

What's inside?

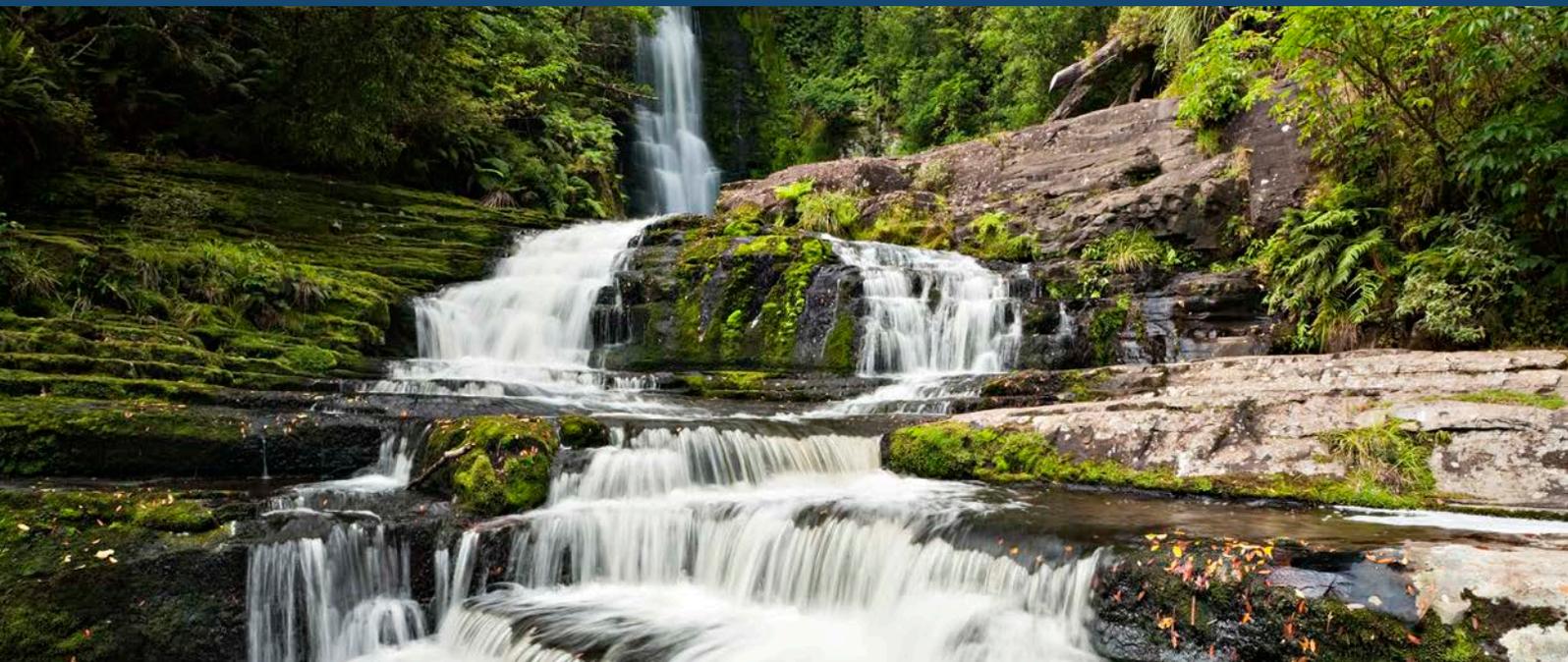
Meet the
Rural Liaisons



Innovations in
flood monitoring



"Taking the pulse" of
freshwater ecosystems



Action for Healthy Waterways

The government has announced a series of provisions designed to restore and protect the health of New Zealand's waterways. The provisions—including rules, objectives and policies—are collected under the title "Action for Healthy Waterways", part of the Ministry for the Environment's Essential Freshwater work programme.

The provisions include a new National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM), new National Environmental Standards (NES) and section 360 RMA regulations.

The NES contains rules which will form part of ORC's Regional Plan: Water. ORC is required to give effect to the NPSFM through the review of our existing Water Plan and through the development of the upcoming Land and Water Regional Plan, and our Freshwater Management Unit provisions.

The government consulted on these changes last year, receiving over 17,000

submissions which have informed the final provisions.

What's in the provisions?

The provisions include a range of new requirements for councils, developers, farmers and communities, targeted at reversing the course of ecosystem degradation and restoring healthy waterways in one generation.

Some of the new requirements, to be implemented through regional plans and National Environmental Standards, include exclusion of stock from waterways, greater protections for wetlands, controls on intensive winter

grazing, interim controls on land-use intensification, and new caps on the use of synthetic nitrogen.

The new policies also include a clearer definition of the concept and framework of Te Mana o te Wai, a new compulsory value for mahinga kai in the NPSFM to provide greater recognition of Māori values, and new monitoring requirements that more than double the number of attributes for freshwater ecosystem health that need to be monitored.

Visit the Ministry for the Environment website if you would like to learn more.



Shotover River, Queenstown.

What does it mean for Otago and the ORC?

ORC submitted in support of the overall direction and intent of these plans to improve water quality and halt ecosystem degradation when they were presented for consultation in September last year.

“We know there is a lot of work to be done, both here in Otago and in other parts of New Zealand, to reverse the course of freshwater health.”

We also noted in our submission on the proposals that all of this work would come at great cost to the local authorities and communities implementing the necessary changes in very rapid timeframes.

ORC has had an opportunity to get ahead of the curve on some of the new requirements around stock exclusion, fencing, and land use intensification through plan changes in the first half of 2020.

These plan changes have been called in by the Minister for the Environment, and will be notified by the Environmental Protection Authority. When that happens (the plan changes have not yet been notified as Waterlines goes to print), we will have an opportunity to align our proposed rules with the direction of Action for Healthy Waterways.

Signed up for On-Stream yet?

On-Stream is our monthly e-newsletter, delivered to your inbox towards the end of each month. It has the latest news, events, and consultation info to keep you up to date with what’s happening around Otago, as well as seasonal advice from our Rural Liaison team.

To sign up to receive On-Stream, simply email us at water@orc.govt.nz or visit www.orc.govt.nz/onstream

