

NOTES FROM THE RESOURCE CONSENT CONSISTENCY WORKSHOP HELD AT THE RYDGES HOTEL, 75 FEATHERSTON STREET, WELLINGTON, 23 AUGUST, 2013

PRESENT:

Keith Pedley	ADG Mechanical
Brian Sharman	AECOM New Zealand Limited
Matt Savage	Apex Environmental
Yasenko Krpo	Auckland Council
Pete Thomas	Auckland Council
Dukessa Blackburn-Huettner	Auckland Council
Steven Couper	AWT Water Limited
Sarah Sunich	AWT Water Limited
Iqbal Indris	Capacity Infrastructure Limited
Piotr Swierczynski	Capacity Infrastructure Limited
Michael Hannah	Cardno
Hywel Edwards	CH2M Beca
Rachael Shaw	CH2M Beca
Nick Eynon-Richards	CHH
Murray Parish	CHH
Mike Bourke	Christchurch City Council
John Moore	Christchurch City Council
Peter Ross	Clutha District Council
Tara Okan	DCM Process Control Ltd
Iain Peffers	Downer New Zealand
David Wilson	Downer New Zealand
Karen Sannazzaro	Dunedin City Council
Rachel East	Dunedin City Council
Jacqui Horswell	ESR Ltd
Ruben Wylie	Far North District Council
Hamish Anderson	GHD Limited
Ognjan Kralj	GHD Limited
Sarah Dowling	Gore District Council
Mike Bedford	Greater Wellington Regional Council
Erin Ganley	Greater Wellington Regional Council
Sylvia Hubbard	Green Acres Waiheke
Anita Simpson	Harrison Grierson Consultants Ltd
Wally Potts	Horowhenua District Council
Brent Hawthorn	Innoflow Technologies NZ Ltd
Hamish Lowe	LEI
Hamish Waugh	Manawatu and Rangitikei District Council
James Li	Masterton District Council
Graham Robertson	Matamata-Piako District Council
Paul Prendergast	Ministry of Health
Rob Loeffering	MWH NZ Ltd
Paul Dunford	Napier City Council
Kimberley Hope	New Plymouth District Council
Craig Redmond	NZTA

John Crawford
Rob Blakemore
Roger MacGibbon
Wendy Turvey
Sandy Ormiston
Shane Allen
Rob Green
Mike Monaghan
John Harding
Peter Keller
Desmond Scrimgeour
Mark Poynter
Dr M E U (Michael) Taylor QSO
Alison Lowe
Roger Hardy
Ali Johnstone
Matt Conway
Andrew Pascoe
Mark Allingham
Emily Grace
Ashneel Ambedkar
Fauzeem Farhaaz
Michael Pashke
David Voss
Gerard Cleary
Rebecca Fox
Nicci Wood
Santha Gunasantha
Mark Collinson

Opus International Consultants Limited
Opus International Consultants Limited
Opus International Consultants Limited
Opus International Consultants Limited
Ormiston Associates
Palmerston North City Council
Palmerston North City Council
Palmerston North City Council
PHE Consulting
Porirua City Council
Porirua City Council
Poynter & Associates Environmental Ltd
Private
Rotorua District Council
Scott Technical Instruments Ltd
Silver Fern Farms Ltd
Simpson Grierson
South Waikato District Council
South Wairarapa District Council
Tonkin & Taylor Ltd
Van Den Brink Poultry
Van Den Brink Poultry
Veolia Water Solutions & Technologies NZ Ltd
Voss Infrastructure Consulting
Waimakariri District Council
Water IT
Wellington City Council
Whakatane District Council
Xylem Water Solutions New Zealand Ltd

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nick Walmsley
Murray Gibb
Cherish Low
Amy Aldrich

Water New Zealand
CEO - Water New Zealand
Water New Zealand
Water New Zealand

1. Point Source Discharge Consents: Costly, Unachievable, Inflexible and Inconsistent – Presented by Sarah Sunnich, Steve Coupler – AWT

The presentation began with a brief introduction to AWT and what they do, followed by two different case studies that demonstrated how Point source discharge consents were costly, unachievable, inflexible and inconsistent.

