

## Submission on proposed amendments to NPS-FM

### Personal details

If you are making this submission as a representative for an organisation, the name of that organisation will be used in any reports on the submissions, but your name will be withheld. If you are making this submission as an individual, your name will be used in any reports on the submissions unless you request otherwise.

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I give permission to publish my details

Yes

No

### Why do we need to amend the NPS-FM?

1. Have we correctly identified the problems currently associated with implementing the NPS-FM?

Yes

No

2. If not, what problems, if any, you have faced with implementation

The setting of freshwater objectives in regional plans is a critical issue which needs to be addressed in a robust manner, and it may not be appropriate to do so at the national level using a NPS. Although a stated intention behind the NOF proposal is to provide “clarity and transparency about the required information and processes for setting freshwater objectives”, this should not provide a mechanism for poor practice. The obvious solution is to provide this information as guidance to councils rather than within the content of a NPS. The identification of problems currently associated with implementing the NPS-FM does not reflect this.

### Options for providing further national direction

3. Do you agree that amending the NPS-FM would solve the problems identified in section 2?

Yes

No

The proposed NPS-FM does not effectively address these problems (as is discussed in further detail in other submission points). It is also not needed or appropriate as a method to provide guidance to councils on these matters when a range of other tools are available.

The suggestion that proposed changes will reduce litigation and thus additional costs and delays appears unfounded. The same mechanisms will remain available to affected parties if they disagree with local government decisions. It is critical that any proposed changes improve the effectiveness of the NPS as a policy tool under the RMA. Claims of improved efficiency that are not substantiated are likely to confuse a robust consideration of these two separate criteria when determining the appropriateness of a new proposal such as the NPS-FM. Again, this may be a subject better suited to the provision of guidance as a method. Guidance for councils on good process for setting freshwater objectives to provide for the community's values would likely provide the benefits without requiring a NPS.

4. If not, would additional guidance be sufficient to solve the problems identified?

Yes

No

5. Is there another solution to the problems? Why would that be preferable?

Yes

No

The further development of the NOF concept has considerable merit as an environmental management method, although it would need to be complimented by other methods to inform the translation of objectives into numerical bottom lines, limits, and other expressions of management performance. The proposed process for setting freshwater management objectives does have merit in terms of promoting a collaborative approach which can improve the shared understanding of resource management issues amongst stakeholder groups. However both of the above could be delivered via a variety of methods and do not require a NPS.

The most concerning feature is that the proposed NPS will permit waterways to be further degraded. The proposal sets bottom lines lower than the current water quality of many water bodies. Unless a different approach is taken it is fallacy to believe that this situation will not lead to water quality being 'degraded down'. This arises because the current NPS-FM requires councils to maintain or improve the **overall** water quality in each region (emphasis added). There is a multiplicity of options for local authorities to demonstrate compliance with policy objectives referring to 'overall' condition status of resources, such as through the use of averaging statistics or a selected set of indicator sites. There are several examples of where resources have been degraded under analogous policy regimes, especially at the local scale. As a result this policy objective is not effective in terms of the purposes of the RMA.



In addition it does not effectively tackle the issue of past management decisions that have lead to poor waterway conditions through cumulative effects. In practice the proposal is likely to further entrench these degraded conditions rather than setting up a framework for improvement. The most pragmatic way such a framework could be developed in a manner consistent with the RMA is to first halt the decline of waterway health, as measured against a robust set of indicators, and then seek progressive improvements starting with priority sites. The proposed NPS-FM does not deliver this, although it could be amended to embrace this approach.

The above points must be address and are an urgent requirement if New Zealand is serious about maintaining and improving waterway health whilst enabling development activities. The proposed NPS-FM represents a major opportunity to address these issues, and doing so must be central to the purpose of the NPS-FM as a policy tool.

### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: accounting**

6. Do you agree with requiring councils to account for all water takes?

- Yes
- No

7. Do you agree with requiring councils to account for all sources of contaminants?

- Yes
- No

You can't manage what you don't measure.

8. Do you think that the requirements in policies CC1 and CC2 of the proposed NPS-FM amendments have the right balance between national prescription and regional flexibility?

- Yes
- No

The above is almost a rhetorical question because the concept of freshwater management units has yet to be implemented. Guidance on good practice for the identification of such units is likely to be beneficial to councils and to the achievement of appropriate environment outcomes. This is a critical aspect since the RMA has often struggled to address issues of scale. The development of new tools under the RMA such as amendments to the NPS-FM should seek to improve this situation and ensure that sustainable management is achieved at all scales including the very local.

