

Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan

What does it mean?



Hinds Plan Change Summary

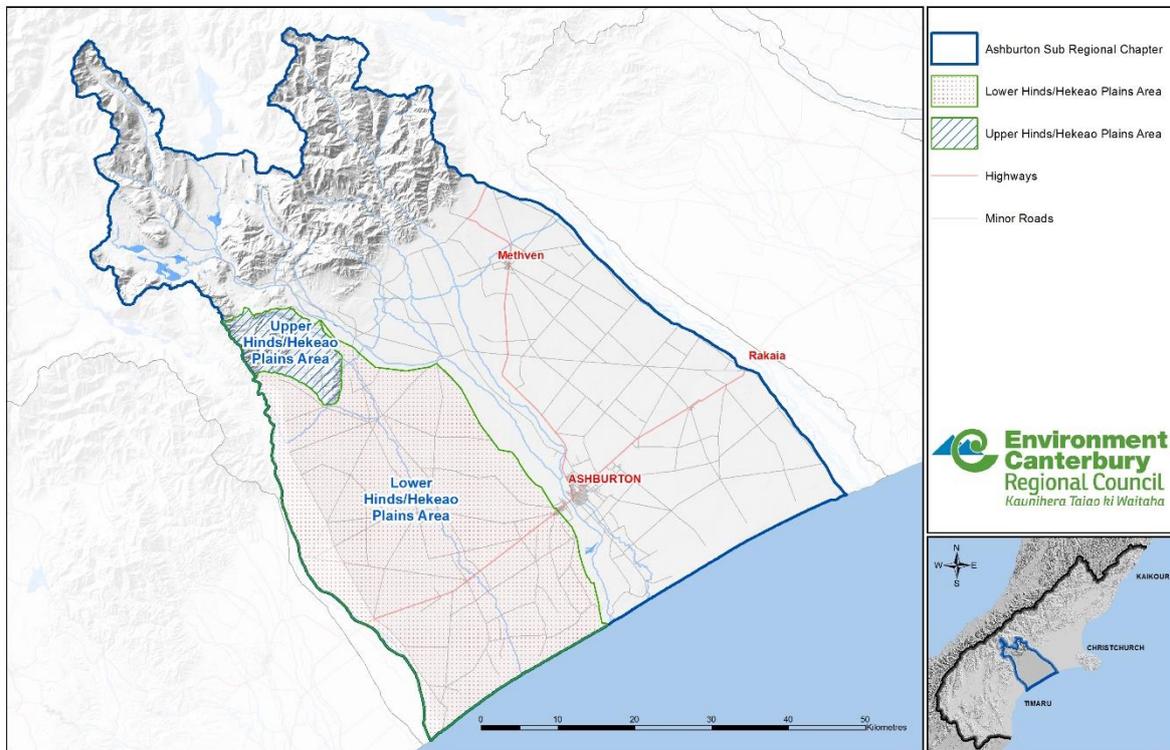
May 2018

The Plan Change forms part of the “solutions package” developed by the Ashburton Zone Committee to achieve outcomes for the Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area.

The solutions package is a combination of statutory actions (a plan change) and non-statutory (“on the ground”) actions. The package will help in delivery of the outcomes in the Ashburton Zone Implementation Programme Addendum (ZIPA).

Area covered by the Hinds Plan Change

The Hinds Plan Change does not apply to the whole Ashburton Zone. It covers the Mayfield-Hinds and Valetta Groundwater Allocation Zones, and the upper catchment that feeds into the north and south branches of the Hinds River/Hekeao.



Ashburton Sub Regional Chapter
Land and Water Regional Plan

Status of provisions

- The Plan Change will become operative on 1 June 2018 and all provisions have full legal effect from this date.
- There have been some changes to the irrigation scheme nutrient management rules through the appeals process, however individual farming rules and water quantity rules have not changed and have been implemented for some time.

Nutrient Management Approach

- In some of the Lower Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area, concentrations of nitrate-nitrogen in shallow groundwater exceed the maximum allowable value (MAV) for drinking water of 11.3mg/L. The Zone Committee set a target nitrate-nitrogen concentration of 6.9mgN/L for shallow groundwater.
- To achieve the 6.9mg/L nitrate-nitrogen target, a 45% reduction in nitrogen losses is required. The Plan Change helps towards this outcome by requiring all farms to operate at good management practice by 2017, and by requiring farms subject to a resource consent to further reduce nitrogen losses by 15% by 2025, 25% by 2030 and 36% by 2035, or until they reduce to 20kg/ha/yr.

Nutrient Management Principles

- **Equitable treatment of all irrigation schemes.** New and existing irrigation schemes/principal water suppliers can apply for a resource consent to discharge nutrients from farming activities.
- **Farms irrigated by an irrigation scheme or principal water supplier are treated equitably compared with farms located outside a scheme area.** Farms in an irrigation scheme are allocated a similar nitrogen loss rate to those located outside an irrigation scheme.
- **Irrigation schemes/principal water suppliers have flexibility in managing nutrient losses within their command area.** Irrigation schemes/principal water suppliers are allocated a nitrogen load, and with limitations, can move nitrogen loss rates from one property to another. Restrictions limit extensive aggregating of nitrogen losses to avoid nitrogen “hotspots”.

