



Water policy – the big picture

Introduction

We will cover:

- § The RMA
- § National & regional policy
- § Regional plans
- § How catchment planning fits



The RMA



Resource management Act 1991 (RMA):

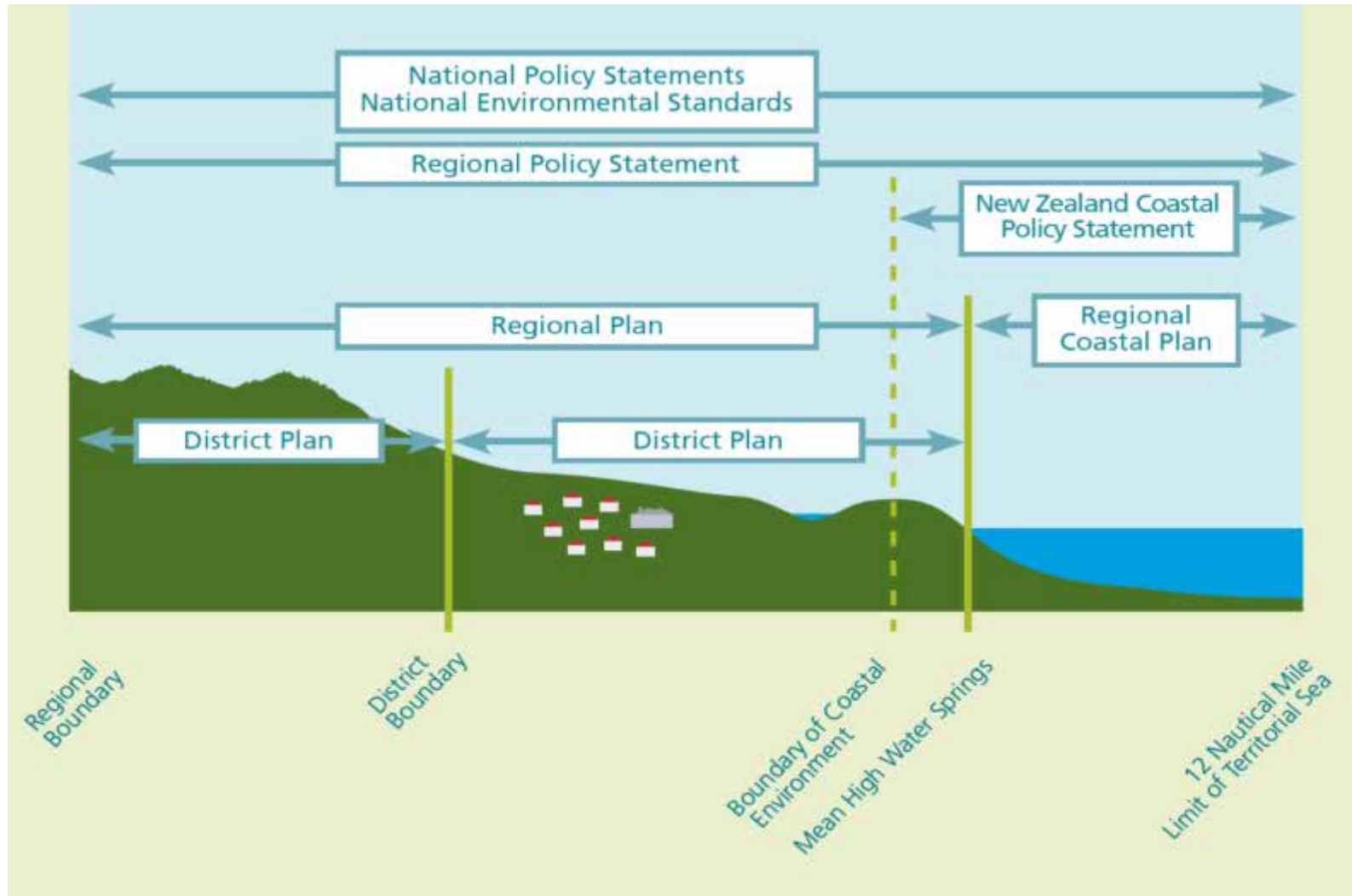
- § Intent is sustainable management (section 5)
- § Sustain natural & physical resources to meet future needs
- § Safeguard life supporting capacity of water & ecosystems
- § Avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects

RMA controls

- Section 13 (beds of lakes & rivers)
 - Section 14 (use of water)
 - Section 15 (discharges)
 - Section 69 (water quality standards)
 - Section 70 (Rules about discharges)
- Reflected in Council functions s30 RMA
- Allocation of water/capacity to assimilate contaminants
 - Biodiversity



National & regional policy (RMA)



National policy/standards

NPS Freshwater management (NPSFM)

- All freshwater bodies – ground & surface water, wetlands
- Water quality & quantity.