Summary:

- Not only are there inconsistencies and anomalies with consent condition requirements between regions but also within regions.
- Where non-compliance has not been addressed through enforcement, this is often later dealt with through the development of costly monitoring, overly prescriptive and operationally inflexible conditions.
- Limitations in technical resources and understanding by the regulator can result in unachievable treatment and operational requirements.

- Consents are increasing in length and complexity. Can consents be simplified to ensure better compliance?
- Can greater consistency be achieved through the national development of template conditions, providing regulators guidance on parameters to be applied, sampling locations, collection and analysis?
- Are there simpler more cost effective monitoring techniques available to reduce inconsistencies and uncertainties inherent with sampling?
- Are mass load limits more appropriate than concentration limits for nutrients?
- Can greater consistency be achieved through nationalisation of regulatory functions of discharges?

Comments/Questions and Answers:

Q: Was the Regional council aware of any of all of the discrepancies?

A: Don't think so. It came clear, particularly for plant A, where they attempted to put a more stringent ammonium limit that AWT had to remind them of what some of the other plants they were allowing to discharge in the environment. Through that process, they managed to gain some relaxation in the effluent quality limit.

Q: For those case studies, was there an impact from the length of time that passed, and tighter standards being imposed?

A: It is arguably dependent on the individual resource consents officer.

Q: Was there any change in the plan during the time that each of those consents were created? If those consents conditions were not achievable/practical, how many of those consents were appealed upon granting?

A: Both of those plants would have been through the transitional phase as the RMA was implemented and then had proposed plans put forward. There was no appeal in either case. The client worked with the regulator to achieve consent conditions. If you are a larger organisation then yes, you would appeal against those conditions, but smaller industries find it more difficult and costly to contest conditions so often go along with conditions that are unrealistic.

C: Typically, when the consent authority is ready to issue conditions, they are presented to the applicant for comment/review.

Q: How would the nationalisation of regulatory functions be operated? Who would coordinate the nationalisation of regulatory functions? There used to be the National Water and Soil Conservation Authority. This looked after all of the catchment boards in the country. They used to get together twice a year to ensure they were all working to the same standards. This eventually got dumped. A big problem is that there are a lot of administrators with no scientific background and no understanding of the fundamentals. Who would be recommended to administer the nationalisation of regulatory functions? Another issue is that many of the points identified in the presentation show a failure to identify the purpose of the resource consent in the first place.

A: A centralised EPPA arrangement would be most appropriate. It doesn't work when there are multiple agencies trying to develop consents in isolation. The core of the RMA wasn't really driven by scientists wanting to protect the environment, it was driven more by the planning laws.

C: If the environment can only receive a certain amount of waste, so if there are 3 or 4 plants discharging into the same environment, you should expect to have stricter conditions.

A: In those situations, then the mass load limits should be carefully considered. It should be based on the science.

C: There are instances in New Zealand where maximum limits have been imposed on discharge environments. Consents that have followed have been proportioned to the maximum limits.

C: Review conditions are often useful in arguing applications through council. Review conditions can include monitoring that can result in condition relaxation or becoming stricter.

C: The carrying capacity of the discharge environment is an artefact. The only perfect environment is one where no discharges occur, so in the end a value judgement needs to be made. There's a

scientific test and there's a value judgement test to be applied, but they often get confused and they try and hide value judgements that may not be acceptable to the majority of the community in the form of 'clever science'.

C: The Wastewater Monitoring Guidelines acknowledges value judgement both in relation to the environment, to the science and also the community's relationship and expectations.

C: The cost/benefit needs to also be considered. What is the point in acquiring something that's very expensive, if it doesn't balance the benefit.

C: The cost/benefit should come into the section 32 analysis when the plan is being made. It's supposed to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness. Cost/benefit comes into the efficiency. The Minister for the Environment is very keen on seeing section 32 improve to involve more economic analysis in it.

C: There is no formal training for resource consent officers. They come from a wide variety of scientific and technical backgrounds. Quite often, very few have had any formal training, rather learning on the job.

2. Consent Consistency – Method of Measurement Defining Compliance – Presented by John Crawford – OPUS

The presentation outlined several issues surrounding resource consents and demonstrated multiple inconsistencies across different resource consents and within single consents. Measurement issues and potential solutions were also discussed.

