

RAISING STORMWATER'S PROFILE: OUTCOMES OF THE 2022 WORKSHOP

*C. Feeney (Environmental Communications Ltd), L. Norman (ACH Consulting)
and the Stormwater Committee Education and Training Subgroup*

ABSTRACT

While flooding and water quality preoccupy the public and regulatory bodies, the wider picture of land use decisions, rainfall and runoff – stormwater – as part of the water cycle is not widely appreciated, nor its connectivity to drinking water.

At the 2022 Stormwater Conference, the authors set up a workshop that aimed to raise the profile of stormwater in water, infrastructure, and resource management reforms. The context was the principle of Te Mana o te Wai in the NPS:FM, the three waters legislation, the principle of Te Oranga o te Taiao (health of the environment) in the RMA reforms, and intimate yet largely misunderstood and undervalued role of stormwater in infrastructure. The work of stormwater practitioners encompasses all such reforms.

The purpose of last year's workshop was to:

- identify and coordinate actions at the national, regional, local or individual level to raise awareness of the role stormwater plays in New Zealand's water future.
- generate information that attendees can take back to their region on:
 - who to target
 - key messages
 - techniques and methods to use
 - existing available resources
 - who to connect with nationally
- possibly also identify nationally-focused actions for Water New Zealand and/or other organisations.

The highly engaged attendees generated a number of key messages to reframe our language into strong positive messaging around stormwater as a taonga and the basis for all planning. Simple and effective visuals are also a key element of this communication.

We identified five key audiences; practitioners, policy-makers, politicians, polluters and the public. There is a great deal of information out there from various councils and other sources, but it is a big job to collate and leverage them. We therefore came up with the following actions:

- find partners
- find funding
- identify channels and collateral information for key audiences
- support a national communications strategy.

This paper discusses the workshop's results with the aim of encouraging the sector to use and refine the information in our various spheres of action.

KEY WORDS

Stormwater, three waters, climate change, infrastructure, governance, information, awareness, education, communication