

Freshwater wetlands, including Whangamarino Wetland (Block 2) – Summary of EIC and Rebuttal

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Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

New Zealand Government

Scope

EIC for Block 2 addresses

- ▶ Policy 1 - Management of diffuse nutrients
- ▶ Schedule 1 - Farm Environment Plans
- ▶ Schedule C - Stock exclusion and Setbacks
- ▶ Prioritised implementation

Rebuttal addresses

- ▶ the suggestion that flood schemes are flow through systems that do not contribute a contaminant load
- ▶ suggested changes by WRC (as submitter) to Policy 11, Policy 12 and Rule 3.5.10.2.

Most wetlands in PCI
influenced by agricultural
Land use



Natural wetlands, Whangape

Amendments to Policy 1

- ▶ S42 A Officers' Report recommends Policy 1 seeks to *'Reduce catchment wide and sub-catchment diffuse discharges*
- ▶ I support this amendment to Policy 1. Given the water quality impacts that the regions wetlands are subjected to
- ▶ Policy 1 enables 'activities with a *low level* of contaminant discharge to water bodies'.
- ▶ I recommend PC1 include a more specific definition of what constitutes a low level of contaminant discharge, taking into consideration the sensitivity of different wetland types

Farm environment plans (Schedule 1)

- ▶ Schedule 1 (Farm Environment Plans) is inadequate in relation to protecting and restoring natural wetlands.
- ▶ Schedule 1 promotes the use of natural wetlands as nutrient/sediment deposition areas. It recommends '*measures to detain floodwaters and settle out or otherwise remove sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus and microbial pathogens (e.g. detention bunds, sediment traps, **natural** and constructed wetlands)*'. I do not support the promotion of natural wetlands to remove contaminants.
- ▶ I recommend a number of amendments to Schedule 1 to ensure water quality impacts on natural wetlands are addressed

Schedule 1 amendments (FEPs)

- ▶ Map all natural wetlands
- ▶ Identify sources of N, P and sediment to all natural wetlands
- ▶ Identify where drainage or flood mitigation is contributing to water quality contamination of wetlands
- ▶ Complete a risk assessment for wetlands
- ▶ Require mitigation strategies to address N, P and sediment contamination of wetlands 1) on-farm and 2) at adjacent or downstream sites in the sub-catchment
- ▶ Require restoration strategies to reduce the extent and dominance of exotic weed species that have established in response to water quality decline
- ▶ Require set-backs (buffers) of 10m from all natural wetlands for specific activities:
 - fertiliser application
 - stock fencing
 - effluent discharge

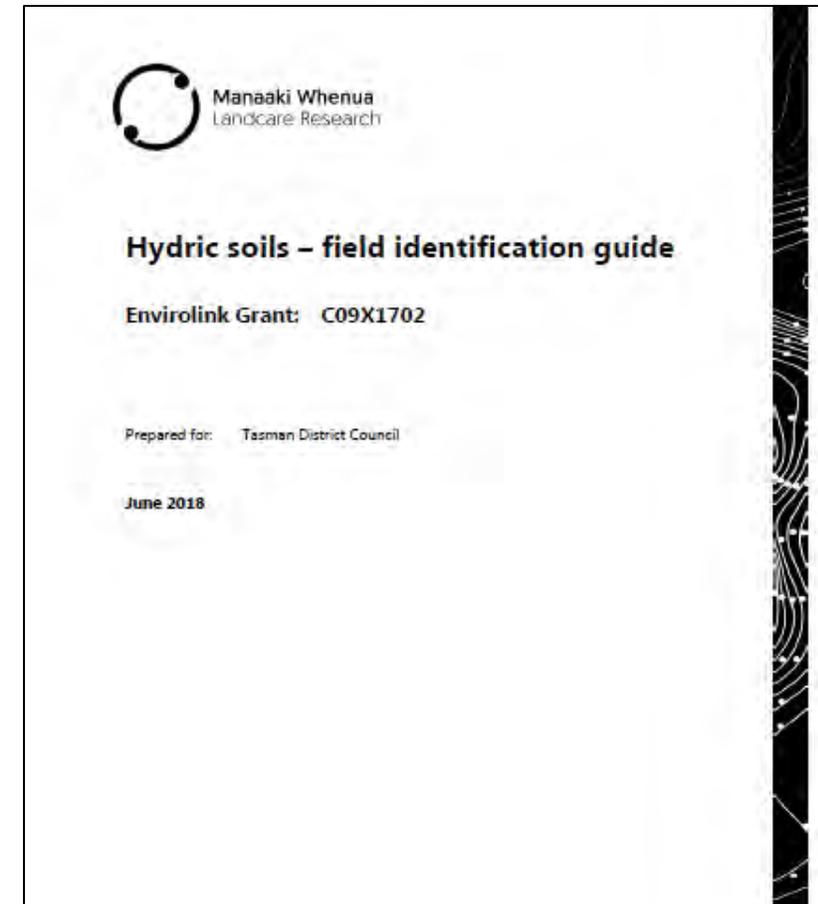
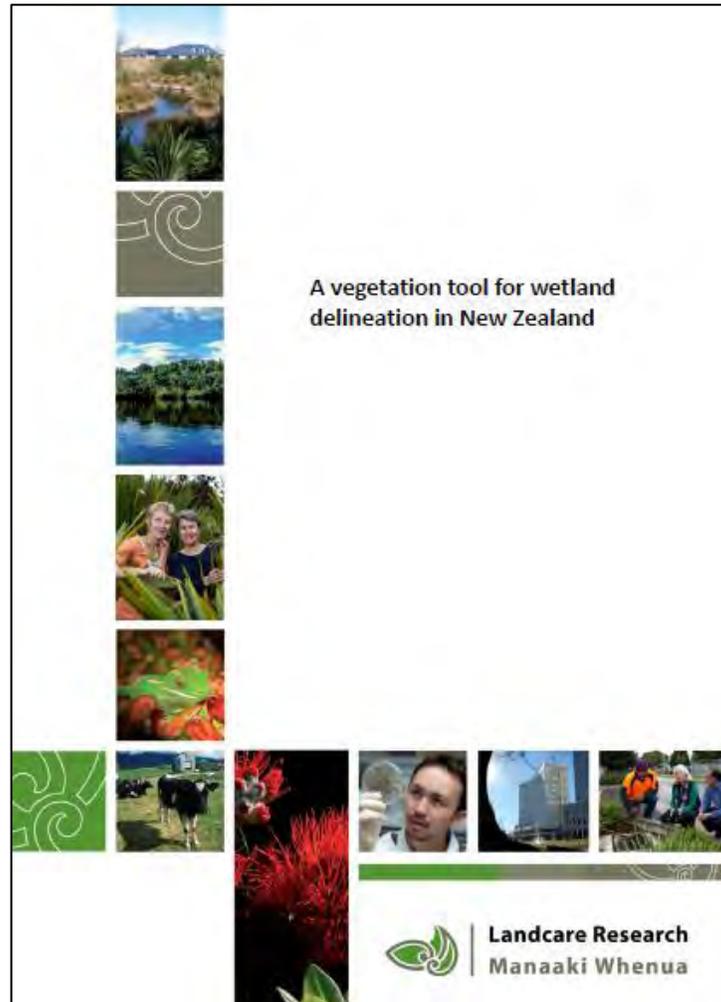
Stock exclusion and setbacks
(Schedule C)

