



Introducing the Regional Water Assessment

November 2020

Why freshwater matters

Freshwater is Hawke's Bay's most precious resource.

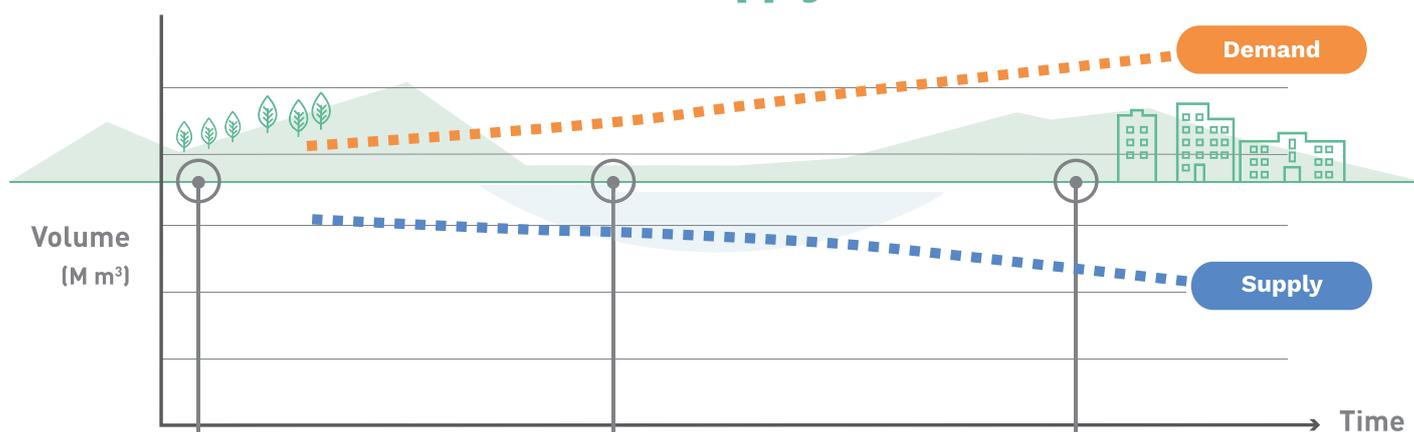
We need it to grow our food, to maintain the integrity of our natural environment, for recreation, for our households and businesses.

Hawke's Bay's prosperity and success has historically depended on what nature provides: fertile soils, a warm climate, abundant sunshine and freshwater. However, our freshwater is coming under increasing pressure. As a region we want more and more of it, yet the more we take the greater the cost to our streams, waterways, rivers and the wildlife that lives in and around our waterways.

Ultimately, we all need freshwater to survive. It is linked to the quality of life and wellbeing of every person in Hawke's Bay. We cannot do without it, but it is a finite resource that we must treat and manage with the utmost respect if we are to sustain our region's wellbeing. We must manage our freshwater very carefully and share it equitably.

We need to better understand Hawke's Bay's freshwater resources and we need to make decisions as a community on how we protect and manage it.

Freshwater demand and supply



Data

What are our current sources and uses of water?



Scenarios

What will happen to the supply of and demand for water in the decades ahead?



Policy

What choices will we make to plan for climate-resilient and secure supplies of freshwater, for all?



What is the Regional Water Assessment?

Hawke's Bay has never before completed a top-to-bottom assessment of all of its freshwater – how much it has, how it is used, who benefits from it, what the future demand looks like and our ability to deliver secure supplies into the future.

The Regional Council, with support from the Provincial Growth Fund, has started such an assessment.

The Regional Water Assessment will, for the first time, provide a comprehensive analysis of our freshwater, including the growing gap between how much we want and how much we have.

The Regional Water Assessment will not just focus on how we use water to make money. Rather, it will take a holistic and integrated view of freshwater in Hawke's Bay, starting with protecting our natural environment and covering the cultural, recreational and wellbeing benefits of a secure supply of freshwater.

The report will report on a wide range of options that Hawke's Bay has to protect our freshwater and ensure secure supplies, including – but not limited to – possible water storage, water conservation, more efficient water use and land use practices.

When will it be finished?

The assessment is currently being reviewed by councillors, mana whenua and key stakeholders. It will be made public early in 2023, alongside a summary with key findings and an education programme to increase understanding of water security issues.

What else is the Council doing?

The Regional Water Assessment is the centrepiece of a broader Water Security Programme that the Regional Council is accelerating. This work includes the investigation of small to medium-sized water storage options in the Heretaunga catchment to supplement flows and support aquatic ecosystems in lowland streams, as well as a mix of potential storage and Managed Aquifer Recharge – using peak river flows to supplement groundwater – in Central Hawke's Bay.

The focus of our water security work lies in protecting our natural environment and ensuring secure, sustainable freshwater supplies to protect our economy for future generations.



What happens when the Regional Water Assessment is complete?

The Regional Water Assessment is the centrepiece of the Regional Council's Water Security Programme.

It will provide the stocktake of our freshwater resources and provide detailed analysis of the options available to us.

When it is complete, we will also have a better understanding of some of the options, such as Managed Aquifer Recharge and small to medium-sized water storage, which we are investigating at the same time and which will still be under development.

We will release the full report publicly and engage with the local community on its findings and the options available to all of us. Once we have consulted the local community we will make decisions about the initiatives we will put in place to improve our water security for our natural environment and the people of Hawke's Bay.



How can I find out more?

You can find out more about the Regional Water Assessment and the broader Regional Water Security Programme by visiting our website:

www.hbrc.govt.nz/hawkes-bay/projects/regional-water-security-programme/

If you would like to speak about the programme, please contact the Hawke's Bay Regional Council Water Security Director, Tom Skerman.

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