



Healthy Rivers  
PLAN FOR CHANGE

Wai Ora  
HE RAUTAKI WHAKAPAIPAI



TŪWHARETOA  
MĀORI TRUST BOARD



# Waikato Regional Plan Variation 6 – Water allocation

## **Collaborative Stakeholder Group - 5 June 2014**

Presentation from WRC and sectors involved in Variation 6

WRC

Māori interests

Energy

Rural advocacy

Horticulture

Water takes

Other interests

# Purpose

1. Hear directly from people who have been involved in Variation 6
2. Gain more understanding about how water quality and water quantity are linked in Variation 6

# Waikato region



**Forestry**



**Mines**



**Farming**



**Huntly power station**



**Auckland water take  
Hamilton water take  
Taupo water take**



**Kinleith**



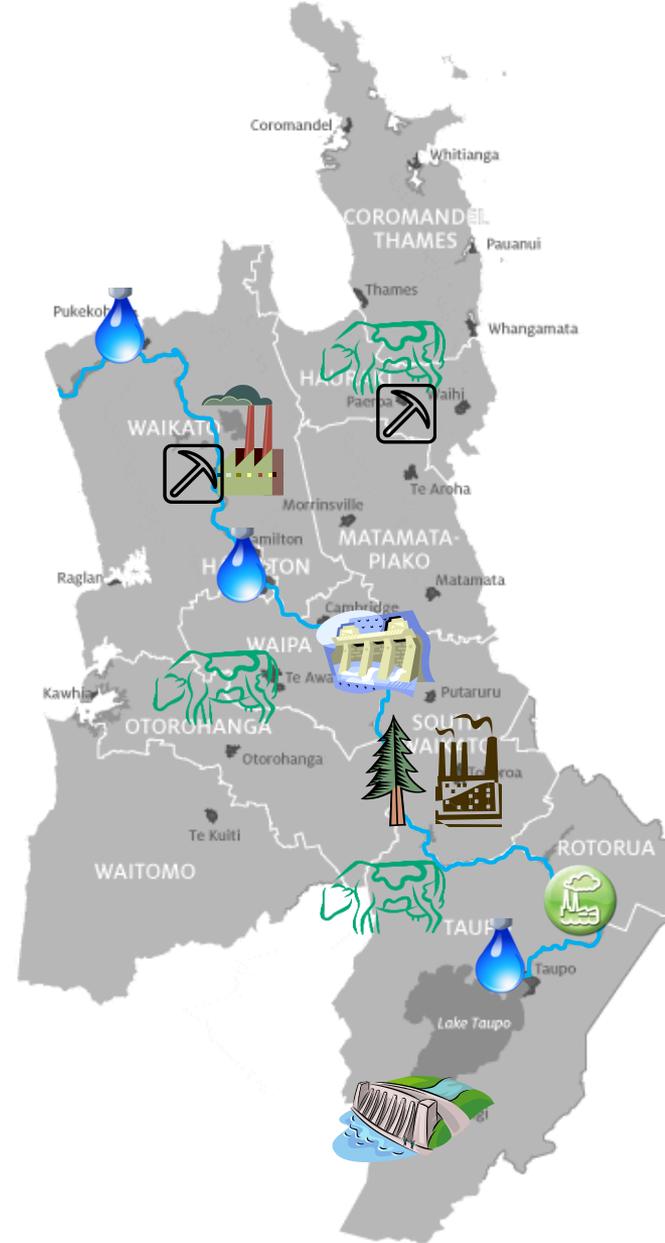
**Geothermal**



**Hydro power stations**



**Tongariro power scheme**

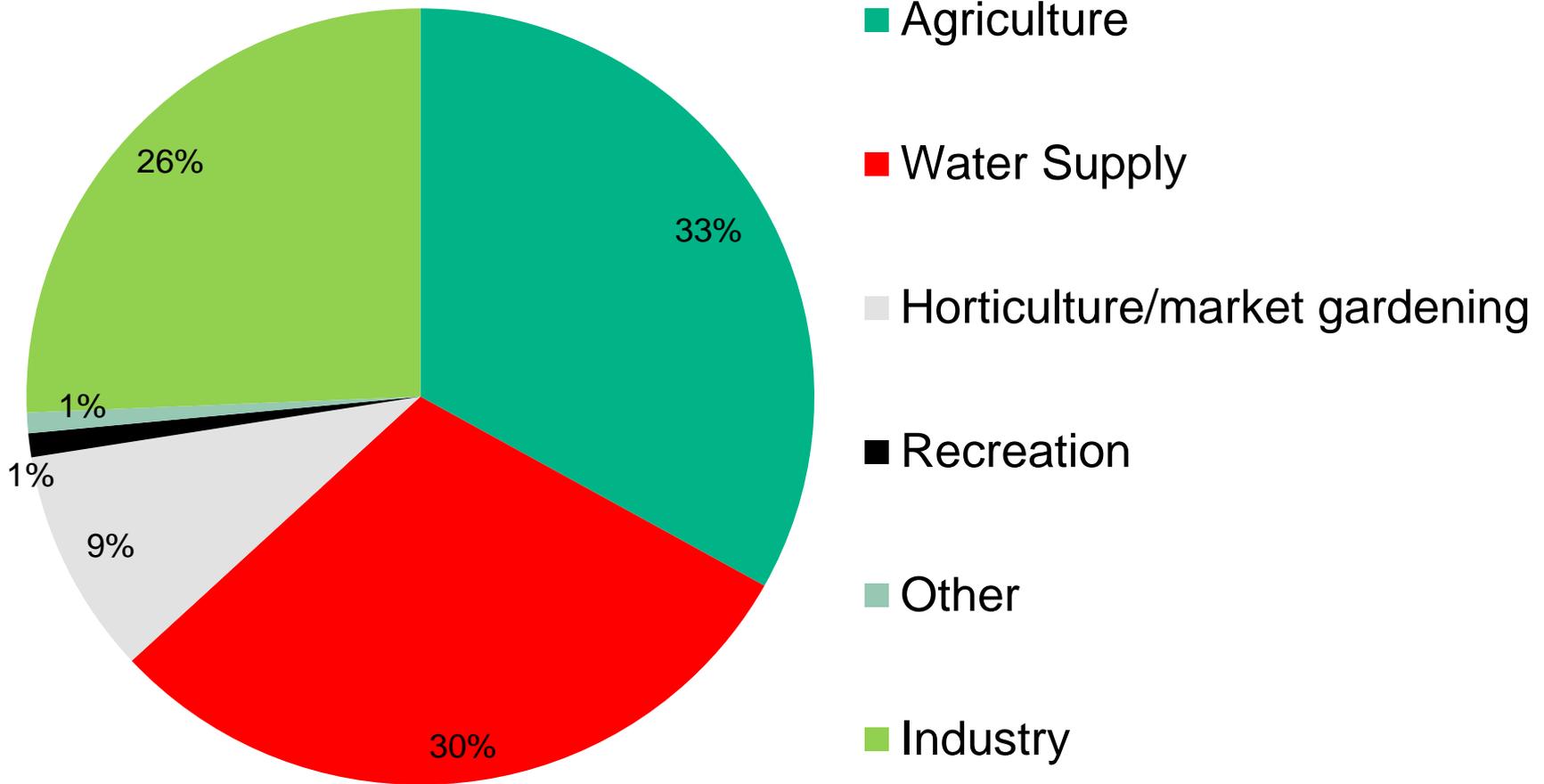


Healthy environment

Strong economy

Vibrant communities

# Fresh water use in Waikato Region



# WRC defined issues pre V6

- 50% of NZ's peak electricity produced in Waikato
- Conflict between demand for irrigation and hydro and little guidance for decision makers
- Some town supplies at risk of losing their allocation on the first in first served basis
- Importance for dairying and horticulture
  - Many of the shed wash and stock water takes have not been properly managed and consented where necessary

# WRC defined issues pre V6

- Many catchments reaching allocation limits but little guidance of how consents should be processed
- No water shortage provisions
- Limited criteria on water use efficiency
- No ability to prioritise applications for the same resource
- Poor understanding of water use due to limited recording of meter readings
- No accounting of net-take
- No government guidance, NPS, NES etc

# Issues from sector point of view

(sectors to list issues here. May take more than one slide)

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# Summary of objectives

- Importance of existing takes to social and economic wellbeing
- Giving effect to the Vision and Strategy to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River
- Availability of water for reasonably justified domestic or municipal supply
- Efficient allocation and use of water
- Protection of water used for the generation of electricity from renewable energy resources
- Protection of Huntly Power Station