NZ Coastal policy statement (NZCPS)

- Coastal environment only
- Fresh & coastal water

National environment standards (NES)

- NES for Sources of Human Drinking Water
- Proposed NES on Ecological Flows and Water Levels



NPS Freshwater management

Protect:

- life supporting capacity
- outstanding water bodies
- Wetlands

Avoid over-allocation by:

- Setting objectives
- Limits & targets



NPS Freshwater management

Water quality:

- Maintain or improve overall water quality
- Set water quality objectives
- Set water quality limits (E.g contaminant load limits &/or resource limits)
- Set targets to improve where objectives not met.



NPS Freshwater management

Water quantity:

- Avoid over-allocation
- Objectives, minimum flows / levels and allocation limits
- Targets to reduce over-allocation (if needed)
- Efficient use & allocation



NPS Freshwater management

Proposed amendments 2013:

- National values table
- National objective framework
- Human health & ecosystems compulsory & subject to 'bottom lines'
- Integrate fresh & coastal water
- Freshwater management units
- Accounting for takes & discharges



NOF Compulsory attributes

Compulsory values/attributes

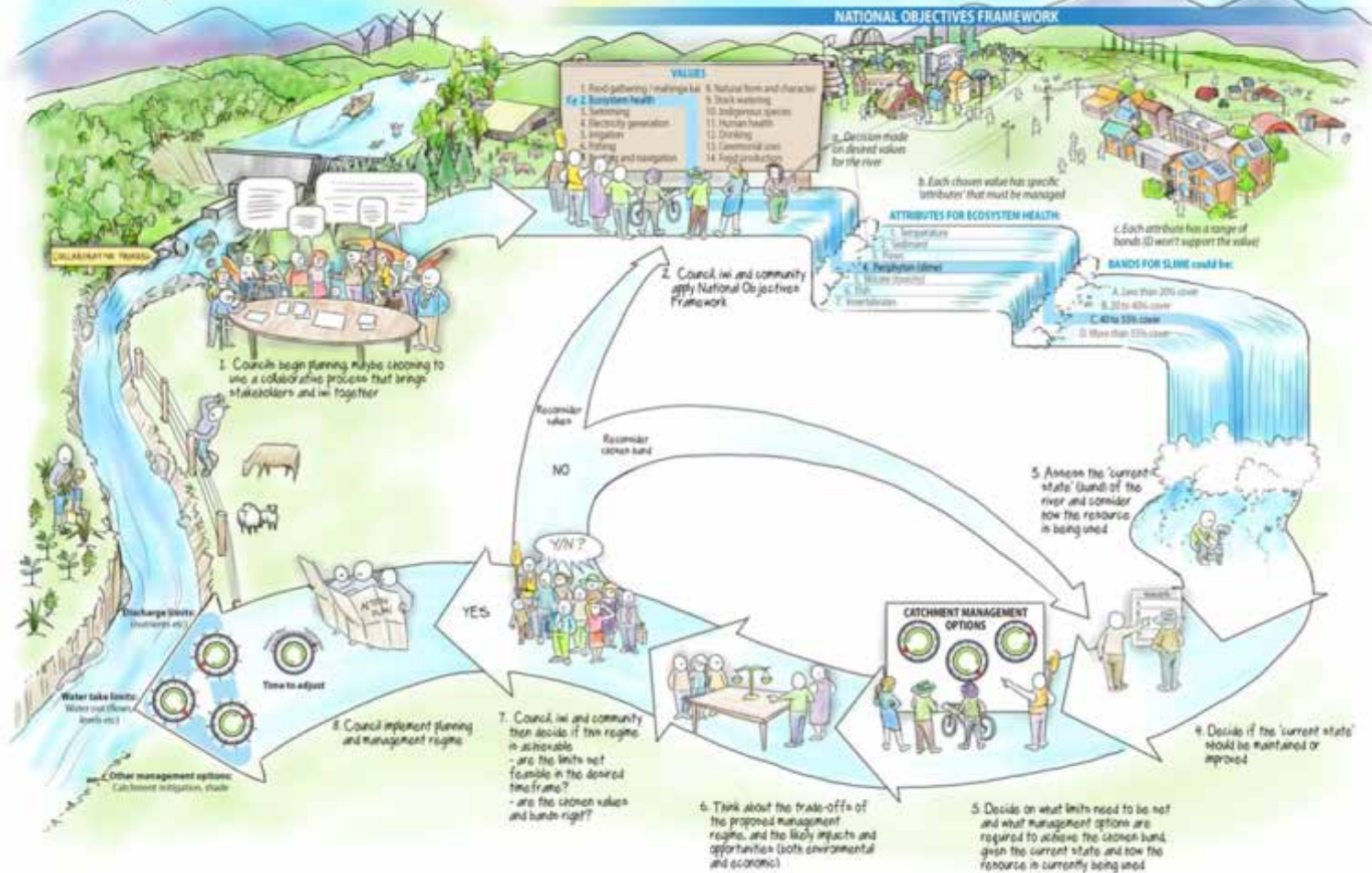
Value	Waterbody type	Attribute
Ecosystem health	Lakes	Chlorophyll-a
		Total Nitrogen
		Total Phosphorous
	Lakes and Rivers	Nitrate toxicity
		Ammonia toxicity
	Rivers	Dissolved Oxygen
Periphyton		
Human health (secondary contact recreation)	Lakes and rivers	<i>E. coli</i>
		Cyanobacteria