Nutrient Management Framework

- The good management practice loss rates that apply in the Hinds/Hekeao Area are not the GMP loss rates estimated by the Farm Portal.
- Stepped reductions in nitrogen loss apply, over time, to farming activities that require a resource consent. These reductions do not apply where the nitrogen loss calculation is less than 20kg/ha/yr.

Upper Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area

Permitted activities

- Farms under 5ha are permitted.
- Farms with nitrogen loss of less than 15kg/ha/yr are permitted, provided the practices in Schedule 24a are implemented.

Farms requiring resource consent

- Farms with nitrogen loss of more than 15kg/ha/yr require a resource consent and must not exceed their nitrogen baseline. Applications for resource consent must be accompanied by a farm environment plan (FEP) and explain how the stepped reductions in nitrogen loss will occur over time (as directed by the policies).

Lower Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area

Farms where the nutrient loss is not managed by an irrigation scheme or principal water supplier.

Permitted activities

- Farms under 5ha are permitted activities.
- Farms with nitrogen loss of less than 15kg/ha/yr are permitted, provided the practices in Schedule 24a are implemented.

Farms requiring resource consent

- Farms with a lower nitrogen loss may apply for a resource consent to increase up to a maximum of 20kg /ha/yr, provided they do not increase by more than 5kg /ha/yr above their nitrogen baseline (i.e. nitrogen baseline of 11kg /ha/yr may apply to increase nitrogen loss to 16kg/ha/yr).
- Farms with nitrogen loss of more than 20kg/ha/yr are limited to their nitrogen baseline.
- Applications for resource consent must be accompanied by a FEP and explain how stepped reductions in nitrogen loss will occur over time.

Irrigation Schemes and Principal Water Suppliers

- These entities can apply for a resource consent to authorise the discharge of nutrients from farming activities within their command area that they supply water to.
- Properties irrigated with water from either of these entities do not require a separate land use consent, provided their nutrient losses are managed by a resource consent held by the scheme.
- Irrigation schemes can manage nitrogen losses from farms supplied (or partially supplied) with water from the scheme.

Nitrogen limits for land irrigated by an irrigation scheme or principal water supplier

- The Plan Change limits the maximum allowable nitrogen loss rate for land irrigated by these entities.
- The Plan Change provides for intensification authorised by existing resource consents held by Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation (BCI) and Rangitata Diversion Race (RDR).

It allocates nitrogen loads to irrigation schemes and principal water suppliers as follows:

Nitrogen load for land irrigated by BCI/RDR but before CRC162882 (BCI, 11 Dec 2015) or CRC121664 (RDR, 26 May 2014) were granted:

- The load is the aggregate of the nitrogen baselines for the land at good management practice. Further reductions in nitrogen loss are required, but no further than 20kg/ha/yr (15% by 2025, 25% by 2030, 36% by 2035).

Nitrogen load for land authorised for irrigation under CRC162882 (09 Sep 2018) or CRC121664 (26 May 2019), where irrigation was established before the relevant consent expired:

- The load is the aggregate of 27kg/ha/yr for all land irrigated before the resource consent expired. No further reductions in nitrogen loss are required.

Nitrogen load for:

- (a) land where irrigation was not established before the expiry of CRC162882 (09 Sep 2018) or CRC121664 (26 May 2019); or
- (b) land not previously irrigated with water by an irrigation scheme or principal water supplier:

- Properties that had a nitrogen loss calculation of 15kg/ha/yr or less at 1 September 2015 can continue to operate up to this limit.
- Properties that had a nitrogen loss calculation between 15kg/ha/yr and 20kg/ha/yr at 1 September 2015 can increase up to 20kg/ha/yr.
- The load for properties with a nitrogen baseline exceeding 20kg/ha/yr is an aggregate of the nitrogen baselines for that land at good management practice. Staged further reductions in nitrogen losses are required (15% by 2025, 25% by 2030, 36% by 3035).

Water Quantity

- In general, new groundwater and surface water takes are prohibited. However, an application for resource consent can be made to swap an existing surface water or stream depleting groundwater take for a deep groundwater take. Consideration of the consent application will be subject to the availability of deep groundwater from the new allocation block.
- Applications to transfer existing water permits (full or partial transfer) may be made provided the point of take remains within the same groundwater allocation zone or surface water catchment. However, if the existing water take is from a surface water body or from the Valetta

Groundwater Allocation Zone then 50% of the water to be transferred is required to be surrendered.

Other Rules

- The Hinds Plan change has introduced an additional condition to the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) regional rule for the use of agrichemicals. It is focussed on clear signage where an agrichemical is being discharged in or near a surface water body.
- The LWRP regional stock exclusion rules also apply to drains in the Hinds/Hekeao Plains area.
- There are some specific rules around the removal of fine sediment from the bed of a river for the sole purpose of habitat restoration.
- Augmenting groundwater and surface water are also provided for by specific rules requiring consent for these activities.

For more information regarding Plan Change 2, check out the canterburywater.farm website or contact the Environment Canterbury Customer Services Team at www.ecan.govt.nz or on 0800 324 636.