# Summary of objectives cont'd

- Sufficient water is retained to safeguard the life supporting capacity of the water bodies
- Allocation decisions need to avoid further degradation of water quality
- Protects aquatic life while providing for human use
- Availability of water for future uses

# Summary of water take limits

- Limits for every catchment set in one table
  - Primary allocable flow – high reliability
  - Secondary allocable flow – lower reliability
  - Water harvesting flow – 10% median flow
- Default allocations applied where no specifically assessed primary allocable flow set
  - Allows allocation without investigating instream needs
- Information on flows available on Council's website
  - Level of cumulative allocation triggers different consent status

# Managing scarce water resource

- Phasing out over allocation
- Rules manage how much water can be taken
- Consent assessment criteria
- Water take recording and reporting
- Consent term generally 15 years
  - Longer terms for municipal supply, large scale industry
- Water shortage
  - Levels of priority established
  - Even takes within limits do not have 100% reliability

# Use of water

- Use of water – separate activity status to the take
  - Irrigation regulated in specified catchments
  - Irrigation water balances required
- Transfer of water permits
  - Downstream transfers permitted
- Water efficiency and water conservation measures

# Groundwater takes

- Allocation framework in relation to groundwater limits established
- Establishing Sustainable Yields (limits)
  - Recognise links with surface water
- Permit small scale takes
- Larger takes discretionary activity up to Sustainable Yield (if listed)
- Non-complying activity for takes greater than Sustainable Yield

# Implications for Māori interest sector

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*Vibrant communities*

# Implications for energy sector

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*Strong economy*  
*Vibrant communities*