NOF table

Value	Ecosystem Health		
Freshwater Body Type	Lakes		
Attribute	Total Nitrogen		
Attribute Unit	mg/m ³ (milligrams per cubic metre)		
Attribute State	Numeric Attribute State		Narrative Attribute State
	Annual Median	Annual Median	
	Seasonally Stratified and Brackish*	Polymictic	
A	<160	<300	Lake ecological communities are healthy and resilient, similar to natural reference conditions.
B	160–350	300–500	Lake ecological communities are slightly impacted by additional algal and plant growth arising from nutrients levels that are elevated above natural reference conditions.
C	350–750	500–800	Lake ecological communities are moderately impacted by additional algal and plant growth arising from nutrients levels that are elevated well above natural reference conditions
National Bottom Line	750	800	
D	>750	>800	Lake ecological communities are at high risk of a regime shift to a persistent, degraded state, due to impacts of elevated nutrients leading to excessive algal and/or plant growth, as well as from losing oxygen in bottom waters of deep lakes.

NPSFM process

Managing fresh water in New Zealand



NZ Coastal policy statement

- Coastal environment only
- Quality of fresh & coastal waters
- Enhance water quality where impacting use & values
- Avoid significant increase in sediment from land use & development
- Management of discharges



National Environmental Standards

NES Drinking water

- Protects sources of human drinking water
- Applies to resource consents and plan rules

Proposed NES ecological flows / levels

- Not operative
- Water quantity only
- Provides method to set interim minimum flows, levels and allocation limits



PROPOSED
National Environmental Standard
— on Ecological Flows and Water Levels

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT



www.govt.nz

Regional Policy Statement

Regional policy direction:

- Interprets & applies national policy in Northland
- Directs our district & regional plans
- Addresses fresh & coastal waters
- Council decision Sept 2013
- Water policy appealed to Env Court.



Regional Policy Statement

Water quality - improve overall by:

- Collaborative catchment specific planning
- Targeted stock exclusion
- Good management practice
- Control of point source discharges

Water quantity – protect life supporting capacity by:

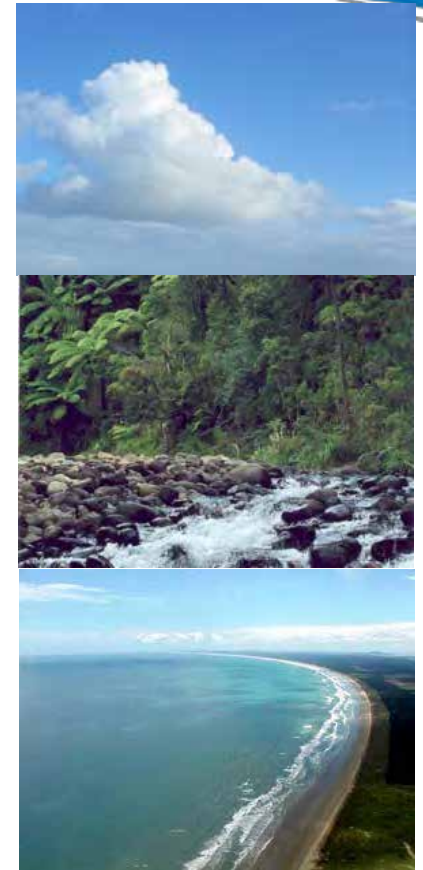
- Collaborative catchment specific planning
- Regional minimum flows / levels & allocation limits