9. Do you think the time period allowed for councils to develop accounting systems is appropriate?

- Yes
- No

### Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: NOF values

10. Should there be a national set of values as outlined in appendix 1 of the proposed NPS FM?

- Yes
- No

The concept of a national set of values is sound though how they are to be used is the key issue.

11. Are there any additional values that should be included? Why are these values nationally significant/important (recognising that councils can use other values if they wish)?

- Yes
- No

Appendix 1 is currently difficult to follow. However the relevant national value for human health should be the contact recreation standard or perhaps simply 'human health' as the information in Appendix 1 seems to have mixed up the concept of a bottom line with that of a value (note that this does not mean that the contact recreation standard should be set as a national bottom line as is discussed further below). The national value should definitely not be the secondary recreation standard. For the majority of New Zealanders the concept of waterways being swimmable is entirely appropriate as a long term objective and the question becomes one of selecting the most appropriate methods to achieve it and over what time frame.

12. Are there any values that should be deleted from appendix 1 of the proposed NPS-FM and why?

- Yes
- No

The secondary recreation standard needs to be replaced with contact recreation standard or simply 'human health' as the national value

13. Do you agree with the descriptions of the national values in appendix 1 of the proposed NPS FM?

- Yes
- No

As above

**Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: NOF attributes**

14. Do you agree with the attributes associated with the values in appendix 2 of the proposed NPS FM?

- Yes
- No

The ecosystem health value should include a comprehensive suite of attributes relevant to this value. In the current proposal many are absent which has the effect of

- (a) giving the impression that attributes without a national bottom line are of lesser importance; and
- (b) reducing the effectiveness of the method.

It makes little sense to address some aspects of ecosystem health at the national level and ignoring other important aspects, whereas there are a range of indicators already in common use for the measurement of ecosystem health and generally agreed as being important by the scientific community. To address this, the attributes and national bottom lines concepts for ecosystem health need to be expanded. Key points include that measurements for dissolved oxygen, sediment, and biological indicators need to be included for all freshwater bodies. It is also essential that influences on coastal waters are explicitly included in the concept of ecosystem health for freshwater water bodies. For example, measures for estuaries and other river mouth ecosystems need to be included in the national bottom lines framework.

Because the current proposal describes this as a work in progress, it may be that that a more comprehensive list may be developed in the future. If so, this aspect may not be an issue for making decisions on the proposed NPS-FM in its current form, provided that the flexibility to identify additional values and attributes is also provided for at the regional/local level.

15. Do you agree with the numeric attribute states in appendix 2 of the proposed NPS FM?

- Yes
- No

The identification of one of four “attribute states” roughly equating to the level of importance of that waterway is a core feature of the proposed NPS-FM approach. However, it is not clear that this would be an effective method. In practice stakeholders will likely be challenged in the collaborative process to identify a range of states for various waterways within an area using the proposed A, B, C, D method. This will become a critical point of contention, especially if stakeholders are pressured to support the so-called ‘balanced’ approach to sustainable management where competing interest are

first identified and a balance between their wishes promoted as the solution to settling issues of resource allocation (ie access to water) and resource use costs (ie permitted levels of pollution).

In addition, for many of the attribute states there does not appear to be a good match between the numerical figures given and the narrative version. For example the proposed bottom line for nitrogen is 10 times higher than current guidelines, and the lower limit of the 'A' or excellent band (1mg/l) is twice the current guideline of 0.44mg/l. As a result the proposed 'attribute states' framework is highly ineffective as a tool for sustainable management and is highly likely to promote the further degradation of water quality in New Zealand.

In summary the concept of using the 'attribute states' as proposed within a national level tool such as a NPS is seriously flawed and highly ineffective in meeting the purposes of the RMA. It should be abandoned in favour of providing guidance to regional and local authorities.

16. Do you agree with the narrative attribute states in appendix 2 of the proposed NPS FM?

- Yes
- No

As discussed above, it not clear that the proposed identification of "attribute states" would be an effective method, especially in relation to what councils are already doing to set objectives and expectations for various waterways within their plans. In addition there is not a good match between numerical and narrative versions of the same 'state' as proposed.

