

# EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS IN FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee

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# OUTLINE

- Definition of equity
- Equity principles
- Equity issues
  - Abstractive uses of water
  - Discharges and habitat effects
  - Inter-generational equity
- Equity in modelling architecture
- Assessing equity in the decision-making process
- Exercise – developing your own equity criteria



# EQUITY - DEFINITIONS

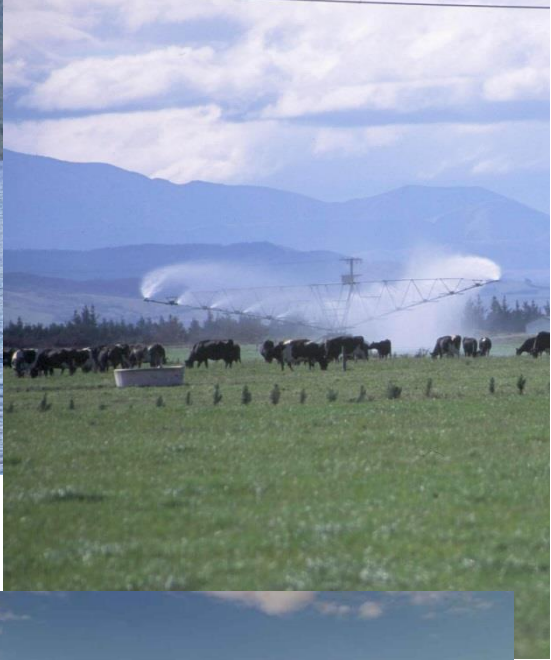
Fairness or justice in the way people are treated

-- how resources, costs and benefits are shared amongst individuals and groups within society





# EQUITY - PRINCIPLES



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- **Equality** - Everyone should have the same income, wealth or other opportunity
- **Meritocracy** - Everyone should have equal opportunity at initial allocation; differences ok if they are the result of effort
- **Minimum standard** - No person's income (or allocation, in the case of water) should fall below a certain minimum level required to provide for basic needs





# EQUITY - PRINCIPLES

- **Pareto optimality** - No one should be made better off if it involves making someone else worse off
- **Freedom to achieve potential** - Everyone should have an opportunity to meet their basic needs and human development potential ...
- And should not be inhibited from doing so by institutions that give privileged access to others.



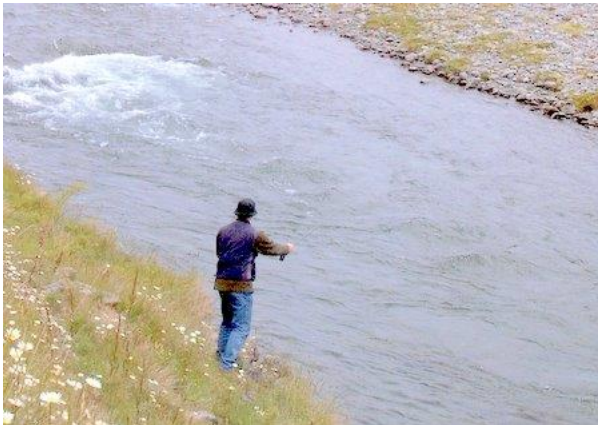
# EQUITY ISSUES – ABSTRACTIVE USES

- Equity between abstractive users – who gets the water?
  - First in, first served
  - Use it or lose it
  - Transferable water permits
  - Auctions
- Over-allocated resources – who has to reduce?
- Equity between abstractive users and the public
  - How much can be taken vs left in stream
  - Should water users be charged rent?



# EQUITY ISSUES – DISCHARGES AND HABITAT EFFECTS

- Discharges, runoff and habitat changes cause adverse effects on in-stream uses & values
  - What standards and limits for water quality?
  - What requirements for habitat protection?
  - Should in-stream users be compensated?
  - How should discharge allocations and reductions be shared?





# INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY

- Fairness between current and future generations
- Some problems will take a long time to address
- Equity issues include—
  - Speed of change vs. costs for current land users
  - Incurring debt to finance change puts costs on future generations
  - Water allocation – presumption of renewal of water permits



# EQUITY IN MODELLING ARCHITECTURE

- Equity is a filter for looking across multiple outcomes from a scenario
  - Does the scenario address specific concerns about equity?
  - Does the distribution of costs and benefits seem fair?



# EQUITY AS A CRITERION FOR DECISION-MAKING

- Identify equity issues that are of most concern
- Develop a specific principle:
  - “Everyone should have ...”
  - “All landowners should have an equal opportunity to develop their land through irrigation”
- Some principles might be mutually incompatible
  - Can you write ‘conditions’ that resolve incompatible principles?
- Decide if some principles take precedence over others



# KEY POINTS

- Equity – fairness in access and in the distribution of benefits and costs
- Equity principles – many suggestions
- Equity issues
  - Abstractive uses of water
  - Discharges and habitat effects
  - Inter-generational equity
- Assessing equity requires clear statements of principles (desired equity outcomes)

# EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS IN FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT

## Questions?



## EXERCISE - 1

- Individually, write down one or two equity issues that you would like the RWC to consider as it develops and assesses scenarios (2 mins)
- Draft a principle, a “should” statement, that describes an equitable outcome for an equity issue (3 mins)
  - Do two if you have time



## EXERCISE - 2

- In groups of 2-3 committee members, share and discuss your draft principles (15 mins)
  - Take turns sharing, one principle at a time, before there is any discussion
  - Someone identify a principle from someone else that they agree with or would like to refine (maybe add conditions: “provided that”)
  - Try to get agreed wording
  - What question might you ask about a scenario to judge whether the principle has been satisfied?
  - Repeat for another issue/ principle

## EXERCISE - 3

- Report back (5 mins)
  - Each group shares their suggested principles
  - Are there other critical equity issues that have not been covered by those on the board?
  - Any principles that are addressing essentially the same equity issue and could be combined?

## NEXT STEPS

- How does the Committee want to proceed?
- Unlikely to get full agreement on set of mutually compatible principles
- Thinking about these principles will help you weigh up the scenarios
  - How well is each principle met?
  - Is the overall distribution of costs and benefits fair?