

# Freshwater Management Units

## Ngā wae whakahaere waimāori

### Overview | Tirohanga whānui

Waikato Regional Council is carrying out a Freshwater Policy Review in response to central government's Essential Freshwater package, which is about stopping further degradation of New Zealand's fresh water and improving its quality and ecosystem health.

A key element of the package is an update to the *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020* (NPS-FM) which provides direction on how we manage freshwater under the Resource Management Act (RMA).

To give effect to the NPS-FM and as part of this policy review, we will be identifying freshwater management units, or FMUs, and we want

your input to help understand what needs and aspirations you have for the rivers, streams, lakes and other freshwater bodies in your area.

The whakaaro (views) and kōrero (feedback) you share will help to define long-term visions for fresh water in our rohe, set environmental outcomes and identify the methods we will use to achieve these outcomes. These will be included in our *Waikato Regional Policy Statement* and *Waikato Regional Plan*, which are policy tools used by the council and other authorities to manage the natural and physical resources of our rohe.

### What are freshwater management units?

#### Mō ngā wae whakahaere waimāori

The NPS-FM directs regional councils to identify areas called 'freshwater management units' (FMUs) so we can manage our freshwater resources at an appropriate scale for monitoring and reporting.

An FMU can include all or part of a waterbody or waterbodies, and their related catchments. For the purposes of the Freshwater Policy Review, FMUs need to be established at an appropriate spatial scale for setting environmental outcomes (and associated limits) that are best suited to our rohe and its needs.

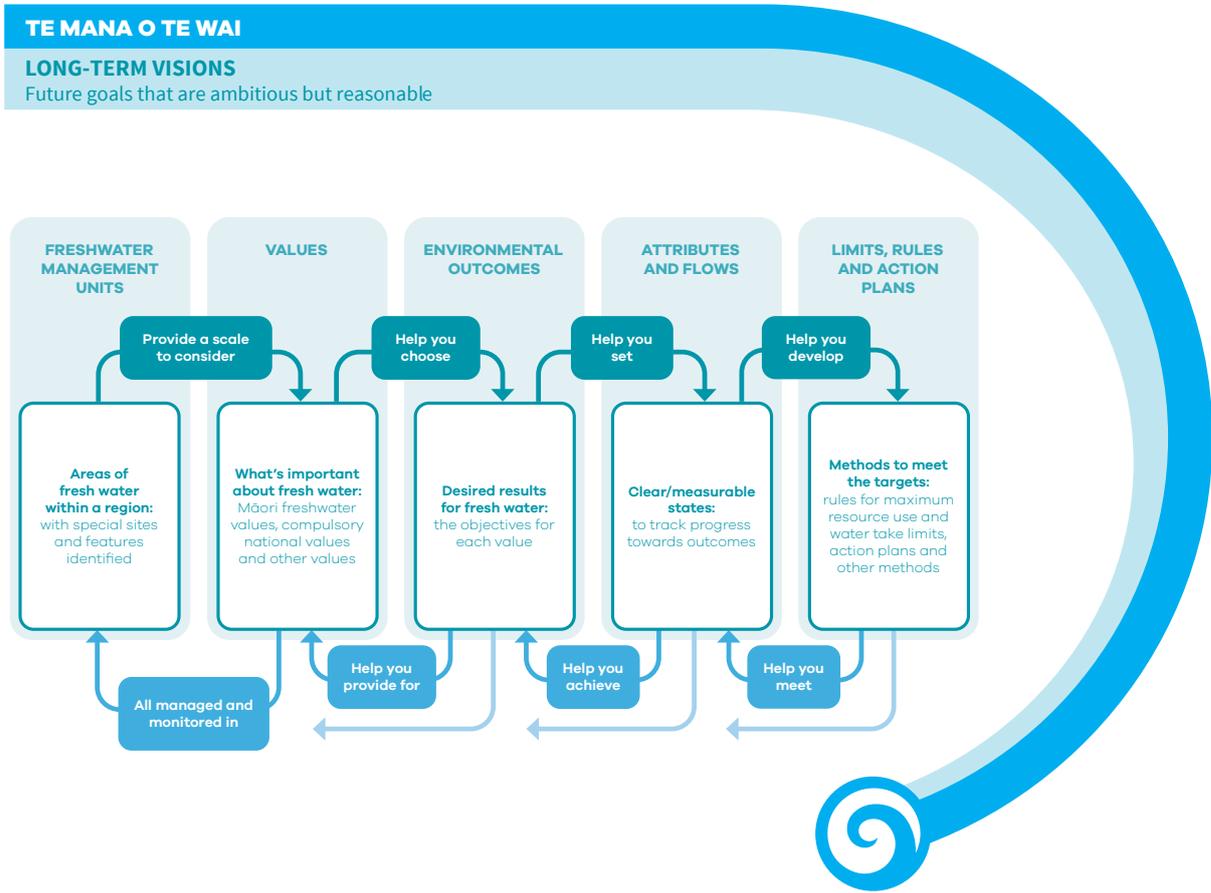
### Why are they needed?

