

NEWS UPDATE

4 December 2019

Since sending Waterlines to print, there have been some important new developments and changes relating to water that may affect you.

By the time you're reading this, there will have been an extraordinary Council meeting on 27 November to discuss the developments, with another Council meeting on 11 December. Things are happening quicker than we can get to print, so for the latest updates, visit www.goodwaterinotago.nz.

Minister Parker's response to the Skelton Investigation

David Parker, the Minister for the Environment, has sent a letter to ORC with recommendations for how to meet our planning and consenting obligations in compliance with the Resource Management Act (RMA) and the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM).

His letter follows a review by Professor Peter Skelton of our readiness to deal with expiring deemed permits (historic mining rights to take water), which the Minister requested in May.

Under the RMA, these permits will expire in October 2021.

Minister Parker's key recommendations are for ORC to develop a new Regional Policy Statement by November 2020

and a new Land and Water Regional Plan by the end of 2023, and to prepare a plan change by March next year that will enable us to process short-term consents, until new discharge and allocation limits are set in line with the NPS-FM.

ORC acknowledges there are legacy issues in our planning framework, and in the past 18 months we have taken steps to begin addressing them. Sorting out deemed permits is a priority for our newly-elected Council.

The ORC has a lot of work ahead of it. We are committed to continue working with the community every step of the way.

For more information, including the letter from Minister Parker and the full report prepared by Professor Skelton, visit www.orc.govt.nz/mfereport.

Omnibus Plan Change - Update on timing

We've begun consulting with key stakeholder groups about the proposed new water quality rules that have been grouped into an "Omnibus" plan change, including new provisions around stock exclusion, dairy farm effluent, better direction for managing all discharges, and sediment control associated with urban intensification.

These provisions will strengthen ORC's water quality regulation and better align it with central government's expectations and policy.

To keep up-to-date on either of these projects, sign up to ORC's monthly On-Stream e-newsletter by emailing water@orc.govt.nz, or visit www.goodwaterinotago.nz.