

Your submission to Clean Water

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Clause

Do you have any other comments on the contents of the Clean Water discussion document?

Notes

On the North Shore, Auckland it is streams, not rivers, that dominate as a special feature and are treasured by our community. Yet streams are ignored by the proposed standards. This is a pressing issue because we are witnessing ecosystem collapse in many of our urban streams. Local residents report pollution events, sedimentation, sewage and stormwater overflows impacting on these waterways on a weekly basis. The frequency of incidents points to a systemic failure in effective monitoring, mitigation and enforcement. These are not one-off events. Of note, residents report problems with sewage and stormwater infrastructure and poor maintenance leading to blockages. There is, at times, a lack of follow up and the response to incidents is often too slow. Local people would also like to see a more proactive approach through targeted monitoring, rather than a solely reactive approach to complaints of non-compliance. Kaipātiki streams traditionally harbour Banded Kokopu, long and short-finned eels, freshwater crayfish and invertebrates. Some also contain valuable fish spawning habitats. Species abundance and richness are at risk and, because streams are small, stormwater discharges and associated urban development can have major impacts. We are experiencing not just degraded streams on the North Shore that need to be restored, but streams in good condition being destroyed. Evidence suggests that once Kokopu disappear from a stream, it is very difficult to re-introduce them due to their specific adaptive attributes. In sum, we would like to see proactive prevention and mitigation before complete ecosystem collapse.