Regional Plans

Three regional plans:

Air, Water & Soil, Coastal

- All developed late 90's & operative early 2000's
- Address council functions under s30 RMA
- Due for review this year
- Must give effect to national & regional policy statements



Regional Water & Soil Plan



Water quality (freshwater only)

- Water quality guidelines (E.g ecosystems, recreation, water supply or cultural purposes)
- Rules on point source discharge (E.g stormwater, effluent)
- Protection for dune lakes & outstanding rivers (point source discharges)
- Rules for some land use (E.g. vegetation clearance) & use of riparian margins
- Limited controls on diffuse source contaminants
- No stock exclusion rules

Regional Water & Soil Plan



Water quantity

- Minimum flows for rivers (based on size of river)
- Rules on volume of permitted extraction
- No allocation limits
- No minimum levels for lakes or groundwater
- Strong protection for dune lakes, wetlands and outstanding rivers (extraction, damming & diversion)
- Some groundwater aquifers mapped (at risk / high demand)

Regional Coastal Plan



- Applies from MHWS out to 12 nm
- Water quality
- Water classifications – Whangarei & Bay of Islands (E.g Recreation, cultural purposes)
- Rules on point source discharge, dredging & disturbance
- Stock exclusion rules
- Can't control sediment or diffuse contaminants from land

So what does it all mean?

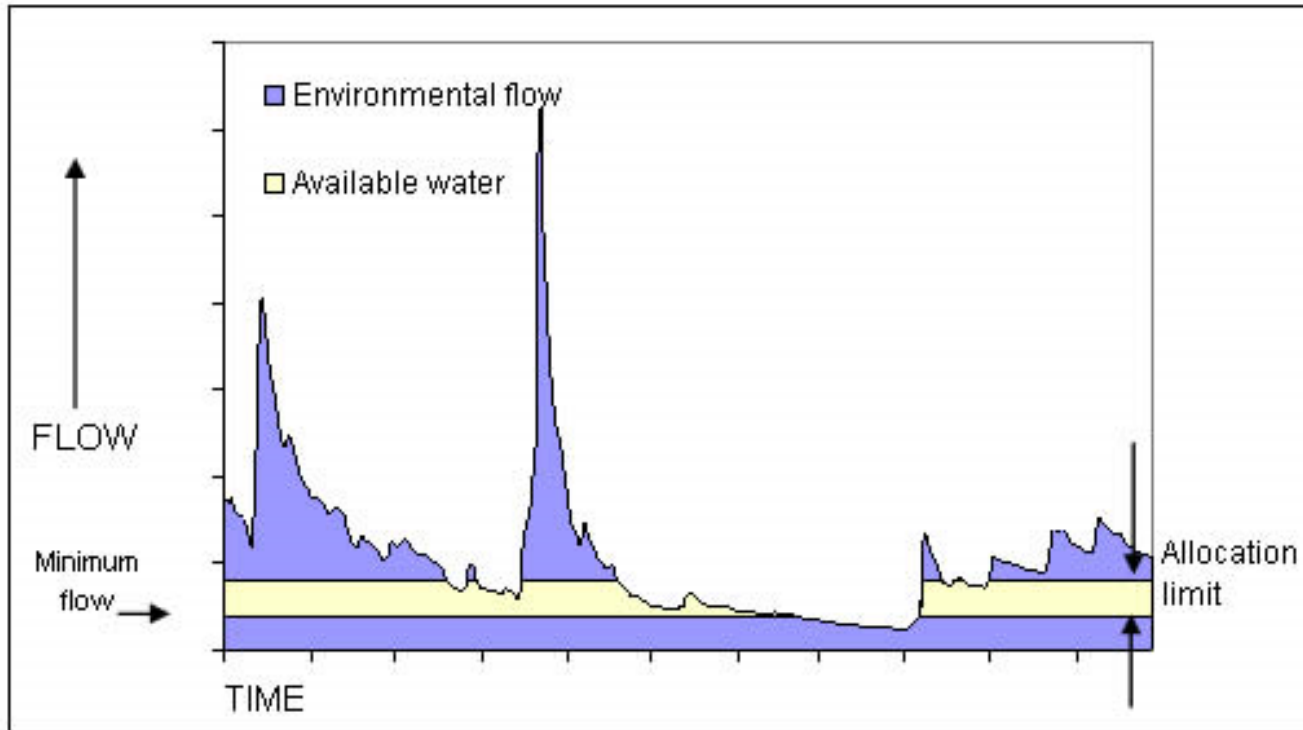
- Must amend plans to give effect to national policy statements (coastal & freshwater)
- Must give effect to regional policy statement
- Gaps in Water & Soil Plan (allocation limits, diffuse contaminants, water quality standards/limits)
- Gaps in Coastal Plan – update water quality standards
- Integrate water quantity and water quality fresh and coastal water quality
- So...plans need review & update.

