

## CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

*The work volumes for the Natural Resources and Environment team are increasing as the regulatory and research environment changes especially in relation to water quantity and quality. Outlined below are some of the objectives that are a focus for the department.*

### **Prioritisation of projects**

Currently a reactive approach is being taken to regulatory processes and related projects as they arise. A new strategic framework is being developed to prioritise work under certain criteria to ensure that the most important issues for the industry are given precedence.

Appendix A and B outline the process of prioritisation of projects. Appendix A is a prioritisation matrix to help gauge how important a project (or RMA process) is to the industry. This takes into account economic factors and whether the process is precedent setting. It is quite a broad brush to give an indication of the priority a project and/or statutory process should be given. We would be interested in your views on whether the levels are set appropriately. Weightings for each question are in the third column. Following this initial analysis projects will be put through the decision tree in Appendix B this will help to define projects that will not be undertaken at a national level (the CEO has the opportunity to 'veto' any decision to not undertake a project or process). If a project is to be undertaken but there is not enough funding the decision tree allows for leveraging funding from other parties. If this cannot be raised, however, a project may not be done. If projects are not going to be carried out at the national level this will be communicated to the interested/affected parties as soon as possible to ensure they have an opportunity to undertake that process/project should they so choose.

### **Key priorities for the NRE team**

**Below are the five key areas of work for the NRE team in the future we would welcome your feedback on these or any suggestions you may have on these priorities**

#### **1. Grower engagement and education on the NPS**

One of the priorities for the team is to upskill growers so they are prepared to take part in the collaborative processes. This will help representation of horticulture at a regional level and ensure growers understand the complex issues in freshwater management and can effectively take a leading role in the process. It is important that farmers are aware of and involved in collaborative processes and appear alongside Horticulture New Zealand in hearings and mediations. Whilst Horticulture New Zealand can represent growers, it is individual growers perspectives on the rules and how they may affect their business that Councils really need to hear.



## 2. Good Management Practice, the proof and the system

It has become clear that defining Good and Best Management Practices for horticultural farming systems and being able to quantify the effectiveness of these practices is vital in the planning process. Developing Codes of Practice such as the Nutrient Management Code of Practice for Vegetable Growers, the Glasshouse Nutrient Discharge Code of Practice, Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines and NZGAP (and other GAP) tools to benchmark, audit and report environmental metrics for growers is key. Supporting the development of capacity in the field of agronomic consulting on good management practice and training for growers, auditors and farm advisors is a key focus.



## 3. Science and research

Underpinning the Good Management Practice with relevant science is integral. The regional planning process in relation to freshwater requires science and research to ensure decisions are effects based and well informed. Supporting the development of on-farm modelling tools such as OVERSEER and working with regional councils to develop robust models for catchment planning and management is a priority.



The need to provide economic evidence based on grower case studies to show the effects of proposed rules is increasingly a requirement of the planning process. Economic information is very effective when portraying industry impacts of rules in relation to water management.

Other studies required for RMA processes include;

- Spatial mapping of production potential for horticulture (soils, water, infrastructure);
- Water demand studies (Auckland, Western Bay of Plenty);
- Catchment Management Plans;
- Irrigation efficiency;
- Effectiveness of soil conservation methods( Don't muddy the waters project);
- Nutrient management performance (Rootzone Reality Project);
- Plant nutrient requirements;
- Defining natural capital and high value land resource – quantifying the effect of subdivision on horticulture;
- Discharge control (covered crops);
- Discharge control - washwater
- Noise output of frost protection devices.

## 4. RMA – consistency in approach

A policy manual is being developed to help ensure a consistent approach nationally. A set policy for differing issues that are related to horticulture is required. There are significant cost and training benefits from doing this, as well as the opportunity to use these for the development of national standards and rules. It also futureproofs the NRE team from losing industry knowledge.



## 5. Communications

A communications plan for the department is under development. The aim of this is to ensure growers and affiliates are aware of statutory processes that may affect them. The communications plan will also

- highlight the issues that growers must be aware of;
- simplify complex regulation so growers understand how it affects them;
- advise which regional and district plans are going on and how it will affect growers;
- celebrate the wins and describe the challenges faced by the NRE team on behalf of growers



The NRE team is working with the HortNZ communications team to not only utilise existing channels of communication around RMA issues (such as the website and newsletters) but also develop other channels such as social media and videos to help convey complex messages on RMA processes to growers.

Please provide your feedback on this document to Eve Williams – [eve.williams@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:eve.williams@hortnz.co.nz) before the next Horticultural Forum on 3 December 2015. Thanks for your input!

		Total	Comments
Does it have national/regional or local significance OR does it set a national precedent?	1 - Local only      5 - Regional      10 - National	10	
What is the potential negative industry/social impact?	1 - Low impact on growers/ community - economically      3 - Medium impact - growers' bottom line affected but can still turn a profit      5 - High impact - direct effect on growers' ability to grow and be sustainable economically	5	
What is the strategic importance of the project in relation to achieving the 10/2020 strategy goal?	1 Value of project not directly relative to strategic goals      3 Value of project indirectly (but potentially significantly) helps to achieve strategic goals      5 Value of project directly enhances the industry's ability to achieve the strategic goals	5	
What number of growers are affected, either directly or indirectly?	1 <100      15 >200	15	
Dollar impact	1 <\$100,000      10 \$5,000,000 +	10	
What are the reputational implications for HortNZ?	1 Low impact.      3 Medium impact - some negative media      5 Serious threat to HortNZ's reputation and levy base	5	
Do the growers have a common view and can we establish a mandate?	1 No common view - growers completely divided      5 More than 50% of growers with a common view      10 Total agreement	10	
		<b>60</b>	

