

**27 November 2015**

**Media Release**

**EDS welcomes the release of the latest Land and Water Forum report  
and says the most important phase is yet to come**



The Environmental Defence Society has welcomed the release of the Land and Water Forum's fourth report outlining 60 new recommendations on how New Zealand can improve the management of fresh water.

"The quality of fresh water in New Zealand is an extremely important and pressing issue. This report, along with the Forum's previous three reports, provides a blueprint for reform of the fresh water management system that will protect and restore our waterways," said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

"It's critically important that the Government implements these recommendations and does so without delay. Water quality in our lowland streams and rivers is poor and the current system is demonstrably failing to deliver the outcomes the public wants.

"Improvements can't be left for another 5 or 10 years. The need is urgent and it needs to be done now," Mr Taylor said.

The Forum includes representative from all key stakeholders involved in the management of freshwater in New Zealand and was initially established by EDS at its 2008 annual conference.

"In this latest round we have worked through the tricky issues between farmers, environmentalists, iwi, power generators and others, and have developed a useful addition to the comprehensive and workable reform package that has been developed over the past several years.

"We note that some of the earlier recommendations of the Forum that have been included in the RMA reforms announced yesterday.

"We think this positive outcome proves the collaborative approach works. We have made more progress by working through the issues with stakeholders than relying on costly and time-consuming litigation.

"But the ball is now firmly in the Government's court. It should move expeditiously to implement the Land and Water Forum's framework.

"We also look forward to the final phase of the Forum's work in 2016. That will involve much-needed improvements to the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management and the completion of the environmental bottom lines in the National Objectives Framework.

"In many respects this last phase is the most important. We need robust limits that protect freshwater ecosystems, create swimmable rivers and lakes and drive rapid improvements to polluted rivers," Mr Taylor concluded.