

Long-term vision

Te pae tawhiti

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 fresh water under the Resource Management Act (RMA).

To give effect to the NPS-FM, we will be developing a long-term vision for fresh water as part of this policy review, 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 a long-term vision for fresh water, which will then be included as objectives in the *Waikato Regional Policy Statement*, a mandatory document that sets the direction for how we manage our region's physical and natural resources.

What is a long-term vision for fresh water? | Mō te pae tawhiti

A long-term vision is a goal, objective or aspiration which outlines how you want your catchment or waterbodies, such as rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands, to look like in the future.

For us at council, this vision will act as a goalpost when implementing the National Objectives Framework (see figure 1), a process that connects the freshwater values and aspirations held by tangata whenua and communities with potential solutions to realise a long-term vision.

Visions can apply to multiple catchments, parts of catchments, or even to a specific waterbody, and will need to:

- set goals that are ambitious but reasonable (that is, difficult to achieve but not impossible)
- identify a timeframe to achieve a goal, one that is both ambitious and reasonable (for example 30 years)
- be informed by understanding the history and pressures on the catchments or waterbody.

We must also apply the hierarchy of obligations set out in *Te Mana o te Wai* when developing long-term visions. *Te Mana o te Wai*¹ is about ensuring the health and wellbeing of the water is protected and human health needs are provided for before enabling other uses of water.

¹Refer to Information sheet 2 of 11 – *Te Mana o te Wai*.

What about Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato | Mō Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato

Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River is the primary direction-setting document for the restoration and protection of the Waikato and Waipā rivers. It captures the aspirations tangata whenua and communities have for these catchments, so we will be building on this information with you to help define the long-term visions and values for fresh water in our region.

