

# Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

## Swimming in rivers and the sea and Māori customary use



Swimming and paddling are popular pastimes in the Wellington Region. Even people who don't actually go swimming want waterways and coastal areas to be suitable for their family members and others to swim in.

Iwi of the region emphasise the importance of maintaining and improving the mauri, or life sustaining properties, of fresh and coastal waters as the basis for human and ecological health. Māori use waterways for customary purposes, including recreation, as well as for spiritual and cultural practices that rely on water quality.

Wellington's rivers and beaches offer great swimming and many also have very beautiful natural surroundings. Wellington Regional Council works with local councils and Regional Public Health to ensure that waterways are safe for swimming.

The Wellington Regional Council regularly monitors water quality through the bathing season (November to March each year). Information on the suitability of water for swimming is available on the Wellington Regional Council website:  
<http://www.gw.govt.nz/is-it-safe-to-swim/>

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (proposed Plan) includes a number of provisions to address potential risks to water quality. New discharges that flow directly into water (such as out of a pipe) and that would adversely impact water quality for recreation and Māori customary use will require resource consent. Discharges of stormwater and wastewater that impact water quality need to improve over time. The allocation of water from rivers such as for municipal supply, irrigation and other uses is managed to protect environmental flows and lake levels.

Water quality in our rivers and at our beaches is generally good over the summer, except in poor weather conditions. Heavy rain can flush contaminants from urban and rural land into water. Therefore, we advise people not to swim for at least two days after heavy or prolonged rain – even if a site generally has good water quality. When the Wellington Regional Council becomes aware of water quality concerns, we work with other authorities to erect signs warning people of the dangers of swimming in that area.

### What is the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region?

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan (the proposed Plan) is a new regional plan designed to integrate the Wellington Region's five existing regional plans-- the [Regional Coastal Plan](#), [Regional Freshwater Plan](#), [Regional Soil Plan](#), [Regional Air Quality Management Plan](#) and [Regional Plan for Discharges to Land](#). Regional plans are developed under the Resource Management Act to set out the objectives, policies and methods for people and organisations that use a region's resources for a variety of purposes:

The proposed Plan was developed following a review of the five existing regional plans from 2011 to 2015. Until the GWRC decides to adopt the proposed Plan, resource users must comply with rules in the proposed Plan and rules in the five existing plans.

There is a lot of information in the proposed Plan and a lot to understand, so if you need help to figure out if your activity is permitted, or requires a resource consent, or if you have any questions at all, please contact us for more information 0800 496 734 or [regionalplan@gw.govt.nz](mailto:regionalplan@gw.govt.nz)



**Permitted:** no resource consent is required provided you comply with the conditions in the rule.

**Controlled, discretionary or non-complying:** a resource consent from Wellington Regional Council is required. Conditions may need to be met.

**Prohibited:** cannot be undertaken at any time.