

David Russell [withheld]

Water is one of the most precious commodities on Earth. Allowing our waterways to be despoiled by careless practice governed by weak rules is not good enough. Keep hearing about job creation. Here is the perfect opportunity. Get groups of unemployed to plant and develop riparian strips to protect waterways. We create employment, better farming practice, enhance tourism (you listening, Minister of Tourism?) and makes some gains back on our clean green status.

Doing

the current duck and dive sidestep, National, is doing too little too ineffectively.

If you believe in the values you espouse, you would have taken action already, and maybe that BS vision of a better country would have meant something.

I want strong rules that protect our rivers and ensure that they are safe for swimming. The proposed changes are inadequate. Ensuring rivers are clean enough to swim in should be a compulsory standard, not optional.

Too many recognised water quality indicators are missing. If councils don't have to monitor these indicators then we don't get an accurate understanding of the state of our waterways.

The rules should ensure:

- * water clarity and periphyton cover (a measure of how much algae, bacteria and detritus is covering the river bed) are monitored, to ensure our rivers are safe for swimming;
- * monitoring of aquatic insects to ensure our rivers are healthy;
- * there is a limit on both problem pollutants nitrogen and phosphorus so they don't cause nuisance algal growth; and
- * a limit on sediment to ensure our rivers are healthy.

Any exemptions to the rules should be limited to a list of specific water bodies.

One certain way to help protect our rivers is to ensure that we look after them and that the water is clean enough for swimming, not just wading or boating. Human health and our economy depend on safeguarding our environment.

David Russell