

OVERVIEW

Banks Peninsula District has limited freshwater resources. Most valleys and gullies have streams with low but consistent flows. Groundwater aquifers do exist but their potential is little known. Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere) and Wairewa (Lake Forsyth) are the most significant bodies of water and they contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the district. Bodies of fresh water have important ecological values and are also important for recreation.

Banks Peninsula is surrounded by the sea and the waters adjacent to the coast are integral to the character and amenity of the District. Coastal, harbour and estuarine waters are important elements in contributing to the overall ecological health of the District and are an important source of recreational opportunity.

Water quality is largely determined by land use activities. Generally, the highest natural water quality occurs in rivers and streams flowing from mature, undisturbed forest catchments. Degradation of quality can occur through inappropriate management practices. Water quality may also be degraded through contamination from fertilisers, effluent and sediment. Land clearance can also create problems of soil erosion and sedimentation of waterbodies.

Reduction of water quality is generally greatest when contaminating activities are located adjacent to water bodies. The clearance of vegetation from riparian and coastal margins will often lead to increases in siltation and contamination.

Water also holds considerable cultural value for Maori both as a source of traditional food supplies and for its spiritual significance.

Increased urbanisation poses an increasing risk to water quality. Greater runoff is created through the clearance of vegetation and an increase in hard surfaces. Similarly, increasing levels of rural settlement with associated human activities, animal wastes, run-off and waste disposal have the potential to adversely affect the quality of stream and coastal waters. Where on-site systems of effluent disposal such as septic tanks are used there is the potential for contamination of ground, surface and coastal waters.

Recreational activities also have the potential to impact water quality through intrusion, disturbance of wildlife and damage to vegetation and habitats.

The control of potential point sources of contamination by discharge is the responsibility of the Regional Council. However, District Plan provisions directed at land use activities such as vegetation clearance can assist in protecting and enhancing water quality.

ISSUE 1	The potential adverse effects on water quality and quantity from activities carried out on land and on water bodies.
OBJECTIVE 1	To assist in the protection of the availability of water and in the preservation and enhancement of water quality of surrounding coastal waters and the underground and surface fresh water of the District.

POLICIES

- 1A** To ensure that activities do not adversely affect the quality of surface, ground and coastal waters and their associated aquatic habitats.
- 1B** Activities which utilise surface water should not adversely affect the water quality and associated vegetation and habitat values of lakes.
- 1C** To promote measures that minimise non-point source discharges of contaminants into water bodies and the coastal area.
- 1D** To promote the use of land to maintain and where possible enhance water quality.
- 1E** To retain, protect and promote the establishment of riparian vegetation.
- 1F** Water conservation and the reuse and recycling of water shall be encouraged.
- 1G** Land use activities which have the potential to deplete catchments should be sited to avoid reduction in the flow of streams and rivers which serve as a water source.

EXPLANATION AND REASONS

Water quality is primarily a matter for the Regional Council to manage, but the District Council does assist by controlling land use activities which can degrade water quality, and by promoting activities, such as the planting of riparian vegetation, to improve water quality. Non-point source discharges can significantly degrade water quality in rivers and lakes, which in turn can affect coastal water fed by contaminated waterbodies.

The welfare of future generations is also a key element in the way we manage our water resources, these resources being essential to the functioning of living systems.

Since the District has only limited freshwater resources, water shortages do occur. Restrictions on water use may be imposed at particular times of the year,

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or in particular areas. The reuse and recycling of water will minimise demands on the water resource.

Some land use activities, such as forestry, can deplete water catchments, and thereby contribute to water shortages for downstream users.

Such activities act as an indirect abstraction on the water resource, so it may be necessary to control the siting of these activities, particularly where catchments drain into water courses that are used as water intakes for public supply.

METHODS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- The Coastal Protection Area has been established along the coast to prevent significant adverse effects on water quality from adjacent land uses.
- District Plan rules which require esplanade strips or reserves along the margins of waterbodies as a condition of land use or subdivision consent.
- District Plan rules to protect riparian margins from adverse effects from forestry, the keeping of animals, earthworks, removal of indigenous vegetation, and the erection of buildings and structures.
- The Council will give consideration to the use of economic instruments to assist fencing and planting of riparian vegetation.
- The Council will liaise and consult with the Canterbury Regional Council, adjacent councils, the Fish and Game Council, the public health service, and the Department of Conservation, as appropriate, when considering proposals which have the potential to impact adversely on water quality.
- The Council will take into account the maintenance and enhancement of the habitat values of adjacent water bodies when administering the esplanade provisions of the Act.
- Information provision about ways to conserve water, including the collection of rainwater.
- In conjunction with the Canterbury Regional Council, provide information to landowners indicating methods to reduce the amount of run-off and discharge which may contaminate water bodies.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The following environmental results are anticipated from the implementation of the objectives and policies relating to water resources:

- Adverse effects from activities on the District's water resources (including surface activities) and riparian areas, including their natural and physical characteristics, will be avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- Land use activities undertaken in water catchment areas and which require a resource consent do not adversely affect the flow of streams and rivers into which the catchment drains.