# Implications for rural advocacy sector

*Healthy environment*

*Strong economy*

*Vibrant communities*

# Implications for horticulture sector

*Healthy environment*

*Strong economy*

*Vibrant communities*

# Implications for water takes sector

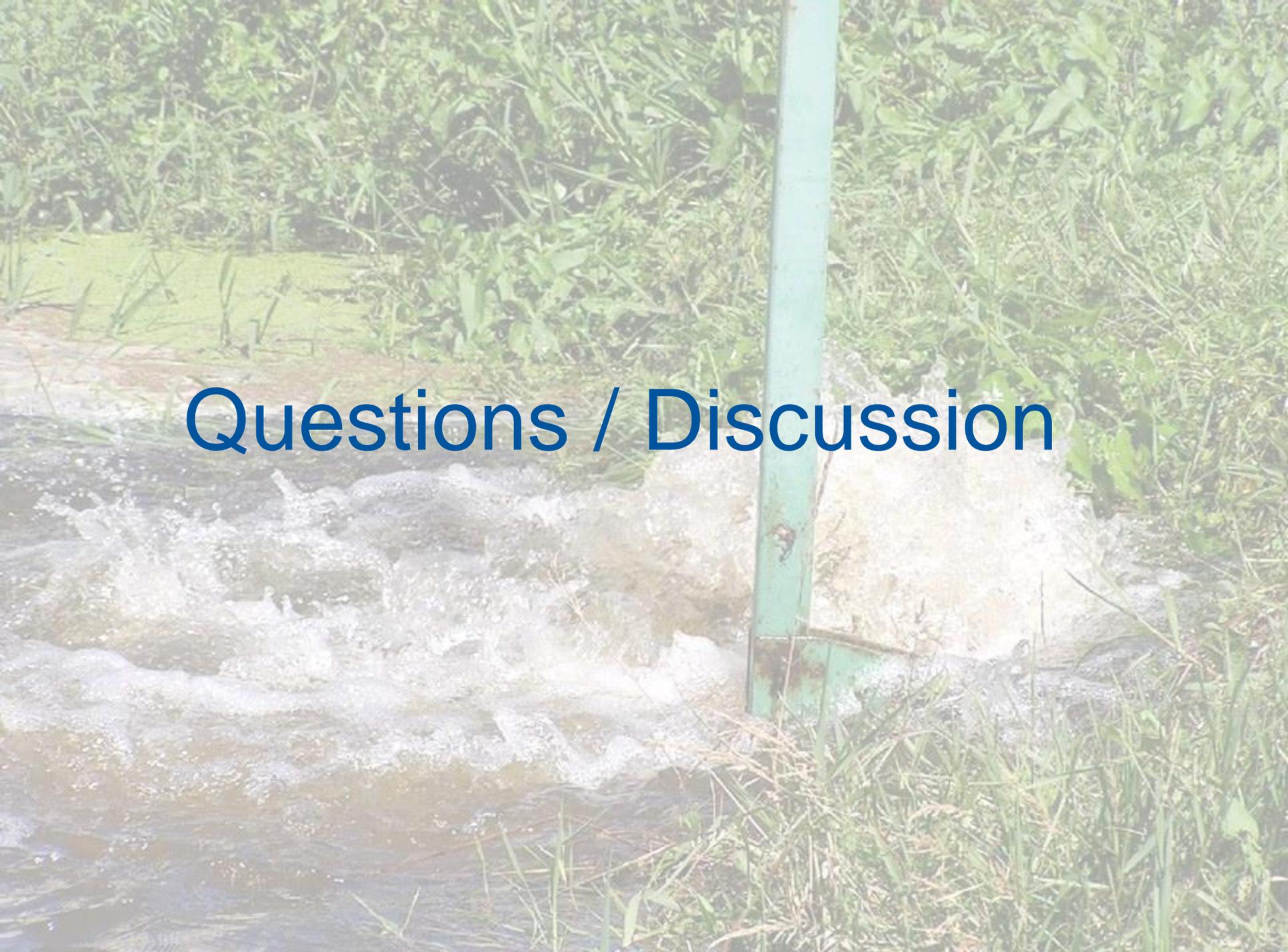
*Healthy environment*

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# Implications for other interests?

*Healthy environment*  
*Strong economy*  
*Vibrant communities*

A photograph showing a green metal pipe or culvert discharging water into a body of water. The water is turbulent and white with foam as it exits the pipe. The surrounding area is filled with lush green grass and other vegetation. The text "Questions / Discussion" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# Questions / Discussion

# Background Information

- The following slides are background information and it is not intended to present them

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# Resource Management Act

Regional Council functions include:

- Control take and use of water and allocate water in a regional plan
- Set minimum flows
- Can allocate capacity of water to assimilate contaminants (water quality limit setting)

# National Guidance

- NPS – Freshwater Management
  - Safeguard life supporting capacity
  - Avoid & phase out over allocation
  - Improve & maximise efficiency of allocation & use of water
- NZ Energy Strategy
  - 90% NZ's electricity generated from renewable sources by 2025
- NPS – Renewable Electricity Generation

# National Guidance cont'd

- Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River
- Water measuring and reporting regulations
- Drinking water regulations
- Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act
  - Applies to Waihou, Piako and Coromandel Catchments

# WRC rationale for Variation 6

- Proposed Waikato Regional Plan received complex appeals on Water Module
  - Not easily resolved via mediation
- Rapid changes in water demand, water use, and legislation
  - Original plan provisions out dated
- In 2003, rather than progress existing chapters in proposed plan WRC started Variation 6 – Water Allocation

# Key dates

- Notified October 2006
- Council Hearings Committee
  - Decision released November 2008
- 37 appeals to Environment Court
  - 9 weeks hearing time - February to August 2011
  - Environment Court's decision released Nov 2011
- Operative April 2012