#### Mō te aha

Identifying FMUs is a step towards developing a plan for maintaining or improving the state of fresh water in our rohe, and giving effect to the NPS-FM.

To ensure we do this right, we will follow central government's National Objectives Framework, a process connecting the values and aspirations you have for fresh water with potential solutions to realise these values. As shown in figure 1, defining the spatial scale for how fresh water will be managed is the first step in this process. Within each FMU, we will work with tangata whenua and communities to identify special sites and features, including monitoring sites and outstanding waterbodies.

Figure 1



## How will they be used?

### Mō te whakamahi

An FMU will enable the council to effectively manage freshwater activities at an appropriate scale. This involves setting target attribute states, environmental flows and levels, and other criteria to support the achievement of freshwater environmental outcomes, which we'll be developing alongside tangata whenua and communities.

Although FMUs do not dictate the policy approach to be taken in a specific area, there can be important differences or similarities in geology, soil type or land use, as well as values and outcomes between different FMUs, that will influence how we respond to the issues in each area.

FMUs for the Waikato and Waipā river catchments were set through the Healthy Rivers Wai Ora process that resulted in *Waikato Regional Plan Change 1*. Some draft principles have informed our thinking for defining FMUs for the rest of the region. These will form the basis for discussing FMUs with tangata whenua and communities. These principles are:

- setting FMUs at the largest practical scale and where similar catchments are grouped together to form distinctive FMUs
- the FMU represents an area of similar freshwater issues
- each FMU represents whole catchments aligned with the principle of ki uta, ki tai (from the mountains to the sea).

## Freshwater Management Unit boundaries

### Mō ngā wāhi Wae Whakahaere Waimāori

The concept of ki uta, ki tai (from the mountains to the sea), recognises the movement of water through the landscape and the numerous interactions it may have on its journey. This concept, along with cultural considerations, land use, geological features and other relevant information, has been a key influence in how we have formed FMU boundaries (see figure 2).

For the Freshwater Policy Review, we will be seeking your input to help understand what needs and aspirations you have for freshwater bodies within these boundary areas, acknowledging that there will be some overlap across FMU areas.

The table on page 4 describes each FMU that is shown in figure 2.

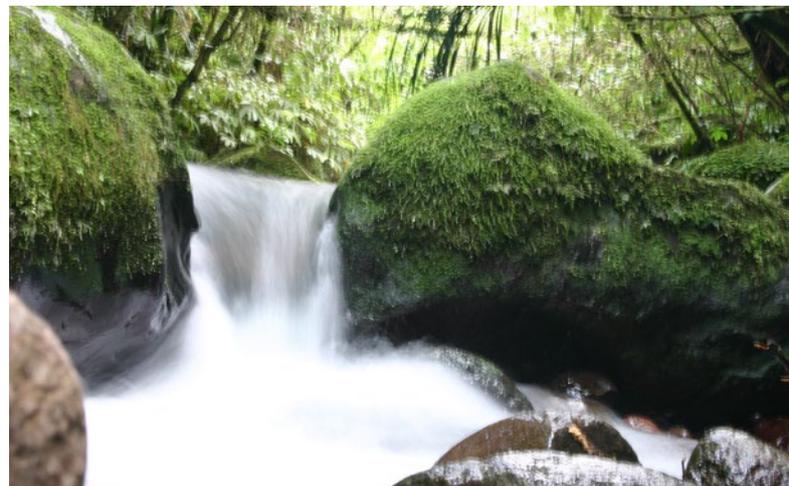
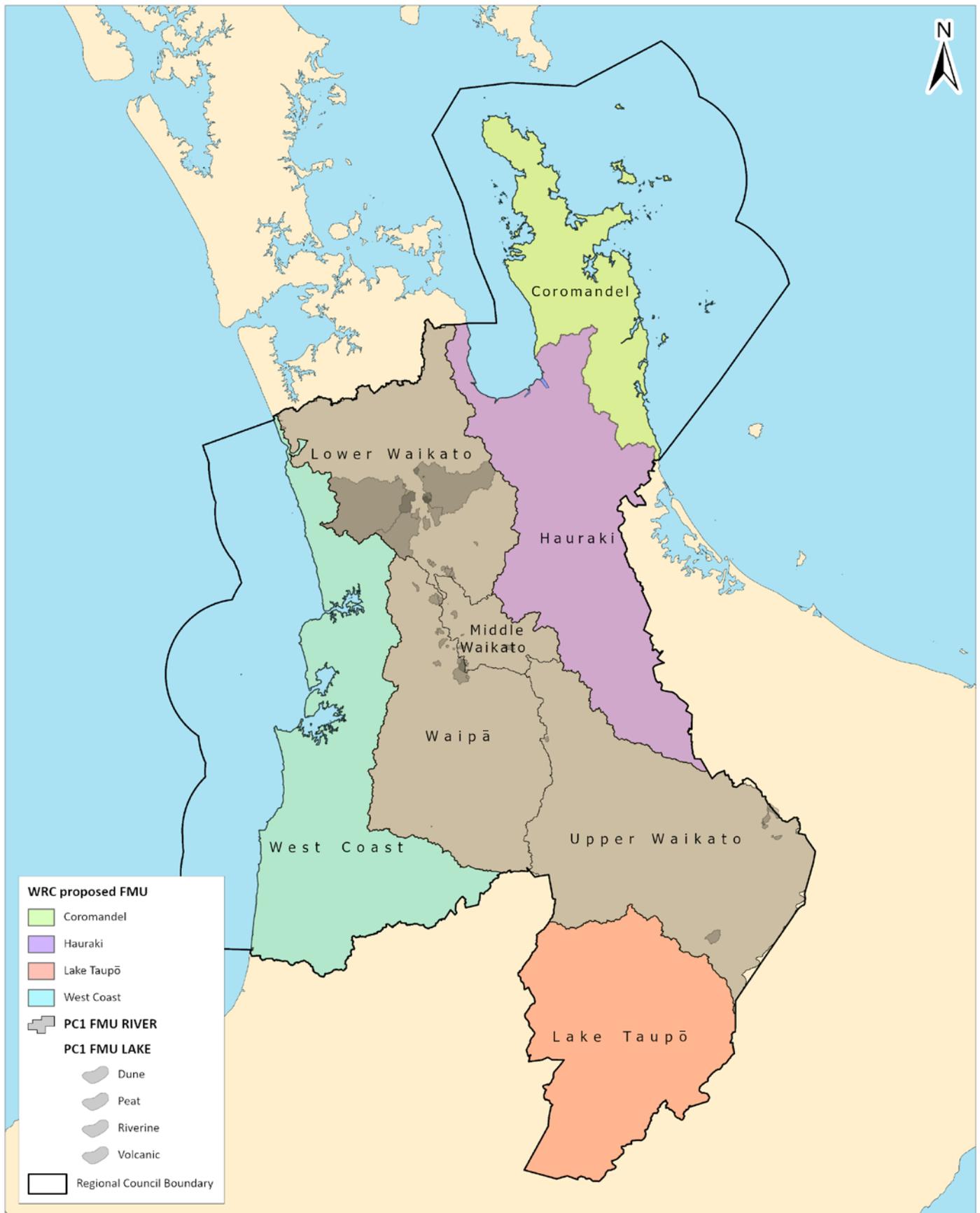


