

Urgency wanted for freshwater policy

The NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFA), a national trout fishing advocacy group, has backed the need for a national policy statement of freshwater management, but wants greater urgency.

In a submission recently made to government, NZFFA President, David Haynes of Nelson, said the federation supported the fundamental need for a National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management.

"It is a standard well overdue given the primacy of freshwater to our

environment, economy, society and, most importantly, life. We have been advocating for standards to protect both quality and quantity of water for many decades," he said. "However, the proposals fall well short of improving the ability of our fresh water to sustain life."

David Haynes said several key areas were of concern. One was that national bottom lines for ecosystem health and human health were far too low, while timescales for remedial implementation were far too long.

There was also a serious flaw in that the policy statement only applies to

new activities or to changes to existing activities, not to existing activities. Ecosystem health was a critical measure of freshwater health, but the measures proposed are not extensive or stringent enough.

"Our scientists suggest the bottom lines for ecosystem health are too low to sustain life. Why are some proposed attributes applicable to rivers but not lakes, with temperature being the most obvious example? We recommend that the ecosystem health attributes be applied equally to all freshwater bodies."

Those attributes that do have

numbers applied to them – the national bottom lines – are far too low to sustain fish life, and fly in the face of extensive scientific research completed over the last thirty years.

"Water quality and quantity management should be a priority for the government – without it our freshwater may no longer be so," said David Haynes. "The fact that New Zealand has only 4.3 million people, less than Sydney, yet suffers from water quality and flow problems, underlines the fact that this matter is of extreme urgency."

-TONY ORMAN

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New Zealand's Water Crisis Needs Urgent Attention

The NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFWA) has supported the need for a national policy statement of freshwater management but says the crisis needs urgent attention and action.

The call came in the federation's submission to government's proposal over a National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management. Federation president David Haynes of Nelson said a set standard as a national target for improved freshwater management was well overdue.

"Fresh water is vital to not only our environment, but to the economy, society and most importantly—life."

The Federation had been advocating for standards to protect both quality and quantity of water for many decades, he said. The new policy statement was a step in the much needed right direction but fell well short of improving the ability of New Zealand's freshwater to sustain life.

David Haynes identified aspects that needed strengthening.

"National bottom lines for ecosystem health and human health are far too low while time scales for implementation are far too long," he said.

Another inadequacy was that the policy statement only applied to new activities or to changes to existing activities, not to those existing activities. Importantly, there needed to be much more urgency.

"New Zealand has only 4.3 million people, not even the size of Sydney, yet we have water quality and flow problems. It underlines this matter is urgent," he said.

Ecosystem health was a critical measure of freshwater health but the measures proposed were neither extensive nor stringent enough.

"Our scientists suggest the bottom lines for ecosystem health are too low to sustain life. Why are some attributes proposed applicable to rivers but not lakes, temperature being the most obvious example? We recommend that the ecosystem health attributes are applied equally to all fresh water."

Those attributes that do have numbers applied to them—the national bottom lines—are far too low to sustain fish life and fly in the face of extensive scientific research completed over the last thirty years.

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