

The importance of water

Water is at the heart of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is essential to our environment and our social, economic and cultural well-being. It grows our food, powers our businesses, and provides recreational and cultural benefits to our communities.

For Māori, fresh water is a taoka (treasure) and considered essential to life and identity - Kō au te Āwa, kō te Āwa kō au (I am the river, the river is me).



‘Te Mana o te Wai’ (the vital importance and health of our water) is at the centre of New Zealand’s freshwater legislation. The legislation recognises that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and well-being of the wider environment and those who live within it.

Te Mana o te Wai refers to the health and wellbeing of water - ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea). It says we must care

for the wider environment; our land, forests, and wetlands, because these must be healthy to keep our water healthy.

A healthy freshwater environment provides essential ecosystem services to the people of Aotearoa, such as storing and filtering our drinking and stock water, absorbing atmospheric carbon, and providing resilience in the face of climate change.

TOITŪ TE HAKAPUPU
PLEASANT RIVER CATCHMENT RESTORATION PROJECT

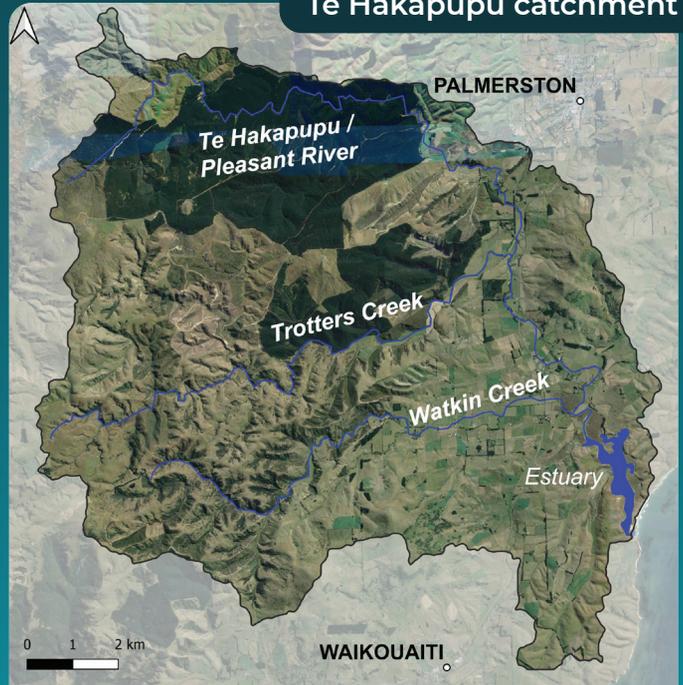
Like the rest of the world, Aotearoa faces increasing challenges related to water scarcity, pollution, and a changing climate. Understanding how and where water quality is changing lets us focus our efforts on its conservation and restoration. It also helps us see how our actions, land use, and planning can be altered to live in greater balance with our environment.

Common methods for assessing water quality include measuring levels of:

- nutrient content: for example, amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous
- the bacteria *E. Coli*: as a measure of sewage or animal waste contamination
- periphyton: the slime and algae found on stream beds
- sediment: both suspended in the water and deposited on the stream bed
- temperature, acidity, and dissolved oxygen: which all impact aquatic plants and animals
- ecological health: which includes the health of both the water and the waterway it flows through.

These methods help identify issues with water quality and may indicate potential causes.

Te Hapakupu catchment



The Toitū Te Hapakupu project is all about water quality improvement in Te Hapakupu / Pleasant River catchment in East Otago. It is led by Otago Regional Council, in partnership with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and in collaboration with the local community. The project objectives aim to improve water quality and enhance conservation, cultural, and community values throughout the catchment. It will achieve this by monitoring water quality and combining the results with rūnaka and community objectives to guide actions to protect and restore the rivers and wetlands.

A partnership project by:



In collaboration with:



Find out more at: www.orc.govt.nz/toitutehakapupu