

Committee recommendations for transitioning to higher minimum flows in the Waipoua River and Upper Ruamāhanga River – based on discussions up to 5 March 2018

Waipoua River

Considerations – a reasonably small number of surface water users, largest user is MDC for QE Park lake and sports field irrigation

- Increase the minimum flow level in the Waipoua River from 250L/s to 340 L/s over 10 years as follows:
 - 5 years after plan change notification (or in 2024) increase minimum flow to 295L/s
 - 10 years after plan change notification (or in 2029) increase minimum flow to 340L/s

Upper Ruamāhanga River

Considerations – large number of users who may need more time to transition

- Increase the minimum flow level in the upper Ruamahanga River from 2400L/s to 3250L/s over 20 years as follows:
 - 5 years after plan change notification (or in 2024) increase minimum flow to 2550L/s
 - 10 years after plan change notification (or in 2029) increase minimum flow to 2700L/s
 - 15 years after plan change notification (or in 2034) increase minimum flow to 2850L/s
 - 20 years after plan change notification (or in 2039) increase minimum flow to 3250L/s

Category A Takes

No change for 10 years (i.e. Category A users will remain on 50% restriction when relevant river reaches minimum flow)

Review after 10 years - the whole policy package to assess whether progress is being made.

The Committee still needs to decide what happens to Category A takes after 10 years. Further information will be supplied in response to the questions asked at the last meeting to help the Committee's decision.

What is the difference in the flow of the river of continuing to abstract water from Category A at 50% restriction, compared to the flow if Category A was to cease take at minimum flows? And what are the potential consequences for ecological health of not meeting the minimum flow for another 20 years?