Summary:

- Adequate investigation resourcing. Can we agree some common and consistent measurement methods?
- Care and consistency in condition drafting.
- Have the designer, owner & operator in mind.
- Try to keep it simple.

Comments/Questions and Answers:

C: In terms of opportunity to make a difference nationwide, the Ministry for the Environment has announced a national objectives framework in the freshwater space coming up. This is to link what the community might decide is swim ability to an actual number. We are the experts in saying what sort of a number should be in that national objectives framework. There could be an opportunity in the future for this organisation to get involved in the national objectives framework.

Q: With regard to the particular resource consents that were discussed. How have the conditions changed over time? Which consent was issued first? Hopefully we are going through a process of continual improvement, therefore, inconsistency of conditions would be.....?

A: Through 19 years of experience with resource consents, over this period of time the conditions have changed significantly. Throughout the years, there has been emphasis on different aspects such as phosphorus, ammonia and nitrogen. Over time, the conditions are changing in terms of the parameters which have been looked at but they are also improving alongside the technology.

Q: With all the monitoring data that is being collected, is there experience of regulatory requirements that actually do anything with it, ie; process or analyse it? If yes, has that made any difference over time to the type of conditions or choice of monitoring conditions adopted, and if not, would it?

A: It has been very difficult to obtain coherent sets of monitoring data from regional councils for similar activities in their area. If the data were available, it would make things a lot easier as it would give a clearer picture where other consents were sitting and how other activities are performing. One of those issues with obtaining those coherent sets results are the different ways in which they are measured which makes it very difficult for comparison.

C: If the regional authorities did do this analysis it might help them clarify their approach.

Q: Why can't this be done nationally? If you can collect the data regionally, you can collect it nationally. Is it a valid approach?

A: Yes, if appropriate assistance is given. This is potentially a way forward. We may be able to do something independent of the regional councils and then eventually get them on board.

C: Regionally, if you get the councils to report the data to the public, the information is therefore nationally available, however it's a question of who collates it?

3. Percentile Standards: Rationale, Implementation and a Few Misconceptions – Presented by Nick Walmsley on behalf of Graham McBride – NIWA

Nick Walmsley gave the presentation on behalf of Graham McBride, who was unable to attend the workshop. The Presentation explored percentile standards which were followed up by several examples.

Summary:

- Percentile standards' compliance rules should be derived
- from requirements on percentiles of time
- Simplest compliance rules are based on number of
- exceedances of a percentile limit in a required number of
- samples in an assessment period
- You must adopt (and should state) a burden-of-proof
 - permissive, even-handed, precautionary
- Can infer breach before the end of the assessment period
- Simple! (Lookup tables and graphs)

Comments/Questions and Answers:

C: We got into Bayesian statistics because all of the earlier work that we did were based on classical statistics requirements in which you have to take random samples. However, when you look at a river, it is not random. There are a number of specific characteristics of the river that you can take into account and Bayesian statistics allows you to use prior knowledge of the way in which a system works. That's why all of the drinking water standards were based on Bayesian statistics.

Q: Does that logic apply to wastewater and stormwater discharges which will have a different distribution and concentrations compared to rivers.

C: As well as the statistics used, the effects and consequences also need to be taken into account. A different confidence level will be needed in different environments, ie; drinking water, stormwater and wastewater.

4. Inappropriate Setting of Measurements without Understanding the Instrument Accuracy or Measurement Protocols - Presented by Roger Hardy – Scottech Instruments

The presentation with an introduction into Scottech Instruments and what they do, followed on by their relationship with Regional Council's and identifying where issues arise.

Summary:

- We don't get involved in judging the suitability of consent conditions, but,
- We do not believe councils understand the practicalities for continuous water quality data. Natural variations of water quality can be very large, and these do not seem to be reflected in consent conditions. Percentile limits would be superior to absolute limits in these cases.
- It seems likely that there is a lack of experience with the norms of continuous water quality data. Possibly much of the data they are looking at is from close to outputs of catchments (ie heavily damped). When operating closer to pollution sources, both natural and manmade, very different norms exist. These norms do not seem to be reflected in the consents that we have seen.