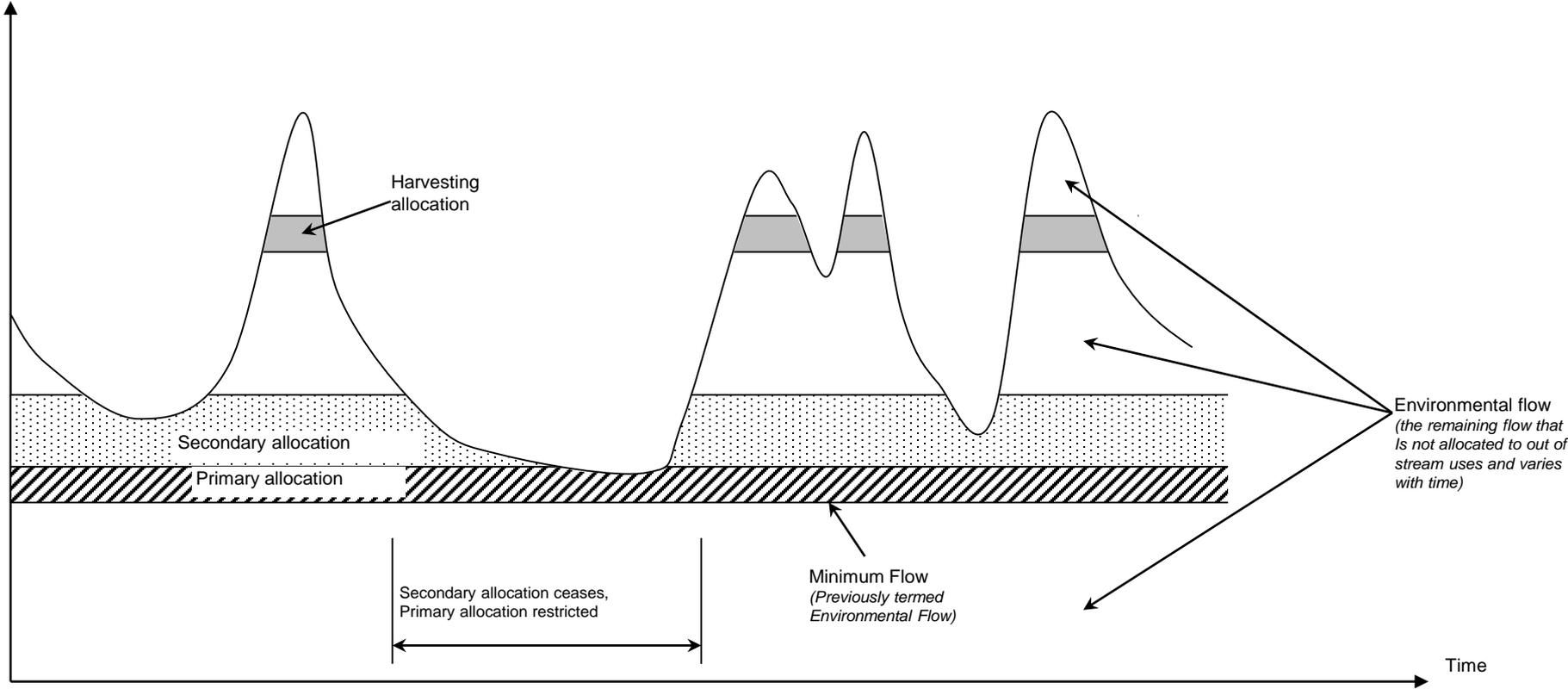
# Plan guidance on establishing limits

- When establishing/reviewing limits consider:
  - Vision & Strategy
  - Water quality
  - Flow regime variability
  - Generation of electricity from renewable energy
  - Benefits of existing & future takes
  - Life supporting capacity of ecosystems
  - Climate change
- Waikato River at Karapiro Dam – limit protects hydro generation



# Surface water allocation regime

Flow



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# Plan guidance on water takes that require consent

