

Drinking Water Protection

Issues

There is a need to adequately protect drinking water supplies from land use activities, subdivision, and development. If these supplies are not protected, they can become contaminated by pathogens or other contaminants and may be rendered unsafe for human consumption. Particular land uses or activities can pose a risk if located up-gradient of drinking water supplies, and management of these activities can help maintain the safety of drinking water supplies into the future.

Operative District Plan Approach

The protection of drinking water supplies is not specifically addressed in the Operative District Plan. There is a focus on ensuring drinking water connections are provided to new properties or buildings, but there are no provisions to ensure that the supply provided is safe to drink.

Proposed Plan Approach

The Proposed District Plan proposes to emphasize the protection of drinking water supplies in the objective and policy framework, map protection areas around community drinking water supplies, and to control land use and development activities that pose a risk to drinking water safety through rules.

Changes

The Proposed District Plan proposes to require resource consent for the following activities where they occur within the mapped Drinking Water Protection Overlay, or within close proximity to a known drinking water supply: subdivision, camping grounds, mining or quarrying activities, pipelines for hazardous facilities, industrial activities, major hazard facilities.

Reasons

The Resource Management Act allows District Plans to control land use activities, subdivision, and development. The range of activities that pose a risk to drinking water supply safety is larger than the four mentioned previously, but the majority of those other activities are managed by regional plans rather than the District Plan. The activities proposed to be controlled by the District Plan are ones not managed elsewhere, and which fall within the scope of what is able to be addressed by the District Plan.

What this Means in Practice

If people wish to set up a camping ground or quarrying activity near a drinking water supply, they will require resource consent to do so. During the resource consent process, the Council can consider the potential impact on the safety of the drinking water supply, and what measures will be taken to protect the supply point from the effects of the activity.

Subdivisions, where they are near to drinking water supplies, will require restricted discretionary resource consent rather than the default status (where the consent is guaranteed to be granted). Lastly, new or extended major hazard facilities will become non-complying activities rather than discretionary activities where they are near to drinking water supplies. This means there is a higher bar to pass for the consent to be granted.

