

**15 November 2012**

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Environmental Defence Society endorses Land and Water Forum Report**



The release of the third and final report from the Land and Water Forum has been welcomed and endorsed by the Environmental Defence Society.

The Forum originated at the 2008 EDS Conference where an initial support group from a wide range of interests, including farming and environmental, agreed to try and find a better way of managing freshwater.

“It’s been a long road since then, with the Government getting behind the exercise and the core group expanding to include representation from all key stakeholders and from iwi. Four years on there is now a package of measures that need to be taken together and implemented by Government,” said EDS Chair Gary Taylor.

“The LWF has recommended a comprehensive system for managing freshwater. It involves national-level policies and objectives (National Policy Statement and National Objectives Framework). At a regional level, councils are to make plans, with collaborative processes preferred, consistent with the national direction. These are to be based on catchments and will set water allocation (both take and discharge) limits. Then communities and regional councils will work together to find the best methods of working within the limits.

“The one incomplete part of the package is the proposed National Objectives Framework. This is being developed by officials for Ministers to consider. The Forum has endorsed the need for greater central government direction for regional councils and so getting the Framework right is clearly critical to a long-term quality outcome.

“But if common sense prevails, if robust national guidance is provided, and if the Forum’s recommendations are accepted and implemented as a package, then New Zealand will have a world-class system for freshwater management.

“Finally, I acknowledge with thanks the superb work of our Chair, Alastair Bisley and the Forum’s Secretariat. I would also like to recognise the political capital that Ministers Nick Smith and David Carter put on the line for our work, and more recently support from Minister Adams, and the interest from right across the political spectrum.

I would also like to acknowledge with respect the collegiality and good will (most of the time) of Forum colleagues,” Mr Taylor concluded.