to the region due to extra jobs being created and improved roading infrastructure to cater for the expected increase in rural productivity.

Business Hawke's Bay is coordinating business attraction and growth opportunities. Along with iwi and other groups they are coordinating labour market development initiatives to fill the expected demand for certain skills

### The future without water storage

Without the Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme to meet the improved environmental parameters in the proposed Tukituki Plan Change there would have to be a reduction in farming in Central Hawke's Bay.

For example to improve the river flows water consent holders would be facing less secure water for irrigation, in turn offering less certainty of supply for processors, therefore potentially affecting future employment opportunities in the region.



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