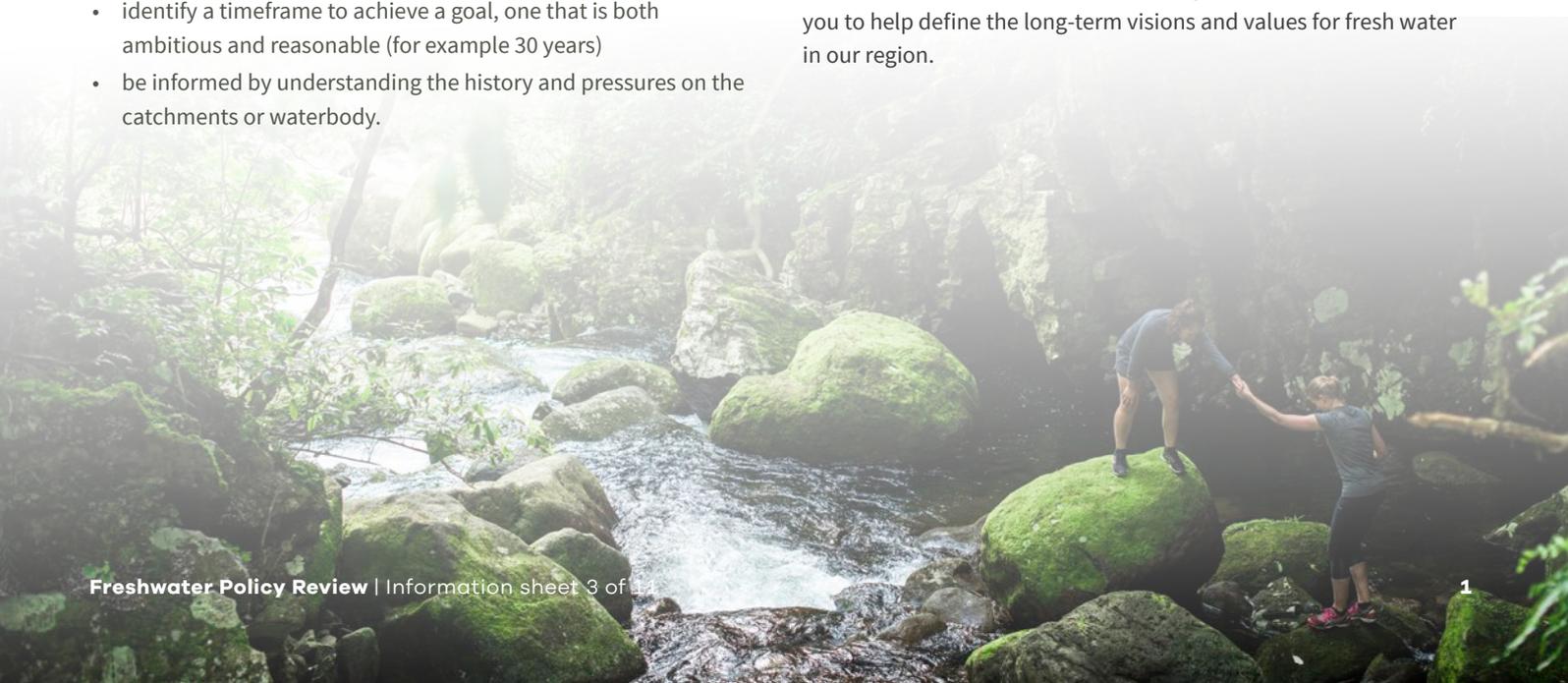
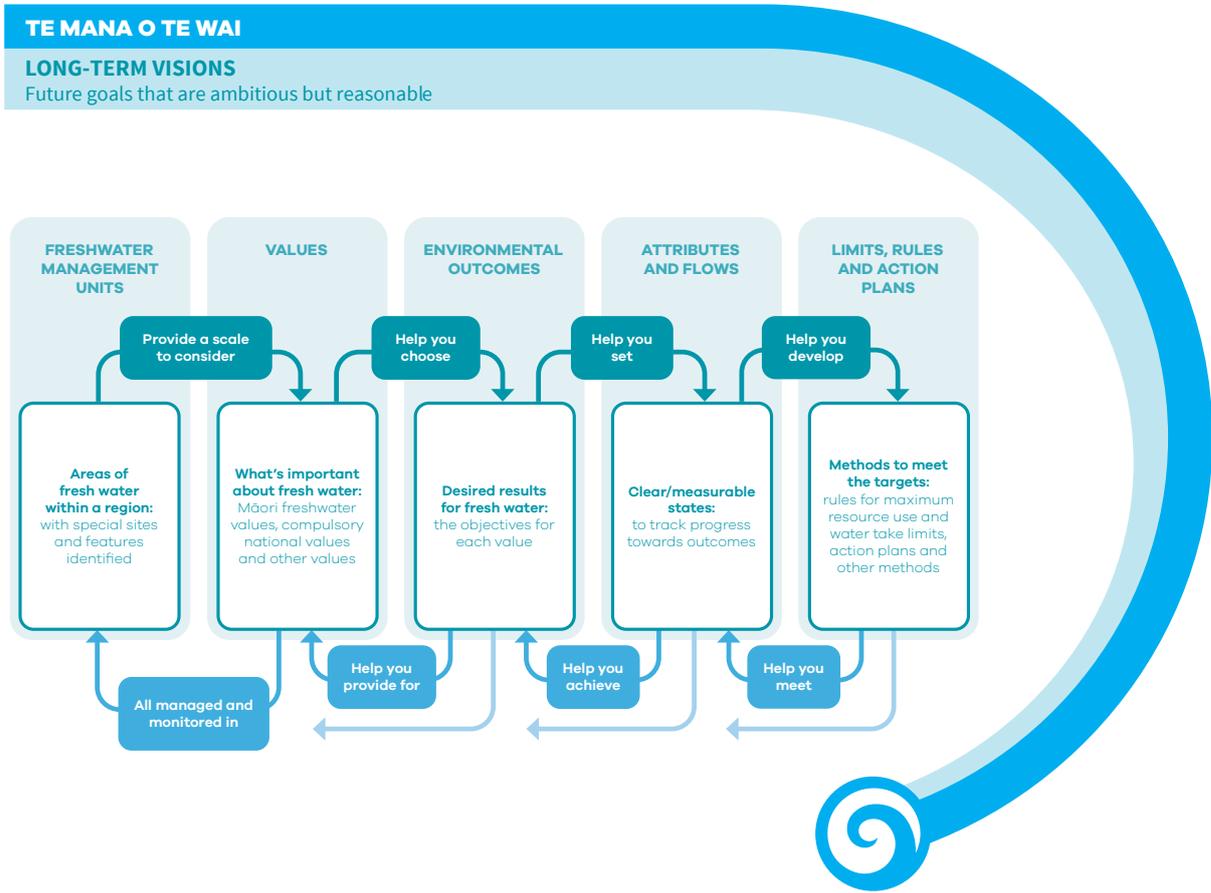


Figure 1



How does a long-term vision relate to what I value about fresh water?

Mō te pae tawhiti me te pānga ki ngā mātāpono waimāori

A value is what you consider important about the water, and a vision is how those values will look in the future.

For example, if you value water for its ecological values, then a vision might include a healthy ecosystem. If you value water for its recreational use, then a vision might include improved access or for water that is safe to fish or swim in.

A vision can embrace multiple aspects of what you value about fresh water.

How long is 'long-term'?

Mō te roa o te angawā

The timeframe to achieve a long-term vision is up to regional councils to decide alongside tangata whenua and communities. Considerations to determine the timeframe include the existing state of the waterbody, the changes or actions needed to achieve the vision, and the ability of the community to make those changes. A vision can also have a staged approach with different parts of the vision achieved in different timeframes.

The Essential Freshwater package was created with a vision and timeframe in mind: to improve water quality within five years and to restore waterbodies to a healthy state within a generation.

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

Check out 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 or call 0800 800 401 to speak to a member of our Freshwater Policy Review team.