In practice this concept would become a critical point of contention for stakeholders. If stakeholders are pressured to support the so-called 'balanced' approach to sustainable management this method has the potential to lead to further waterway degradation. Whilst the articulation of desired attribute states for waterways is in itself a reasonable idea, the process for setting such attribute states as targets is the key step that will affect environmental outcomes. A critical aspect is this is that the proposed process would require a solid underpinning framework to produce reliable and appropriate outcomes in terms of sustainable resource management. This is not provided by the NOF proposed in its current form.

#### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Timing of putting NOF in place**

17. Do you agree with putting a NOF in the NPS-FM now, including only the attributes for which there is adequate evidence, and updating it as the scientific basis for further attributes and states become available?

- Yes
- No

Putting a NOF in the NPS-FM now, including only the attributes for which there is adequate evidence is not a good idea since it has the potential to lead to further degradation of waterways. All of other weaknesses of the proposed NPS-FM would need to be attended to first, particularly those concerning how the NOF is to be used, before any NOF concept is introduced. Even then, the NOF concept is better used as a method for Guidance rather than as a component of a NPS.

18. Or should the Government delay putting the NOF into place until a more comprehensive set of attributes has been developed?

Yes

No

As above, there are serious issues with the NOF including how it is to be used, and this requires other weaknesses of the proposed NPS-FM as a resource management tool to be addressed first. As a tool under the RMA, the NOF concept is better used as a method for Guidance rather than as a component of a NPS.

#### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Processes for freshwater objective setting**

19. Do you agree with having the process requirements to link values and freshwater objectives directed in policy CA1 in the proposed amendments? If not, why not?

Yes

No

The general concept of identifying values and important attributes and explicitly considering these when setting freshwater objectives is sound. However, as discussed above, the “attribute states” concept is seriously flawed and ineffective as a method, especially in relation to what councils are already doing. This would also become a critical point of contention amongst stakeholders, and is likely to lead to a worse situation than the status quo in terms of achieving sustainable management.

Sections (a) – (e) of Policy CA1 are considered to be very important, and appropriate. However section CA1 (f) may in practice complicate the implementation of sections CA1 (a) – (e) as it sets up several competing demands. These demands will become most apparent when attempting to implement the “attribute states’ concept.

20. Do you think the process outlined will work? If not, why not?

Yes

No

Sections (a) – (e) of Policy CA1 are considered to be very important, and appropriate. However section CA1 (f) may in practice complicate the implementation of sections CA1 (a) – (e) as it sets up several competing demands. These demands will become most apparent when attempting to implement the “attribute states’ concept.

As above, the general concept of identifying values and important attributes and explicitly considering these when setting freshwater objectives is sound. However the value of the “attribute states” concept is seriously flawed as a method within a NPS. Whilst the articulation of desired attribute states for waterways is in itself a reasonable idea, the process for setting such attribute states as targets is the critical step that will affect environmental outcomes and has the potential to lead to further waterway degradation.

The setting of freshwater objectives in regional plans is a critical issue which needs to be addressed in a robust manner. Although a stated intention behind the NOF proposal is to provide “clarity and transparency about the required information and processes for setting freshwater objectives”, this should not provide a mechanism for poor practice. The obvious solution is to provide this information as guidance to councils rather than within the content of a NPS. Alternatively, the NPS could provide a degree of information (eg examples of values and attributes to consider) but ensure that councils retain the flexibility to determine the values, attributes and trigger points for actions that are important for managing the issues under their responsibility. The provision of Guidance could be used to promote consistency and the best use of science.

21. Do you agree with the proposed matters in policy CA1(e) that must be considered when establishing freshwater objectives? If not, why not?

Yes

No

The proposed numerical attribute states are not well matched to the narrative version of the same state, and thus the reference to numerical states in Policy CA1(e) is not sound. As discussed above, the value of the ‘attribute states’ concept itself is seriously flawed and is not effective as a tool within a NPS. Because Policy CA1(e) deals with and directly references those concepts it not appropriate as a tool under the RMA and should not be a component of the proposed NPS-FM.

It is noted that whilst the articulation of desired ‘attribute states’ for waterways is in itself a reasonable idea, the process for setting such ‘attribute states’ as targets is the critical step that will affect environmental outcomes. The proposed ‘attribute states’ concept within the NPS-FM is likely to lead to a worse situation than the status quo in terms of achieving sustainable management.