So what do we need to do?

Water quantity (groundwater & surface water):

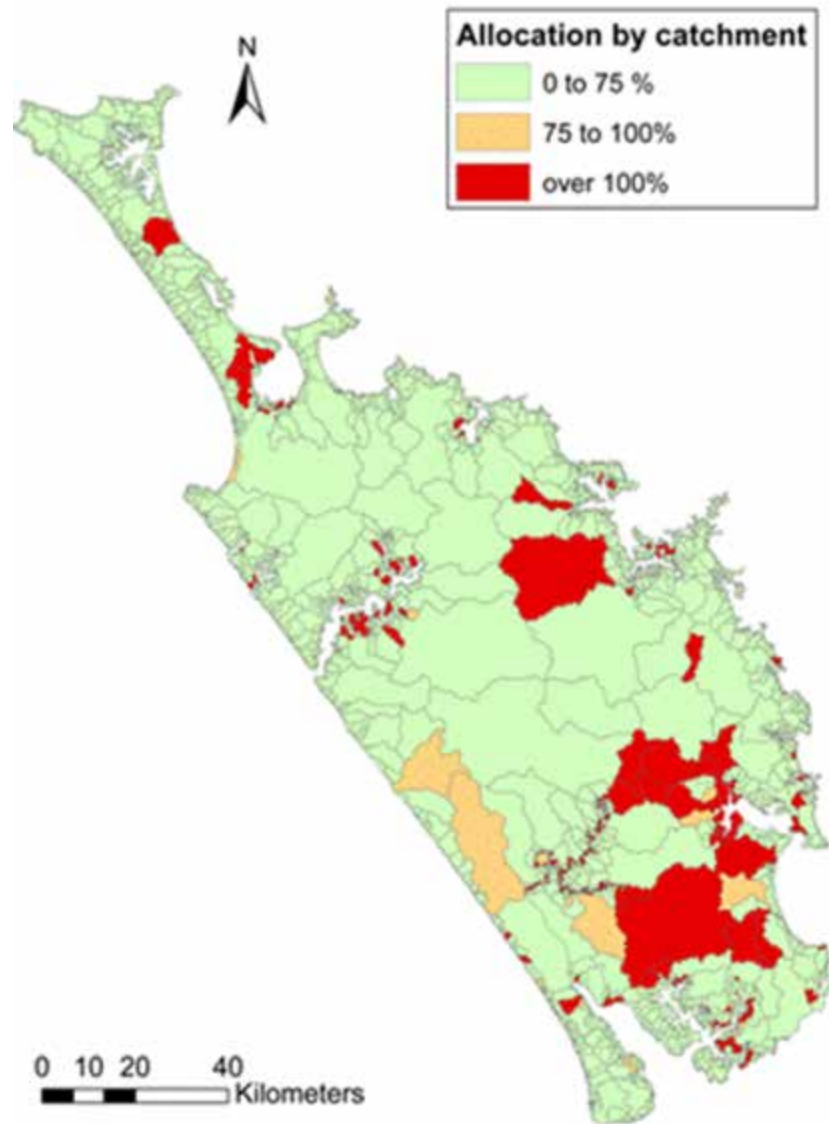
- Set freshwater management units (by water body or catchment type)
- Values & objectives (Catchment specific & region-wide)
- Minimum flows (how much water stays in)
- Allocation limits (how much can be taken out)
- Implementation (rules in plans & actions)

Min flows & Allocation



Allocation levels

- Shows level of allocation using proposed NES
- Red areas = highly allocated (>30% or 50% MALF allocated)



So what do we need to do?

