

Water New Zealand Conference & Expo

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19 September 2019



Essential Freshwater

Healthy Water, Fairly Allocated

[New Zealand Government](#)



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Land and Water Forum advice on improving water quality: preventing degradation and addressing sediment and nitrogen - May 2018

Chair's Foreword

Fresh water is a key asset for New Zealand. In many respects the abundance of water underpins our prosperity as a nation and provides for our social and cultural well-being. But this abundance has seen us take it for granted. There are places where water is being used beyond its environmental capacity and its quality is deteriorating. New Zealand's regulatory settings need improvement and we need to do more on the ground to help improve land management practices to get better outcomes.

This report sets out the steps members of the Land and Water Forum assert are needed to manage within limits and avoid further degradation, manage sediment better, and provide for a national approach to how nitrogen is allocated. It adds to our four full reports and four other pieces of advice that set out an integrated package of changes to water management, and which provide context to this report.

A motivated effort at a national level is required to improve water quality. It will require better coordination and deployment of resources, which we believe should be delivered through a new Land and Water Commission.

The outstanding issue of iwi rights and interests creates uncertainties in the freshwater management system. It should be resolved between the Crown and iwi. Otherwise it will make achieving a long-term durable framework for the management of fresh water more difficult, costly and time consuming.

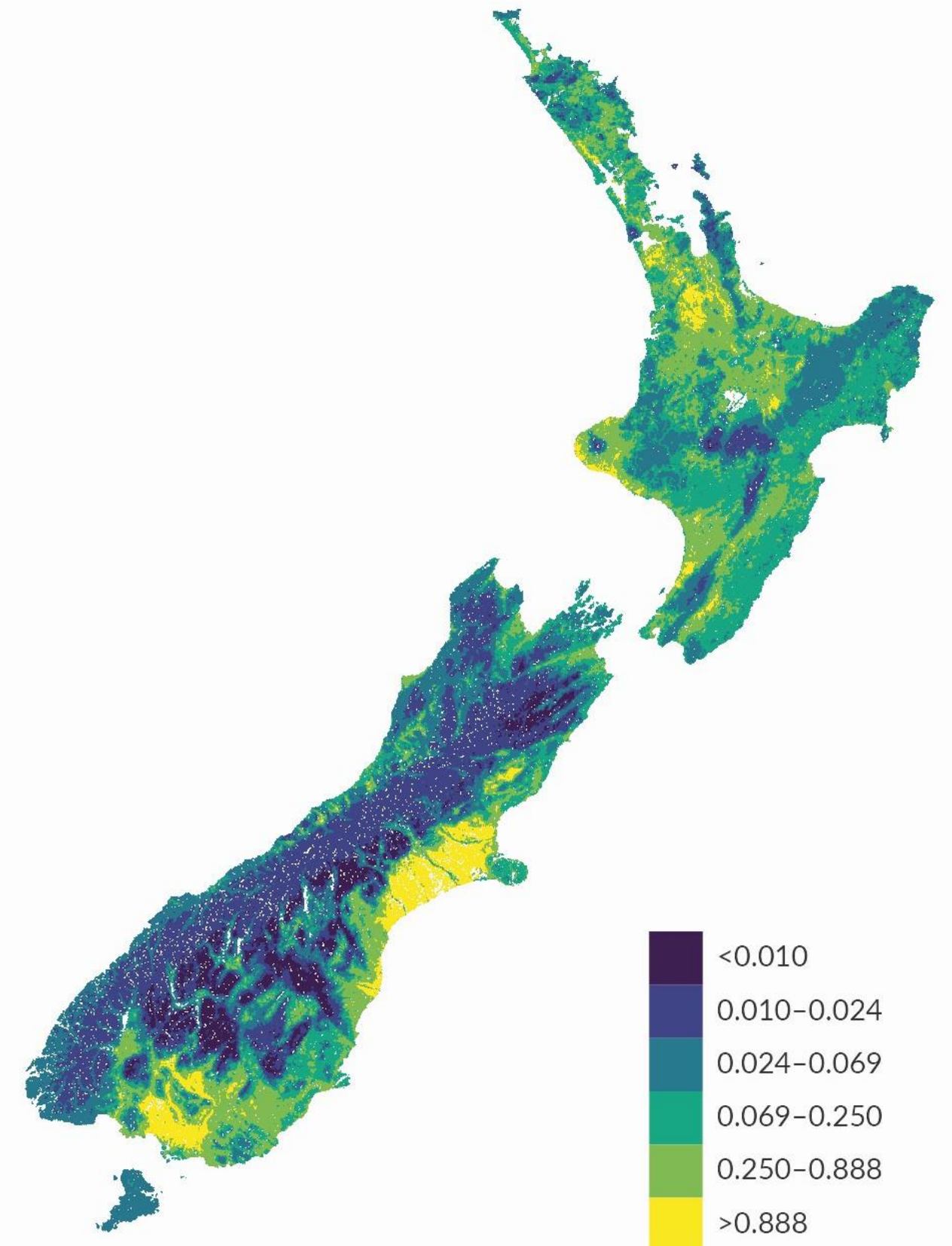
There are number of national level actions which can quickly help prevent further degradation. These are:

- Ensuring, and being satisfied, that at-risk catchments have an effective plan-of-action in place. Where this hasn't happened or plans are inadequate, the government should act, using tools already available to it.
- Improving the way the Resource Management Act (RMA) and its National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) is being applied around the country - especially protecting wetlands and outstanding freshwater bodies; how and when the requirement to maintain and improve water quality applies; how certificates of compliance are used and addressing situations where consents collectively add up to limits being exceeded.
- Changing the NPS-FM and its National Objectives Framework (NOF) as recommended in earlier Forum reports.



River water quality

nitrate-nitrogen concentrations for all
land-cover classes



Moving to restoration

- Scientific definition of freshwater quality
- Quantitative analysis of allocation limits
- Requirements on regional councils to develop robust regional plans

Stopping the decline

- Understanding at risk catchments
- Curbing high risk land use practices

Excessive N loss

Excessive sediment loss

Intensification

- Protecting waterways

Improving the system

- Ensuring regional FW planning processes are efficient
- Ensuring that regional FW management is consistent
- Aligning government policy

Fair Allocation

- Water and essential human needs come first
- Economic use subservient and must protect fresh water quality
- Many systems are over allocated and will require transition
- FIFS and grandfathering of historic rights is not supported
- Recognition of the importance of certainty for business
- Need for limited resources to move to best use



Thank you

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