Figure 2



Freshwater Management Unit	Description
Lake Taupō	The entire lake and its catchment upstream of Huka Falls. Includes aquifers, wetlands, lakes and rivers.
Upper Waikato	Waikato River from Huka Falls to Lake Karāpiro. Includes lakes, wetlands, aquifers, rivers and streams.
Middle Waikato	Waikato River from Lake Karāpiro to Ngāruawāhia. Includes lakes, wetlands, aquifers, rivers and streams.
Lower Waikato	Waikato River from Ngāruawāhia to Port Waikato. Includes lakes, wetlands, aquifers, rivers and streams.
Waipā	The entire Waipā River catchment to Ngāruawāhia, where the Waipā joins the Waikato River. Includes lakes, wetlands, aquifers, rivers and streams.
Riverine lakes	Lake FMUs are only the Waikato and Waipā river catchments. There are 15 riverine lakes and their catchments. Many riverine lakes, such as Waikare, Whangape and Waahi are in the northern part of the catchments.
Peat lakes	Lake FMUs are only the Waikato and Waipā river catchments. There are 35 peat lakes and their catchments. Many peat lakes, such as Ngāroto, are in the Waipā catchment. Others include a cluster of eight peat lakes north east of Hamilton in Horsham Downs, and Lake Rotoroa (Hamilton Lake).
Dune lakes	Lake FMUs are only the Waikato and Waipā river catchments. There are four dune lakes and their catchments, north of Port Waikato.
Volcanic lakes	Lake FMUs are only the Waikato and Waipā river catchments. There are five volcanic lakes and their catchments, in the southeastern part of the catchments.
Coromandel	Northern and eastern parts of Coromandel Peninsula. It covers harbours, estuaries and off-shore islands. Includes lakes, wetlands, aquifers, rivers and streams, as well as coastal ecosystems.
Hauraki	Catchments draining to Tikapa Moana/Firth of Thames from the Auckland Council boundary to Tararu. Includes all aquifers, rivers (including estuarine sections, wetlands and lakes) draining into and including Tikapa Moana/Firth of Thames.
West coast	West coast/Tai Hauāuru catchments, including harbours and estuaries (i.e. from the boundary with Taranaki Regional Council to boundary with Auckland Council, excluding entire Waikato River catchment). Includes lakes, wetlands, aquifers/karst systems, rivers and streams, as well as coastal ecosystems.

## Where can I find more information? | Mō te puna kōrero

Check out [waikatoregion.govt.nz/freshwater-policy-review](https://waikatoregion.govt.nz/freshwater-policy-review) to find:

- information sheets breaking down the Freshwater Policy Review
- how to share your views
- a summary of key milestones
- update on our progress.

You can also email us at [policy@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:policy@waikatoregion.govt.nz) or call 0800 800 401 to speak to a member of our Freshwater Policy Review team.