- A proportion of councils flow data (that consents are based on) is based on a historic record that could be considerably improved by use of newer technology. Some bridge based flow measurements, could be improved by measurements in open water. It is likely that a number of business operations are restricted by this practice.
- These issues seem to currently be dealt with by a variable approach to enforcement rather than solid understanding.

Comments/Questions and Answers:

Q: Is there more science and rigour with the larger Regional councils than the smaller Regional Councils? Ie; more consistency?

A: It depends on the dynamics in a team within a regional council. There are some councils that are much better resourced than others, eg; ECAN, ARC, Manawatu. They have resources both in science and in monitoring that are much bigger than other councils, but there is no real consistency with those councils any more or less because of their resources.

C: On the Land & Water New Zealand website there is a lot of promulgated environment monitoring standards, one of them being turbidity. They have been promulgated by the regional councils without a lot of consultation with the wider industries. What are the applicability of those standards?

C: The method that the regional council might use may not be appropriate for a consent holder. Small peak discharges are very different now than what they used to be. These days, there is a consistent feed into a river as opposed to periodic discharges, so the baseline is very different today than what they were 20-30 years ago. Regional councils need to adapt their monitoring to suit the different levels of baseline pollution.

Q: Is there is an exponential point at which the cost of monitoring goes up?

A: Yes there is. They have adopted standards that the Regional councils have set. In a consent holders situation, that level of accuracy is not required. The important thing is to do the appropriate measurement for the appropriate situation.

Q: Is there any merit in developing a national point of view that is monitored and run from an organisation such as NIWA?

A: There are international standards around flow and turbidity measurement. For instance, the turbidity measurement that the regional councils have chosen is based on an iso-standard, but that iso-standard is primarily made for lab use and does not produce good measurement in the natural environment. It needs to be adaptive. A common reference point or set of standards would be beneficial.

5. Problems with Consent Limits for Small Wastewater Treatment Plants – Presented by John Harding – Ministry of Health

The presentation explored the issues around consent limits for small wastewater treatment plants and discussed the Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme (SWSS), followed by some examples.

Summary:

- The 10 year SWSS programme has interfaced with almost all of the regional and unitary councils Various competencies in the setting of discharge consent conditions have been noted
- It should be understood that deprived small communities have small budgets. It is always a challenge to provide affordable treatment/disposal solutions for these communities
- During the life of the SWSS the Ministry of Health's Subsidy Desk always encouraged fit for purpose, cost effective and sustainable solutions
- Consent conditions should be effects based, sensible and supported by good science

- Regional council consent officers would often benefit from a better understanding of wastewater treatment methods and costs, including the management of wet weather flows
- Consent officers should never go 'up the pipe' and prescribe treatment methods
- Good consent officers need to have tertiary level water quality science training and understand the relative importance of non-point source pollution (ie the 'big picture')

Comments/Questions and Answers:

Q: The training provided to the Health Protection officers, does the Ministry have any intention of spreading this training to the wider community/councils?

A: There are not enough resources to do so.

Q: Has there ever been similar training for resource consent officers?

A: No. NZWETA offers a training course called Principals and Trends in Wastewater Treatment. The course attracts a wide variety of people, some of whom are consent officers. The course is a four day quick overview of wastewater that includes some site visits. This is probably all the training that a lot of consent officers receive.

6. Significant Adverse Effects...What does it all Mean? – Presented by Rob Green – Palmerston North City Council

The presentation covered a specific example in the Manawatu region where resource consent inconsistencies presented a large issue for the Palmerston North City Council.

Summary:

- Issue has been allowed to develop a momentum of its own
- All stems back to a single officer's interpretation of a benthic report
- No previous non-compliances of condition 3(f)
- Seems that goal posts have shifted in terms of what was expected under the original consent
- Do reviews impinge on the property rights associated with consents?
- Poor processes followed as consent reviews are not commonplace
- All costs passed on to PNCC from regulator
- Regulatory matters were initially played out in the media
- Implications of inconsistent approaches to compliance assessment are potentially very large (up to \$20m for PNCC)
- Political involvement in regulatory processes
- New Manager at Regulator is committed to building relationship with PNCC
- Dealing with these matters is resource intensive
- Commissioners will ultimately decide whether there are significant adverse effects under Section 107 of the RMA

Comments/Questions and Answers:

Q: Referring to the last bullet point – is there an expectation to have any significant input into choosing the calibre of the commissioners?

