

2. **MANUAL FOR THE DESIGN OF WATERWAYS, WETLANDS AND DRAINAGE**

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The purpose of this report is to describe the results of the external consultation for the new draft design manual for waterways, wetlands and drainage and seek Committee support for publication of a new manual. The draft manual is tabled.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s the philosophy underpinning the management of waterways, wetlands and drains within Christchurch has changed dramatically. During the past 10 years events such as local government reform, enactment of the Resource Management Act 1991, formation of the Waterways & Wetlands section within the Water Services Unit and integration of open space planning through the recent CLAS review have impacted on waterways and wetlands management. Each of these developments has accelerated the change in management for waterways and wetlands away from a utilitarian approach within which drainage values were paramount to an approach within which Christchurch's surface water environment is managed as a natural asset possessing a range of values. We now recognise that ecological, landscape, recreation, heritage, cultural and drainage values all need to be considered in planning, design and development.

The existing Drainage Design Manual (last edited in 1986) reflects the outdated utilitarian approach which was to pipe open drains and prescribe waterway capacity criteria. This manual no longer reflects current City Council practice, which now emphasises waterway restoration, integrated urban design and community partnerships (including takata whenua), in the context of the values mentioned above.

PREPARATION OF A NEW DESIGN MANUAL

A multi-discipline project team comprising Water Services and City Design staff and external environmental and takata whenua specialists has worked over the last 18 months to produce the new draft manual for the design of waterways, wetlands and drainage. The new draft manual prescribes an integrated design process in contrast to the old specific design criteria. Existing drainage criteria are retained where appropriate.

The new manual will replace the existing one within the “Code of Practice for Development” which is a companion set of documents under the aegis of the City Plan. It will be used extensively by consulting landscape architects, engineers and other developers’ agents as well as City Council design staff. Its innovative content is expected to generate interest within other New Zealand district and regional councils as well.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

The draft manual was presented to the City Services and Environment Committees in August 1998 as part of the external consultation phase of document preparation. Feedback was also sought from developers and their consultants, takata whenua, Canterbury Regional Council staff and other City Council units. The draft manual has been edited this year to include improvements recommended by those consulted.

Both Council Committees supported the adoption of the design manual. The issue of plant species used for landscaping was raised at both meetings. The point was made that references to planting in the manual must be in accordance with the city-wide planting strategy which is still being developed by planning staff.

The City Services Committee members also emphasised the importance of safety (both for children and public health) which needs to be highlighted in the manual.

At its August 1998 meeting the Council adopted the design manual subject to clause 10.1 (Planting Guidelines - Introduction) being amended to provide for the planting strategy for waterways and wetlands to be in line with the city-wide planting strategy.

The draft manual has now been edited carefully to ensure that no reference to planting is likely to conflict with or pre-empt the outcome of the city-wide planting strategy which is sure to provide helpful criteria for appropriate plant selection at any particular planting site.

The importance of safety as a pre-eminent design consideration has been emphasised early in Chapters 1 and 5 of the manual.

SUMMARY

The external consultation phase for a new manual for the design of waterways, wetlands and drainage has been completed. The document has been well received overall. Recommendations from Council Committees, Council Units, the Canterbury Regional Council, developers and their

consultants and takata whenua have now been incorporated into the document.

The process leading to publication of the new manual prior to mid-year is:

1. Confirmation of Council support (March 1999)
2. Final editing and desktop publishing
3. Publication and distribution (June 1999)

Recommendation: That the Council note the changes made to references to planting and safety in the new manual for the design of waterways, wetlands and drainage and approve the manual, as amended.