



7.0 WATER

7.1 Introduction

Water resources within the South Waikato District include lakes, rivers, streams, ground water, and rainfall. These resources are of importance for domestic water supplies, agricultural and horticultural activities, industrial operations, ecological and heritage protection, and recreational opportunities, as well as being of significance to Maori spiritual, traditional and cultural values.

Environment Waikato (Waikato Regional Council) has primary responsibility for issues relating to the sustainable management of water within the South Waikato District and other Districts within the Region. Environment Waikato addresses these responsibilities by controlling the taking or diverting of water and the discharge of contaminants into water. It also controls a range of land uses that may have an adverse effect on water and soil quality within the District such as earthworks and the clearance of vegetation.

The South Waikato District Council also exercises duties and functions under the Resource Management Act 1991 with regard to water. Statutory responsibilities are outlined under Sections 6 & 7 of the Act. Section 6 sets out Matters of National Importance that include the preservation of wetlands and lakes and rivers and their margins, and their protection from inappropriate subdivision use and development and the maintenance and enhancement of public access to lakes and rivers. Section 7 requires Council to have particular regard to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment, any finite characteristics of resources and the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon. It is directly responsible for managing activities on the surface of water which may affect adjacent land, activities on land which may impact on water quality and is responsible for the provision of recreation reserves, esplanade reserves and strips, and access strips, which maintain public access to the margins of the District's lakes and rivers and provide riparian margin protection.

Reference should be made to Section 15 Heritage and Ecological Protection and Appendix B of the District Plan.

7.2 Objectives

- 7.2.1 Recognition of the cultural, traditional and spiritual significance of water to the *tangata whenua*.
- 7.2.2 The maintenance and enhancement of water quality and aquatic habitats in the District by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of activities.



- 7.2.3 Recognition of the multi-purpose function of some of the District's water bodies.
- 7.2.4 Public access provided in an appropriate manner to water bodies of significant natural, community, recreational, cultural, or amenity value.
- 7.2.5 Manage and resolve potential conflicts between uses and users of water bodies particularly in relation to the use of the surface waters of lakes and rivers.
- 7.2.6 The adverse effects of development on aquatic resources are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

7.3 Policies

- 7.3.1 To consult with *tangata whenua* regarding the management of those water resources within the District for which Council has responsibilities in conjunction with Environment Waikato.
- 7.3.2 To develop a set of appropriate performance standards which will promote land use practices that avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects.
- 7.3.3 To ensure that the adverse effects of the use and development in areas of significant wetlands, rivers and lakes are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- 7.3.4 To encourage the disposal of all sewage, agricultural effluent and industrial waste and wastes resulting from human activities in a manner that is culturally sensitive and does not adversely affect water quality.
- 7.3.5 To zone the surface waters of lakes and significant rivers as part of the Reserve Zone with appropriate performance standards for all activities.
- 7.3.6 To develop a special zone to ensure that resources used for hydro electric power generation are sustainably managed.
- 7.3.7 To encourage management practices which enhance and protect riparian areas adjacent to lakes, rivers and wetlands.
- 7.3.8 To consult with Environment Waikato on all matters relating to the sustainable management of water within the District.



7.4 Methods to Achieve Objectives and Policies

The following identifies the methods that will be used to achieve the objectives and policies contained in this section of the District Plan:

7.4.1 General

Tangata whenua will be consulted when resource use and developments involving the management of water are proposed.

Refer to Policy 7.3.1.

- (i) Effects based rules and performance standards have been specified in order that those undertaking activities are aware of their environmental management obligations.

Refer to Policy 7.3.2.

- (ii) Riparian management will be required along the margins of lakes, rivers and streams in areas which have been identified by the community as having significant natural, community, recreational cultural and/or amenity values. In addition to esplanade reserves and strips, there are a range of other methods available for protecting these values including the use of heritage protection orders, voluntary covenants and the establishment of landcare and streamcare groups. The term 'riparian management' is defined in the Definitions Section of the District Plan.

See Section 5 (Administration) and Section 15 (Heritage and Ecological Protection).

Refer to Policies 7.3.3 and 7.3.4.

- (iii) The South Waikato District Council will work with other organisations such as Environment Waikato regarding the following resource management issues as they relate to water:

- a. sewage disposal
- b. control and disposal of animal effluent (dairy sheds etc)
- c. control of industrial effluent
- d. careful management of stormwater runoff
- e. the use of natural systems such as wetlands and woodlands to treat discharges to water where appropriate
- f. control of leachate and water weeds



- g. groundwater contamination

Refer to Policy 7.3.5

- (iv) The surface waters of lakes and significant rivers within the District have been included in the Reserve Zone which will allow the integration of the management of activities conducted on surface water with that of adjoining recreation reserves and other areas. See Section 15 (Heritage and Ecological Protection).

See Section 25 (Reserve Zone) and Section 15 (Heritage and Ecological Protection)

Refer to Policy 7.3.6.

Existing hydro-electric power stations on the Waikato River have been included in the Hydro-Electric Power Generation Zone. This zone provides operational certainty for hydro-electric power stations with regard to surface water activities and adjoining land uses through the use of rules and performance standards.

See Section 27 (Hydro-Electric Power Generation Zone)

Refer to Policy 7.3.7.

- (v) In order that adverse effects of land use on water quality are avoided, remedied or mitigated, the South Waikato District Council will promote the following through education:
- a. sound riparian management practices
 - b. agricultural practices that minimise nutrient run-off
 - c. disposal of contaminants by means other than discharge into stormwater drains and waterways
 - d. joint education programmes

Refer to Policy 7.3.8 and 7.3.9



7.5 Principal Reasons

The South Waikato District Council considers that the District Plan has a role to play with regard to the sustainable management of water resources within the District. By controlling the effects of land uses through appropriate performance standards, many adverse effects on water resources can be avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

Many of the matters of national importance and the matters to which Council must have particular regard under the Resource Management Act 1991 (identified in Section 1 of this District Plan), relate directly to water resources. In addition, one of Council's functions is the control of any actual or potential effects of activities in relation to the surface of water in rivers and lakes. These effects could include loss of water quality, conflict between uses and users of water bodies, and impacts on ecological systems and habitats.

Water is recognised as being of importance also to the *tangata whenua* and the management of water resources within the District will require their input.

7.6 Anticipated Environmental Results

It is anticipated that the objectives, policies and methods outlined in this section will achieve the following environmental results:

- (i) The cultural, traditional and spiritual significance of water to the *tangata whenua* will be recognised in resource management decisions.
- (ii) Land use activities within the District will be managed in a manner that will avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on water quality.
- (iii) Appropriate public access to water bodies of significant community, natural, recreational, cultural and/or amenity value will be provided as resources adjacent to such water bodies are developed.
- (iv) Potential conflicts between uses and users of water bodies will be managed and resolved.
- (v) The Districts rivers, lakes and wetlands will be protected from inappropriate use, development and subdivision. The adverse effects of land use on the aquatic environment will be avoided, remedied or mitigated. Significant habitats of indigenous fauna will be protected.