A: Horizons will be choosing the commissioners however, comments and input from Palmerston North City Council has been welcomed.

Q: When abatement notices are issued, it's supposed to come with specific requirements. In this instance, were these requirements given? Or did the PNCC have to go back and request them?

A: The abatement notice stated to stop discharge entirely – it did not say how to do so.

Q: Why was there no objection to condition 3(f)?

A: There was a lot of discussion around the 18 day accrual period during the hearing process. A lot of that information was in the decision, but a way of assessing 3(f) was implicit but not explicit for the consent. As time moved on and different consent officers got involved, that information has become lost.

Q: Did Palmerston North City Council become involved at all in the one plan development process?

A: Yes, on the basis that they had the consent until 2028. Palmerston North is fully expecting to comply within 15 years' time. They did engage but not with the urgency they might have had they known that this would occur.

7. Why Consent Land Treatment Systems? – Presented by Hamish Lowe – LEI

The presentation touched on land treatment definitions, policy process and development, skills in the industry, conditions, compliance, and changes to operation.

Summary:

- Definitions – are we talking about the same thing?
- Are there skills – to design, regulate, manage, monitor, interpret
- Conditions – we all need to take responsibility
- Compliance – who takes action and leads the charge; is this risk management?
- Changes – how do we manage seasonal variability, greater information and more certainty?
- Emergency – what can we plan for? What should we plan for?
- Environmental perfection – is there such a thing given dollars and technology available?

Comments/Questions and Answers:

Q: Is there any scope to discuss trading schemes?

A: Yes. The Horizons generated one plan document has created a large stir. There are some issues in it which some industries don't agree, but one of the good things that it has done is open their eyes to what is the capacity of the receiving environments and what is the capacity of, not just the capacity of a particular discharge, but a large part of that catchment. It has enabled us to be able to look at the quota of nutrients that can go in from a number of sources. This gives us an opportunity to look at where the contributions can come within that catchment. It's a really good start and is very similar approach to other countries' approach.

C: The RMA isn't about environment perfection. It's about sustainable development which includes taking into account environment, economic and social effects.

C: As people that are advising or involved in a wastewater system, when the decision making process is reached, we are looking for the most practical option which takes into account all factors.

Unfortunately a lot of the people being dealt with are only focussed on one aspect. It's a balancing act. The RMA provides the opportunity to look for the best practical option but that message is sometimes not communicated to some of the stakeholders that are focussed on one element.

Q: Is public consultation effective?

A: The public consultation process is very important aspect. The community have to realise that it's not the only decision making factor.

8. Workshop Feedback

The attendees were divided up into sub-groups to workshop specific issues raised and then present back to the group as a whole.

Workshop Questions:

1. What issues have yet to be raised? Examples?
2. What are the top 5 issues to solve and why?
3. What can be done to create improvements?
4. In order to create improvements, who should be:
 - Communicated with?
 - Trained?
5. What do you think should happen next?

Group one:

1. ANZECC (other guidelines) applied as standards
SW conditions ratcheting up without appropriate science or knowledge
Greater consideration of the wider use of the data
2. Training
Consistency :
 - Data
 - consent settling
 - measurementConsenting fatigue – tendency to roll over and deal with the consequences later
Complete lack of central leadership. Water does not have it's own Ministry MfE lacking resources and teeth
approach to scale! Cost element must be brought in.
3. Templates:
 - type of consent=format
 - size of activity=scale of monitoring
 - type of pollutant=method of measurement
 - type of receiving water=type of research requiredUpgrade Wastewater Guidelines to:
 - Be inclusive of discharge other than wastewater
 - Improve simplicity/ability to understandApplicant awareness/guidance/resourcing
Training and dialogue with consent managers
Loads on discharges that are not acute
Move, where applicable, to operational base surrogates as opposed to separate monitoring procedure. Consistency/guides on sample type and location.
Join up and rationalise diverse receiving water quality monitoring and data presentation
4. Communicate with:
 - Regional Councils
 - MfE
 - Land and Water Forum
 - NZPI
 - RC's Chairs Forum
 - Affordability – with public during scheme development (particular scheme of the general case)Train:
 - Consent officers
 - L.A officers
 - Consultants
 - Commissioners
 - Monitoring/Sampling staff
 - Awareness of:
 - Guidelines
 - The law
 - Ability to interpret
 - The obligations of each
 - Statistics fundamentals
 - Practical understanding of how the activity must operate and where.
5. Water New Zealand discussion document.