22. Is it clear that setting freshwater objectives is an iterative process which involves consideration of the impacts of the limits, management methods, and timeframes required to meet a potential freshwater objective?

- Yes
- No

This is a difficult and somewhat inappropriate question to ask submitters since there are many possible limits and management methods. It would be more appropriate to pose a question about values, attributes, and bottom lines as these are more important to the subject of this question – which is the setting of objectives.

In addition the 'limits' concept is itself problematic – an aspect barely touched upon in the MfE discussion document.

23. Do you agree that regions should have discretion to determine timeframes for meeting freshwater objectives?

- Yes
- No

Generally yes as it is the eventual attainment of objectives that is important and costs and responsibilities in achieving those have to be equitably shared. The exception is where irreversible changes may occur if urgent action is not taken. The local extinction of indigenous species is a case in point in this regard and must be avoided.

24. Are there any aspects of the process that are not clear?

- Yes
- No

Many. Implementation of Policy CA(f) and the 'attribute states' concept are the two aspects that are very likely to be problematic in practice.

#### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Compulsory values**

25. Do you agree that ecosystem health should be a compulsory value?

- Yes
- No

However, the ecosystem health value should include a comprehensive suite of attributes relevant to this value. It makes little sense to address some aspects of ecosystem health at the national level and ignoring other important aspects, whereas there are a range of indicators already in common use for the measurement of ecosystem health and generally agreed as being important by the scientific community. To address this, the attributes and national bottom lines concepts for ecosystem health need to be expanded. Key points include that measurements for dissolved oxygen,

sediment, and biological indicators need to be included for all freshwater bodies. It is also essential that influences on coastal waters are explicitly included in the concept of ecosystem health for freshwater water bodies. For example, measures for estuaries and other river mouth ecosystems need to be included.

26. Do you agree that human health for secondary contact recreation (such as boating and wading) should be a compulsory value?

- Yes
- No

The relevant national value for human health should be the contact recreation standard or perhaps simply 'human health' as the information in Appendix 1 seems to have mixed up the concept of a bottom line with that of a value (note that this does not mean that the contact recreation standard should be set as a national bottom line as is discussed further below). The national value should definitely not be the secondary recreation standard. For the majority of New Zealanders the concept of waterways being swimmable is entirely appropriate as a long term objective and the question becomes one of selecting the most appropriate methods to achieve it and over what time frame.

27. Do you think there should be more compulsory values? If so, what should they be, and why? What attributes should be associated with them?

- Yes
- No

The idea of setting compulsory values is generally sound, though there will always be debate over what they should be. Proliferation of this concept (ie setting many compulsory values) is likely to be of limited benefit in the absence of effective mechanisms for resolving competing values. It is likely that identification of other values may be more appropriate at the regional level, as is current proposed with regards to the NPS-FM.

#### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: National bottom line**

28. Should there be numeric bottom lines for attributes of the compulsory values?

- Yes
- No

The idea of numeric bottom lines for attributes of the compulsory values is general sounds and is potentially useful as a policy tool to compliment other methods. It is important to note that the national bottom lines concept can be implemented independent of the proposed 'attribute states'

concept. The 'attribute states' concept as proposed with the NPS-FM is seriously flawed and should be abandoned whereas the national bottom lines concept has some merit.

29. Do you agree with the proposed level at which bottom lines would be set for each attribute of ecosystem health? If not, at what level should they be set?

- Yes
- No

It makes little sense to address some aspects of ecosystem health at the national level and ignoring other important aspects, whereas there are a range of indicators already in common use for the measurement of ecosystem health and generally agreed as being important by the scientific community. To address this, the national bottom lines concept for ecosystem health needs to be expanded. Key points include that measurements for dissolved oxygen, sediment, and biological indicators need to be included for all freshwater bodies. It is also essential that influences on coastal waters are explicitly included in the concept of ecosystem health for freshwater water bodies. For example, measures for estuaries and other river mouth ecosystems need to be included in the national bottom lines framework.

Regarding the numeric value that should be set for each attribute as the bottom line, there are a variety of considerations (eg costs to implement, where they fall, and various ideas about what the minimum acceptable state would be). The approach taken within the proposed NPS seems reasonable for some of the proposed indicators but not others (eg nitrogen levels) though it should be noted that setting of bottom lines may be more appropriate at the regional level.