- ▶ No technical evidence has been presented in the development of PC1 to justify the 1m or 3m distances for setbacks.
- ▶ Adequate buffers for all natural wetlands is important to facilitate attenuation of nutrients, limit erosion, limit sediment transport.
- ▶ I recommend Schedule C is amended to require a 10m setback from all natural wetlands



Setbacks - defining the edge of wetlands

- ▶ Definition of a bed of a wetland must take into account the presence of wetland vegetation and/or hydric soils and wetland hydrology

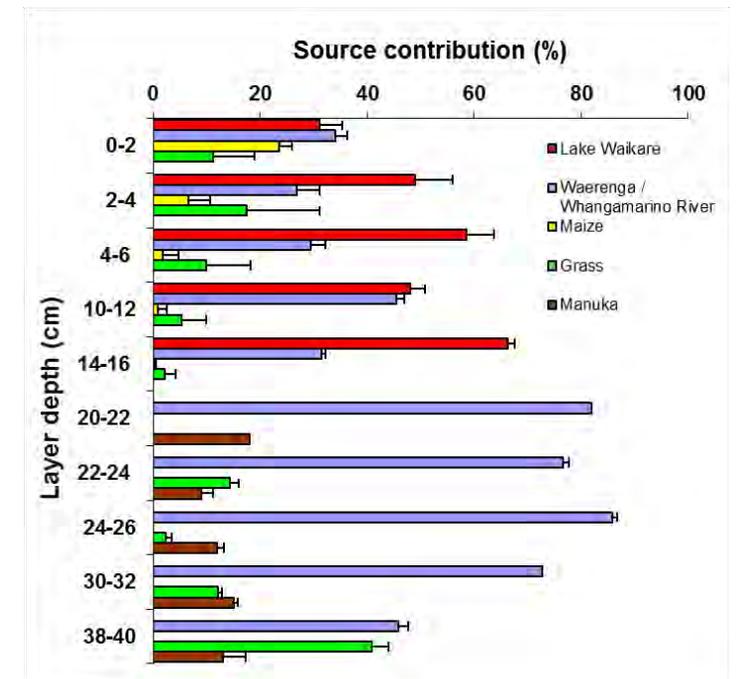


Prioritised implementation

- ▶ The notified version of PC1, under Policy 8, set out a prioritisation of sub-catchments in Table 3.11-2. Policy 8 also prioritised implementation for:
 - ▶ *a. Sub-catchments where there is a greater gap between the water quality targets[^] in Objective 1 (Table 3.11-1) and current water quality; and*
 - ▶ *b. Lakes Freshwater Management Units[^]; and*
 - ▶ *c. Whangamarino Wetland*
- ▶ Retains the Priority 1 status assigned to all contributing sub-catchments for Whangamarino Wetland as detailed in Table 3.11-2
- ▶ Separately delineates Maramarua sub-catchment and assigns a Priority 1 status
- ▶ Retains specific reference to Whangamarino Wetland as a site for priority implementation in Policy 8

Rebuttal

- ▶ It is suggested that flood schemes are operated as ‘flow-through’ systems and “*Their operation is one of flow-through which does not constitute the addition of contaminants into the receiving waterways*”. I do not agree with this statement.
- ▶ The substantial inflow of water, and contaminants, from Lake Waikare into Whangamarino Wetland did not exist prior to the establishment of the Lower Waikato Waipa Flood



Rebuttal

- ▶ In the 2017 calendar year, 16,000 tonnes of sediment was deposited in Whangamarino Wetland and the flood control scheme was the major source of sediment load (PDP 2018)
- ▶ In my opinion, there are feasible and practical measures to avoid or mitigate water quality effects associated with flood schemes.
- ▶ **I do not** support the amendments to PC1 to Policy 11, Policy 12 and Rule 3.5.10.2 proposed by Mr Mayhew.