Group 2:

1. Stormwater:
 - Specific workshop
 - Abatement notices could be interesting...
 Containment of contaminants
 More discussion needed around load and receiving water capacity
2. Regional plans
 - Future and current
 - Catchments and receiving water across boundaries
 Environmental lobbying very achievable
 Technical training for consents officers
 Catchments across boundaries (issue on it's own)
 National technical guidelines for discharges
3. Review of conditions without needing 5.127/128 process
4. Education
 - EPA?
 - Suggested standards
 - Competencies for consent officers
 Improved interagency relationships
 Standards for discharge conditions
 - Wording
 - Technical
 Environment cost recovery/penalty for costs generated by inappropriate RC action e.g PNCC example or private company.
 Mechanism for total catchment management across RC boundaries.
 Accreditation for consents officers (similar to DWA's)
5. Workshop for stormwater
 Water New Zealand to approach MfE regarding national consistency for discharges and training
 NZWETA to formulate a course specifically for consents officers
 Workshop with/for RC managers – compare issues.

Group 3:

1. Standards that make sense
 - National agreement to consistent, achievable and enforceable standards
 - Regional Councils work in economic isolation and have as a single measure “Protection of the environment” they therefore do not have a balanced perspective – perhaps increase their mandate to include expenditure for other public works eg. Hospitals
 Currently, Regional Councils:
 - Work in economic isolation
 - Inexperienced people
 - Unable to enforce very well
2. Discussion of “waste” needs to be inclusive
 All waste water including Tradewaste, stormwater and municipal waste.
3. National coordination of regional councils
 Coordination of waste water specialists to avoid duplication and cover lack of expertise at local level
 National debate about cost/benefit of wastewater use other public good to ensure balanced decisions

Need for operational assessment of proposals in addition to IPENZ peer review to ensure robust use of public funding, ie. Overcome the lack of training and experience in regional councils

4. Planning for TLA – should be split from national waste water discharge and environmental discharge
National coordination of wastewater specialists to avoid the need to train every planner in the country
planners are working in isolation and need access to technical expertise
5. Needs to be independent oversight – best practice guidelines remove commercial pollution from regulatory bodies like NIWA to prevent making value judgements on the value of a project to them – best practice based on a non commercial basis
Iwi considerations need to move to a strategic level rather than local Hapu level

Group 4:

1. Stormwater consents
Guidelines as standards/limits – arbitrary limits
NPSFW and changing regional plans
No consideration of TA responsibility under LGA – affordability, requirement to provide water and drainage services
Regional council ideal – they are environmental regulators only
Lack of S32, economic effects
Reasonable mixing=Om
Water take consents – arbitrary conditions not related to resource availability
Requirement to improve discharge quality is not on the basis of effects (improvement for improvements sake)
Requirement to monitor excessively
Inconsistency between Regional councils
Ngai Tahu – totally oppose ocean outfalls in management plan – all discharges to land preferred
Focus on point source consents, not on rural diffuse discharges
Term of consent
Fear of commitment by Regional Councils eg. Short terms, tight review clauses, reliance on S107 as a default position (after thorough consent process, poor drafting that adds uncertainty and makes compliance difficult)
2. Arbitrary limits including use of guidelines eg ANZECC at end of pipe
Lack of consideration of affordability – environment at all costs
Regional council staff – inexperienced, untrained in specialist areas and inconsistent (officer, senior, manager, panel, commissioners)
Rigour of assessment process – percentiles
Cost of consenting and monitoring
3. Holistic approach to consenting
 - Asset management planning
 - Catchment/community approach
 - Discussions/workshops with industry
 - Affordability
 - Environmental effects (not continuous improvement for the sake of it)Terms to reflect investment return
4. Communicate with:
 - Central Government
 - Regional Councils
 - Stakeholders

