



**Submission on a National Policy Statement on Fresh Water Management by the
Bream Bay Action Group Inc**

PO Box 184
Ruakaka 0151
Tel: (09) 4327117

Preamble

The demand for and the ever diminishing availability of unpolluted fresh water is a worldwide problem. New Zealand is no exception, with more and more of our rivers and streams becoming polluted and increasing demands placed upon them, together with our underground aquifers.

Protection of Water Sources and Quality

Any National policy must make the protection of our fresh water resources a priority and where compromised take the necessary steps to restore water quality. There is a need to identify and protect existing catchments and underground aquifers. In order to achieve this, certain activities should be prohibited including the following:

- A. Land clearance in catchments
- B. Groundwater pollution affecting aquifers

Much stricter controls by Local Government are required to protect fresh water quality at all levels. This will require the prohibition of polluted discharges including stormwater by the following

- 1) The farming sector
- 2) Industry
- 3) Residential and other developments

There is an urgent need to institute much stricter sediment controls.

There has to be a stop to treating our freshwater sources as drains and sewers. The pollution of fresh water sources leads to the pollution of estuarine areas and the degradation of all eco-systems. Ultimately ongoing pollution of fresh water systems works its way into the food chain and poses a threat to human health.

Effects of Climate Change

Any management of fresh water sources must take into consideration, the effects of Climate Change. It is the effects of Climate Change that will determine the replenishment of New Zealand's supplies of fresh water.

More extreme weather events interspersed with periods of drought will in fact mean that less water is available to replenish our fresh water sources, as there will be a more uneven distribution of rainfall accompanied by a greater run off into the sea.

Where river systems and lakes rely on a spring snow melt, it will be necessary to take into account the fact that the present snowline and glacial ice is in retreat, as a result of global warming. This in turn is predicted to lead to a reduction in river and lake levels and the recharging of aquifers.

In the not to distant future, changes will need to be made in agricultural and industrial practices to reduce demand on water resources, as there is unlikely to be the same amount of fresh water available as there is at present e.g.. Industry will need to place a much greater emphasis on recycling and farmers will have to consider alternative crops and less water intensive pastoral practices, such as dairying.

Conservation of water resources has to be a part of any Management Plan.

With access to fresh water likely to become a major issue in the near future, neither additional hydro-electric power or irrigation schemes should be considered. Alternative means of generation must be used. Rivers should not be seen to be a quick fix to solve future power demands. In a sustainable economy, more and more efforts must be made to conserve energy, rather than provide additional generation and in so doing conserve water.

Likewise dams should not be created to provide irrigation on other people's land for the purpose of irrigation, thereby destroying productive farmland, forest and native bush. This is not sustainable and there is no way that any private organisation should be given the right to do this.

It is absolutely essential to protect the viability of all river systems. Demand for water must never exceed supply, so that a river no longer functions sustainably. We must never allow what has already occurred in the Murray - Darling River system in Australia to develop here in New Zealand.. In the same way there can be no uncontrolled free access to aquifers.

Water is necessary to all forms of life; so under no circumstances, can there be privatisation of water rights and the selling off of such rights to the detriment of the community and the environment as a whole.

In conclusion we cannot emphasise enough the need to treat our fresh water sources with the utmost care and respect. We can think of no better way to express this, than to refer the Board to the time honoured precepts held by tangatawhenua on the importance of this most precious of all resources. Without water there is no life as we know it!

Signed

J. B. Hicks (HICKS)
on behalf of the committee of the
Brean Bay Action Group Inc