



## **New Zealand's Approach to Integrated Freshwater Management with a Focus on Indigenous Interests**

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### Abstract

This report focuses on New Zealand's freshwater reform efforts since 2009. My research includes 1) documenting the collaborative processes to the development of policy advice led by the Land and Water Forum; 2) researching how the collaborative governance decision-making process is developing in New Zealand at the catchment level; and 3) assessing the role of iwi/hapū in water governance, including the challenges and resource needs for effectively engaging at the regional level. I describe the key institutions and actors shaping and constraining New Zealand's freshwater reform discussions, and review the status of Crown/iwi discussions on rights and interests in freshwater. My research contains three regional-level case studies (Waikato, Gisborne, and Wellington), based on semi-structured interviews, to assess how indigenous perspectives are being incorporated into the freshwater governance and management processes. I also present a United States - based example of collaborative indigenous co-management as a point of comparison. Key findings and recommendations to strengthen a bi-cultural approach to integrated water management include: central government demonstrating clear leadership and support of regional efforts; expanding local capacity and national-level infrastructure; facilitating greater understanding and dialogue about different world views; and promoting support tools for collaborative processes.