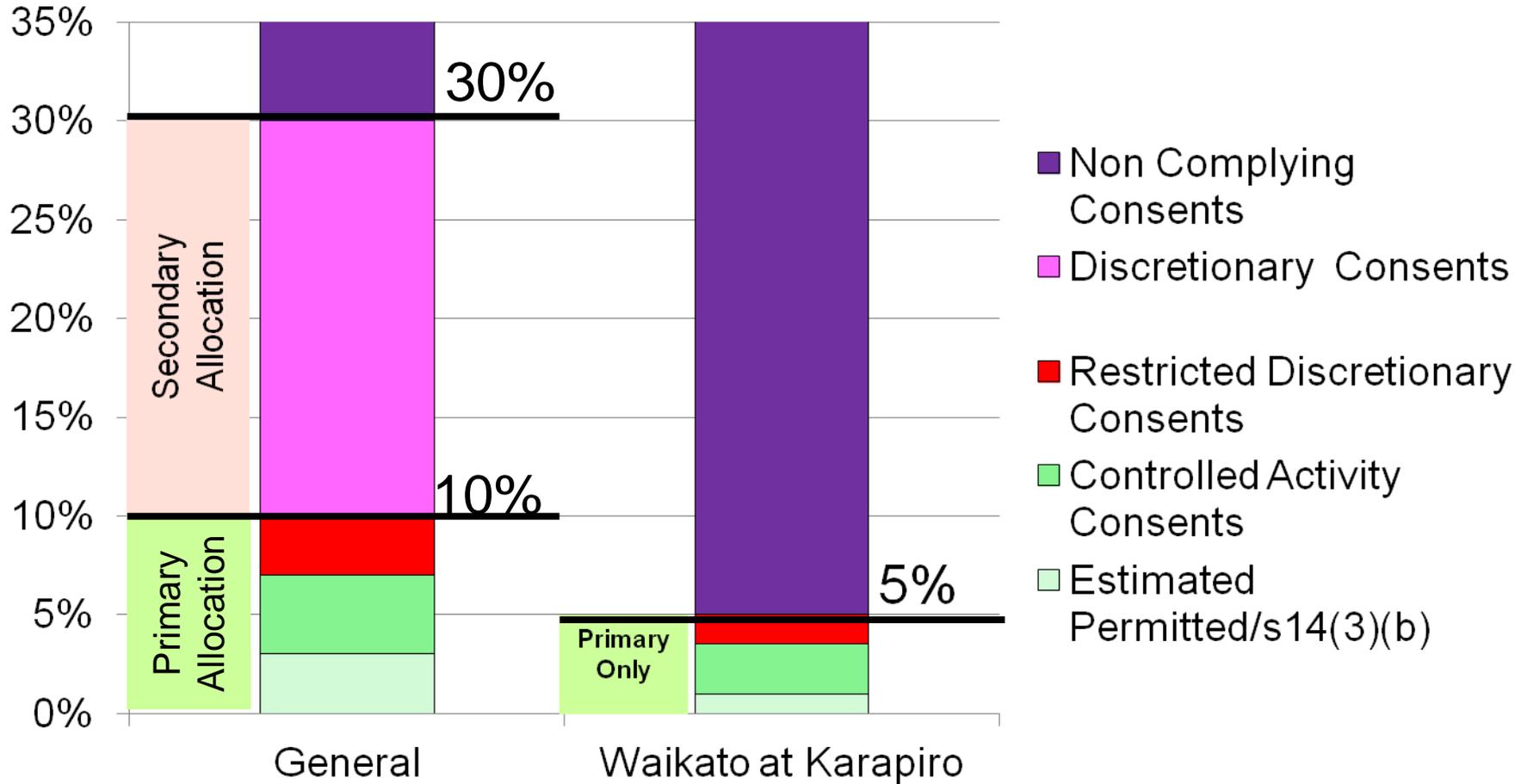
- When water take doesn't exceed limit:
  - Grant on first come basis
  - Consent status depends on allocation level
- Initial allocations - when exceed limits:
  - Generally decline any new take, only exception is for new municipal takes and stock water
  - New municipal / stock takes discretionary activity
  - Grant renewal applied for prior to 2015:
    - Grandparent all authorised existing takes
    - Grandparent all unauthorised dairy shed takes at 2008 levels - require riparian planting, exclude stock

# Plan guidance on water takes that require consent

- When water take consent expires and renewal will exceed limit:
  - Grant existing municipal supply & Huntly Power Station controlled activity
  - Renewal of existing consents discretionary activity, including large scale industry
  - Renewal applied for after 2015 could be reduced or declined in over-allocated catchments

