

6 March 2020

Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment
Private Bag 18888
Parliament
Wellington 6160

Hon Damien O'Connor
Minister of Agriculture
Private Bag 18888
Parliament
Wellington 6160

Dear Ministers Parker and O'Connor,

This letter confirms the agreement reached between Te Kāhui Wai Māori, Freshwater Leaders Group and the Regional Sector Water Subgroup in relation to the freshwater reform proposals. We are very pleased that agreement has been reached and we are heartened they received a positive response at our meeting on 3 March.

Te Kāhui Wai Māori, Freshwater Leaders Group and the Regional Sector Water Subgroup jointly seek from the Government the following:

1. A National Implementation Package

Success of the reforms will depend on a good national implementation package. Both Iwi and the regional sector are key implementation partners and should be involved in co-designing the implementation plan. Key to this is ensuring Te Mana o Te Wai is appropriately implemented and that iwi have the capacity to participate in plan processes. To enable participation plan-making will need to be prioritised.

We recommend that preparation of the national implementation plan should be led by both MfE and MPI officials, through a combined project team comprising Te Kāhui Wai Māori, the Regional Sector Freshwater group, and the primary sector. We would expect the plan to have budget implications.

2. System Performance Monitoring

The overall national and regional water management system should be subject to performance monitoring by a central but independent entity that involves iwi as a 50/50 partner. This entity should consider and report publicly on the actions and achievements of central and local government and industry using agreed KPIs. We would welcome discussions with the Government to help design this entity.

3. Iwi Rights and Interests

The advisory groups hold the view that making progress on iwi rights and interests (and associated allocation issues) is critical. A failure to resolve iwi rights and interests is already creating disruption to implementing the current National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) and this will continue when the NPSFM is amended, prolonging the period before effective policy takes effect. For this reason, the advisory groups urge the Government to commence discussions with iwi as soon as possible.

4. Greater Māori Representation on Regional Councils

Greater Māori representation on regional councils is important for effective implementation of the reforms. LGNZ supports legislative change to remove barriers to the establishment of Māori wards and constituencies.


Ngā mihi,



Kingi Smiler
Chair, Kāhui Wai Māori



John Penno
Chair, Freshwater Leaders Group



Doug Leeder
Chair, LGNZ Regional Sector