It should also be noted that proliferation of the national bottom line concept is likely to be of limited benefit since it is difficult to apply a one size fits all' approach that also takes feasibility, implementation costs, where they fall into account. A more site specific approach it likely to be more effective, and could include the setting of aspiration objectives or 'top lines' to plan for.

30. Do you agree with the proposed level at which bottom lines would be set for each attribute of human health for secondary contact recreation? If not, at what level should they be set?

- Yes
- No

This is a key question for the NPS-FM (although there are analogous question with regards to placing numeric values for identifying ecosystem health bottom lines) and clearly illustrates the weakness of the national bottom line concept as a method to achieve appropriate outcomes. To address this, the concept of national bottom lines needs to be complimented by other measures to ensure that water quality does not continue to be degraded, whilst also enabling development.

In the case of water quality standards for recreation, the national value (and thus long term 'objective') for the condition of waterways should embrace water quality fit for contact recreation standards (ie swimmable), not merely boating and wading standards. However it is clear when considering s32 criteria that setting a national bottom line of the contact recreation standard would be inappropriate. The reason is because the requirement to surmount various technical difficulties, and associated with this, significant costs, would be triggered to achieve that bottom line for a large number of water bodies. Even if a substantial lead in time was provided for compliance, this method would be lacking in some aspects of both efficiency and effectiveness in terms of meeting the purposes of the RMA. However, this is not to say that the national value and long term objective of swimmable rivers is inappropriate. For the majority of New Zealanders this is entirely appropriate and the question becomes one of selecting the most appropriate methods to achieve it. This clearly illustrates that additional measures are required to address the situation.

Two possible approaches to address this within the context of the NPS-FM are:

- i) Devolving responsibilities for setting appropriate objectives to the regional level as guided by other aspects of the NPS-FM and hoping that this addressing the issue; and/or
- ii) Introducing a requirement for councils to set an objective of maintaining or improving the water quality of all water bodies in a region and then making progressive improvements in support of the national value of swimmable waterways.

As is discussed elsewhere, the proposed NPS-FM does not contain effective methods for resolving competing demands. As a consequence it cannot deliver certainty for many desired outcomes. As a result option i) is ineffective as a method if swimmable waterways are identified as a national value and long term goal and a different approach is required (NB: it is noted that some waterways would be subject to exceptions).

For this reason option ii) is suggested as a better approach, and a pragmatic one. This policy objective could be applied in combination with the suggested nation numeric bottom lines. Given the degraded state of New Zealand's freshwater resources this is also not unreasonable. As a policy objective this would also appear to be well suited to adoption within the effects based approach of the RMA.

Of particular note is its ability to directly address a known problem with the ability of RMA processes to deliver environmental outcomes. The above proposal is considered to be effective since it directly addresses a root cause of water degradation, being cumulative effects. The effect would be to raise the bar from permitting further 'minor effects' on waterways to accumulate, to a regime of no further degradation. This would represent a regime shift for environmental management in New Zealand. However the proposal is also considered to be efficient because it places onus on future development proposals without penalising current land uses. The focus would be on new activities and land use patterns to ensure that they can deliver at least maintenance of the current condition of waterways that may be affected, and preferably enhancement. If such proposals cannot achieve that, they are by definition not appropriate development proposals for the sustainable management of that catchment. On the other hand, the selection of methods available to achieve that objective need not be prescribed, putting the onus on the development to solve any technical difficulties or cost implications required to gain approval and this fosters innovation.

This is more appropriate with respect to achieving the purposes of the RMA than the current national bottom line proposals alone, and will help produce a management framework with a clear focus on avoiding water quality being 'degraded down' at the local level. Although there would certainly be challenges for the measurement of performance against this objective, there are similar challenges in operationalising the national bottom lines approach. Both of these subjects should therefore be the focus of improved monitoring, and through recognising the 'degraded down' concept as an issue the proposed NPS suggests that it is indeed a priority for councils to know if this is occurring or not. This is consistent with the need for improved monitoring as is already recommended in the proposed NPS-FM.

The issue of whether water quality improvements and more stringent bottom lines are needed to protect values in individual waterways will still need to be addressed at regional and local levels. For example, the adoption of the above as a policy objective within the NPS-FM would likely be insufficient to provide for cultural values such as mahinga kai which may require better standards for ecosystem and human health than currently exist.