# Consent Status: Surface Water Allocation

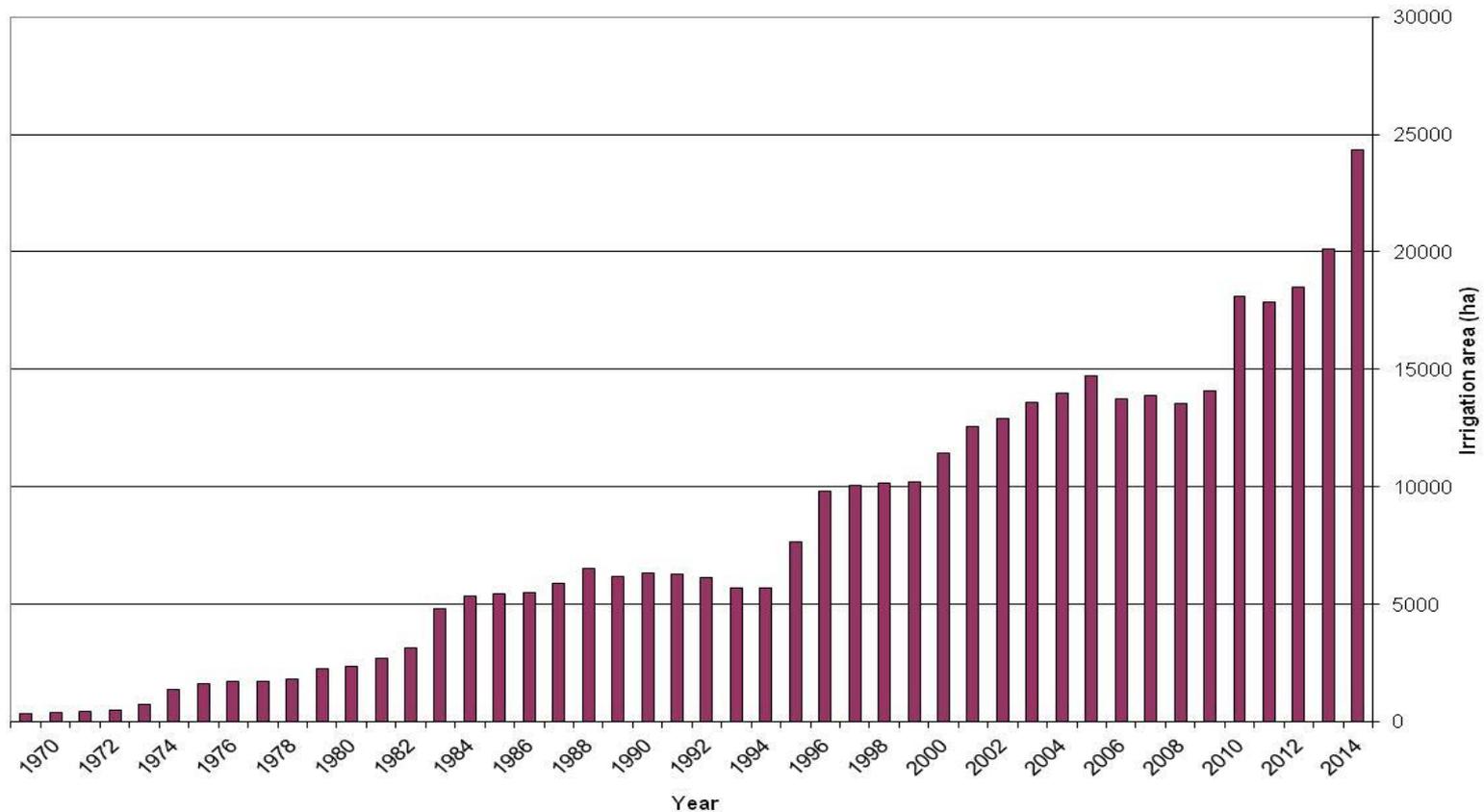
Allocation of catchment defines activity status and process the application will go through



# Summary - Domestic /Municipal

- Favourable consent regime – not constrained by limits
- Must have a Water Management Plan
  - Establishes long term strategy for water requirements
  - Demonstrates need, efficiency & effectiveness
  - Drought management plan
  - Identify large users – industrial/commercial/agricultural
- If no WMP non-complying activity irrespective of allocation level

# Annual growth in land area consented for irrigation in the Waikato region



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# Variation 6 for Horticulture: Strategy

## Horticulture NZ goals going into Variation 6

Maintain access to water to grow food on our current land area

Incentivise efficiency by encouraging water user groups and a harvesting flow

- Recognise non substitutability of water with a different restriction regime
- Have industry internalise their own issues (DSWMC)

# Results

## Negative Impacts

Domestic and municipal supply bundled and prioritised

Industry in town get priority over country industry

Consents provided for over the limit with clawback from existing consented users after 2030

Controlled activity for unauthorised takes

Regime claws back water from existing authorised takes for irrigation after 2030

Some security provided until then

No recognition of survival water need

Heaviest impacted crops restricted first

Accepted argument but not granted (2 subcatchments may have issues)

Removal of secondary allocable flow below Huntly

To restore Health & Wellbeing

Compensation for upstream activity

Compounds effects of other results

Potential financial impact on production value off land by 2030 = \$255M per annum.

Impacts smaller growers more

Main impacts felt in Piako Matamata area (dairy takes) and

Pukekohe / Pukekawa (loss of surface water to municipal and environmental flow).

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# Results

## *Positive*

- Water User Groups recognised
- Harvest flow
- But not enough to preserve security