



## **HORTNZ FRESH WATER POLICY (Approved - HortNZ Board July 2016)**

1. Horticultural production in all regions of New Zealand is reliant on reliable supplies of fresh water that are suitable for sustained crop production and post-harvest washing and processing. Water is essential for the production of food.
2. Horticulture NZ's position is that:
  - A sufficient quantity of fresh water is a key driver that will ensure the horticulture industry can continue to operate, expand and prosper.
  - Reliability of supply of water in terms of volume, quality and timing is critical for growers and their production. Generally, reliability must be greater than nine in ten years to support high value horticulture.
  - Water is a resource that needs to be managed on a catchment basis, with any transfer occurring within a catchment, and controlled from within each region.
  - Augmentation of supply from storage or artificial recharge needs to be encouraged, supported by the community, and be a priority in at risk catchments where it can be demonstrated that the net benefit to communities is positive.
  - Consents to take water should belong with the land for which they are issued, not the person. Versatile land should not be alienated from water resources.
  - Consents to take water should not be able to be owned by third parties with no direct relation to land.
  - The transfer of consents to take water should not occur without the approval of all parties with a direct and specified interest in the consent.
  - The permanent trading of water consents away from productive land is not supported.
  - The transfer of water allocated by a consent should be limited to within a Water Management Unit and to land owners and productive uses.
  - Water should be allocated efficiently to productive uses through a reasonable use test.
3. Horticulture NZ acknowledges that:
  - Water is a public resource that must be protected, and its allocation and quality managed within limits at an appropriate level for the catchment or location.
  - The instream and cultural values of water need to be recognised.
  - There are many competing users of water; e.g. domestic, livestock, recreation, industry, energy, environmental, cultural as well as its use for crop irrigation and post harvest washing and processing.
4. Horticulture NZ supports appropriate national and regional planning mechanisms for managing the allocation and efficient use of water (including its measurement) in situations where:
  - It is necessary to manage the resource efficiently and sustainably, based on robust scientific measurement. Regulators must use best practice based on good science when formulating catchment and aquifer allocation.

- The measurement, data collection and reporting requirements are relevant, practical, achievable and necessary.
  - Recognition is given to the need to minimise risk through the allocation mechanism.
  - Regulatory costs are minimised.
5. Where as a result of new planning policy that allocates rights and interests to other parties and there is a negative economic impact on horticultural production then appropriate compensation needs to be provided.
  6. Horticulture NZ advocates there should be no further degradation in freshwater values other than by natural or climatic causes. It supports growers working in catchment based partnerships involving: other users, the community and the regulatory authority for the management of fresh water. It is committed to providing the transfer of knowledge required for growers to demonstrate genuine progress towards achieving appropriate improvement targets.
  7. Horticulture NZ supports the use of appropriate industry and public funding for science to research and develop the required models & tools for growers to use on a catchment basis to achieve the necessary water management and quality targets in consultation with their community, other users and regional authorities.
  8. HortNZ does not support resource rentals (taxes) as a feature of an allocation system, however if they are considered the funds should be spent to mitigate or offset the effects of the activities the rental is generated from. The rental should be time bound, administered efficiently and transparently.

*Explanation: the need for simplicity and practicality may preclude the effective implementation of cap and transfer systems. The alternative of resource rentals has been put forward as a more efficient way to manage effects. But the potential for adverse unintended consequences to arise from a rental are high and systems need to be carefully considered in line with the principles in this policy document.*

## **Definitions of terms used in the policy:**

**Allocation** – is the consenting authority’s (e.g. Regional or Unitary Authority) formal process of deciding the volume and description of the resource (e.g. from surface water body or ground water aquifer) and then consenting applications within the limit of the resource.

**Consent to take water** – The right to take and use water as granted through a consent approval process. This is sometimes referred to colloquially as a “permit”. (Under the old Soil and Water Act they were referred to as “privileges”)

**Transfer** – changing the description of the place of use of a right to use water from one location to another or one right holder to another. This may be for a part or a whole of the right and can be seasonal, temporary or permanent. All rights to use water describe the name of the holder of the right and the location of the take and use points. If this is to change the right must be transferred to the new owner or point of take and use. Transfers must be approved by the allocating body.

**Trading** – selling the right to use water either through a formal or informal market. The trade could be for seasonal, temporary or permanent ownership change. Trading is a subset of transfer.