Water quality:

- Set freshwater management units (by water body or catchment type)
- Values & objectives for water quality (catchment specific & region - wide)
- Water quality limits
- Implementation (Rules in plans & action on the ground)

So what's the plan?

Waiora Northland Water (phase 1):

- Collaborative stakeholder catchment groups: Whangarei, Mangere, Doubtless Bay, Waitangi & Pouto
- Outstanding water-bodies (E.g identify top wetlands / dune lakes & pristine rivers)
- Interim: minimum flows / levels / allocation limits
water quality limits for certain contaminants

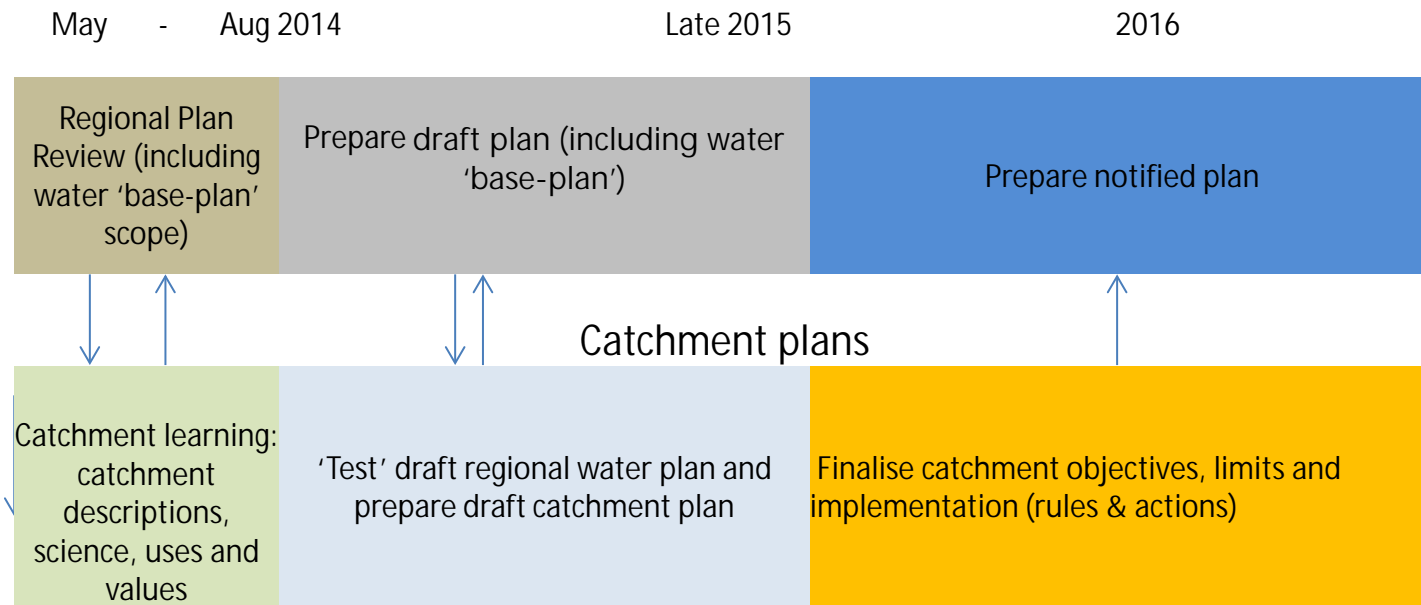
So what's the plan?

Regionally

- Review all three plans by August 2014 - identify what's worked, what hasn't and any gaps
- Test internal plan reviews with stakeholders (May – June)
- Scope changes needed
- Draft plan by late 2015?
- Notify changes 2016

When?

Region – wide base water plan



Summary

- Uses and values (consider NOF)
- Objectives (desired environmental state)
- Policy and management options
- Test baseplan fit for purpose in catchment
- Freshwater limits (quality, quantity)
- Catchment management plan (actions and/or rules)

Thank you

Your name

Your job title



09 insert your direct dial here



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