Train:

- Front line staff
- Commissioners

5. Collate information and communicate with Regional Councils – joint workshop

Group 5:

1. Monitoring with no compliance limit (Stormwater and wastewater)
Limits based on technology capability and affordability
Acknowledgement of existing environment (why new targets if effects are ok?)
Responsibility for industry to explain to regulators
what is/are process and resources to deal with these issues
What parties need to be involved and what is their role
What is acceptable to iwi to restore the mauri of the water?
Is/are industry/stakeholders involved early enough in RMA process
Condition bias from past compliance
2. How to make consistency happen
Standardisation of consent conditions – metric not number ie. common wording
Education/training – council/applicant/consultant
Cooperation through consenting process
use existing resources
 - Templates
 - Guidelines eg. Monitoring design
3. Establish:
 - Best practice guidelines/code of practice
 - For Aee, consent conditions
 - Develop through engagement, regulators, TLA, expertsDatabase of model conditions and contrasting conditions – demonstrate there is a problem/variability
Better relationships – applicant, regulator and stakeholders
Need industry champion
Should the EPA have a more active role
4. Communication
 - Proactive communication versus reactive communication between consent holder and regulator
 - Present to RMG, LGNW and NZPI – issues, plant/next step
 - Community – better with stakeholders

Trained:

- Regional council consenting/compliance staff
- TLA staff
- Planners/engineers/scientists
- HPO's

Group 6:

1. Policy before science, (planners versus technical/scientific)
Perception is reality...but can be misplaced
Commissioners write conditions to pander to minorities (special interest groups)
Degrees of non-compliance
Multiple points of appeal through consenting process on the same/similar matters
2. Affordability (particularly small communities)
Practicality – unenforceable conditions
Linking conditions to effects and include monitoring plan for effluent that links back to

effects

Use of assimilative capacity of receiving environments (science and modelling)

Training:

- resource consent officer, TLA staff, consultants
- national standard/unit standards?

3. Standardisation and training:

- Conditions
- Treatment options
- Management of consent process

Review of monitoring standards then adopt nationwide

National environmental standards (EPA)

More advocacy and coordination from industry groups (Water New Zealand, IPWEA, SOLOM)

4. Central government coordination – EPA, MfE, MoH, MBIE

Communication:

- Government
- Ministers
- Environment commissioners
- TLS's – elected members
- Regional councils – staff

Training:

- Regional Council staff
- TLA staff
- Central government staff
- Consultants
- Contractors
- Defined competencies and training focus – ITO's

5. RMA review 0 submissions and inputs

formal/projection of Water New Zealand to government as industry voice (advocacy)

Development of water trading/permit trading (highest and best use to drive economy)

Group 7:

1. The cost of getting a consent

coordination of plans – RMA, LGA, Plans, Acts, regulations

Quantitative cost/benefit analysis – economic impact, net benefit

offsite mitigation measure – regional/catchment view needed

lack of understanding of design parameters

2. Lack of consistency across the country

Knowledge:

- Central peer review for specific difficult cases
- Lack of. Training required – water quality scientists, technical training for everyone involved in process
- Of subject and interpretation of results

Centralising – but not centrally funded how are we going to ensure we're better off

Regional councils fragmented

Qualified members of staff – water quality staff

3. National peer review facility body for specific consents

Repeat workshop for Regional council audience 0 better communication and cooperation

make consent officer roles more authoritative/more senior positions required

Make regional councils pay part of the consent costs – cap costs, flat rate

Common sense check

Regional Councils should be made to have simpler/cut down on consent conditions allowed

Incentives to simplify things

Standardise – AEE – industry led

4. Communication:

- Has to come from the top – minister for environment, MoH, minister for Local Government

Training:

- Anyone associated with the process should be trained or qualified in some way

5. Water New Zealand engage with Regional councils and central government.