In conclusion, it would be preferable for the NPS-FM to set up a policy framework that sets an expectation of no further declines in water quality of individual water bodies whilst promoting progressive water quality improvements at priority sites. This would be complimentary to, and in addition to the proposal to set numeric national bottom lines to force the improvement of water quality in those waterways that do not currently meet these standards. The result would be a more effective yet fair distribution of responsibilities for improving water quality compared to the current NPS-FM, with the onus firmly in new development activities to contribute to the solution rather than the problem.

31. Do you agree that transitional arrangements should be provided to allow councils and communities to set objectives below a national bottom line for a short time?

- Yes
- No

Some flexibility is required to address unique local circumstances. However it is important that any such arrangements are time-bound.

#### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Exceptions to bottom lines**

32. Do you agree that there could be exceptions where the natural state of the freshwater management unit breaches bottom lines? Where in your region do you think this type of exception might apply?

- Yes
- No

Exceptions to the two national bottom lines are likely to be needed in some cases as is proposed, but it is essential that the bottom line concepts are appropriate in the first instance, and that they work in synergy with other tools to achieve desired outcomes.

33. Do you agree that there could be exceptions where historical activities have created impacts on water quality and the reversal of those impacts is not reasonably practicable, either physically or ecologically, even in the long term?

Where in your region do you think this type of exception might apply?

- Yes
- No

Yes, although the reason for the exception must be made explicit in terms of the measurables that are exempted from compliance. Other measurables relevant to waterways health should be maintained or improved to meet relevant objectives.

34. Do you agree that there could be exceptions for significant existing infrastructure (eg, dams), where a choice is made to manage a freshwater management unit below bottom lines? Where in your region do you think this type of exception might apply?

- Yes
- No

In some circumstances and only for existing infrastructure.

35. Do you agree that freshwater management units eligible under the first two exceptions above should be decided by regional councils?

- Yes
- No

Yes, in consultation with the community and from the point of view that this should be decided at the regional level. All such decisions must only result from a robust objectives setting process for waterways. Any such exceptions must also be made explicit in terms of the measurables that are exempted from compliance. Other measurable relevant to waterways health should be maintained or improved to meet relevant objectives.

36. Do you agree that freshwater management units eligible for an exception due to the effects of significant existing infrastructure should be decided at a national level and included in appendix 3 of the NPS-FM?

- Yes

No

This should be decided at the regional level – especially given the lack of detail on what the process would be for doing this at the national level under the auspices of the NPS-FM

37. What should the criteria be for allowing exceptions based on significant existing infrastructure?

Yes

No

No comment – this should be decided at the local level

### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Tāngata whenua values**

38. Do you think the proposed NPS-FM adequately provides for Te Mana o te Wai?

Yes

No

No comment – this requires feedback from tāngata whenua on the proposed changes and should include specific consultation with manawhenua who will be most directly affected.

39. Do you agree with the way tāngata whenua values are described in proposed appendix 1 of the NPS-FM?

Yes

No

No comment – this requires feedback from tāngata whenua on the proposed changes and should include specific consultation with manawhenua who will be most directly affected.

40. Do you support adding Te Mana o te Wai to objective A1 of the amended NPS FM as a matter that must be safeguarded? What would be the implications of adding this to objective A1 in the NPS-FM?

Yes

No

No comment – this requires feedback from tāngata whenua on the proposed changes and should include specific consultation with manawhenua who will be most directly affected.

### **Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Monitoring**

41. Do you agree with the new section in the NPS-FM requiring monitoring plans? If not, why not?

- Yes
- No

The proposed monitoring requirements are supported ie. to make it clear that regional councils need to identify a range of representative sites in waterways at which to monitor progress towards, or achievement of, freshwater objectives. However further guidance may be required on the concept of freshwater management units to which such monitoring applies. Monitoring also needs to include both detection of changes in waterway condition and measurement of performance against any relevant bottom lines; national, regional or local.

Recognition within the proposed NPS-FM, of the 'degraded down' concept confirms that it is indeed a priority for councils to know if this is occurring or not. Although there would certainly be challenges for the measurement of this, there are similar challenges in monitoring against the national bottom lines concept, or against other the indicators that will be needed to monitor management performance against freshwater objectives. Robust monitoring programmes are critical for good management and need to include a suitable set of indicators to address the relevant values, and sufficient coverage in both space and time to support an adaptive approach to the sustainable management of waterways.

### **Other comments**

42. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the issues and proposals in this document?