

28 April 2017
Clean Water Consultation 2017
Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
Wellington
Online submission

Rural Women New Zealand

Submission on Clean Water Consultation 2017

Question 1: What are you thought on the proposed swimming targets, for example, on the timeframes and categories?

RWNZ supports the need for swimmable lakes, rivers, and streams for drinking, swimming and recreational activities as well as for fauna and ecosystems.

Some of the challenges to achieving quality clean water are disturbances of silt caused by natural weather events and contaminants such as nitrates, phosphates and E coli caused by runoff due to unusually heavy and prolonged rain. In these circumstances we need a reasonable approach to remediating the damage and getting the water quality back to the acceptable standard. Water quality standards and timelines need to reflect unusual and adverse weather events.

Water quality is also affected by contaminants from non-farming activities, such as stormwater and waste water from urban areas. Local bodies must also take responsibility for contaminants affecting downstream water quality which originates from urban areas.

Question 2: What do you think about the proposed amendments to the Freshwater National Policy Statement (NPS – FM)?

RWNZ supports clean, safe and healthy waterways.

Having adequate access to clean water is essential to rural families and communities. Often homes and farms depend on natural water supplies for their family use and for livestock.

Question 3: What are your thoughts on the proposed stock exclusion regulation, for example the timeframes and stock types to be excluded?

RWNZ acknowledges the need to exclude livestock from waterways so as to ensure clean water. It should be noted that huge improvements have been made in reducing livestock access to waterways via fencing and planting. It should also be noted that there are some areas that are

impractical, both economically and physically, to fence for exclusion. Therefore the freshwater policy needs to acknowledge and allow for these types of circumstances and should not insist on total exclusion but rather provide a reasonable and practical test to waterways that should be fenced off.

Question 4: Do you have any other comments on the contents the Clean Water discussion?

RWNZ believes we need swimmable lakes, rivers and streams for the purposes of drinking, swimming and recreational activities, as well as for our fauna and ecosystems.

Farming is more than returns at the farm gate. It is also important to many rural people to farm sustainably and to care for the land and waterways. A long held farming ethos has been to leave the land and water in a better condition than what they once were and, as such, creating a safer environment for rural families and communities.

RWNZ believes the freshwater policy must aim high for the health of our people, our wildlife, our environment, and our communities.