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Tairāwhiti aquifer data collection complete, analysis begins

Helicopter flights using aerial electromagnetic (AEM) technology to survey underground aquifers in Tairāwhiti have now finished.

Aqua Intel Aotearoa Programme Director Jane Frances says GNS scientists will now begin the lengthy process of analysing the data, while discussions continue with hapū and iwi on arrangements for accessing, storing and using the data.

“There’s been a fair bit of interest in the helicopter surveying over areas in the north of Tairāwhiti and Poverty Bay flats. I want to reassure everyone that the only aim of this project is to provide Tairāwhiti people with high-quality science and data to support regional decision-making.

“Knowing more about the region’s aquifers and how the aquifers connect to wetlands, lakes, streams and the ocean, will help people in the region decide how best to care for the wai.”

Jane Frances says conversations are continuing on how to ensure data management arrangements work for hapū, iwi and Council.

Gisborne District Council Director Sustainable Futures Jo Noble says the science and understandings from this project will inform future decision-making, but we also need to continue our discussions so people can have their say on freshwater and what is important.

GNS Science Hydrogeology and Geophysics Team Leader Stewart Cameron says the aerial mapping technology provides detailed data to several hundred metres below ground.

“This geophysical dataset combined with other information, such as data from groundwater bores, helps to create 3D aquifer maps and models that can inform groundwater management decisions,” says Cameron.

This scientific project is being delivered by Aqua Intel Aotearoa, a partnership between GNS Science and Kānoa - Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit, funded by the Provincial Growth Fund. The project has been planned in discussion with Gisborne District Council, Te Runanganui o Ngāti Porou, Tāmanuhiri Tūtū Poroporo Trust, Te Aitanga a Māhaki Trust and Rongowhakaata Iwi Trust.

For further information contact communications advisor Janice Rodenburg on 021 705 301 or visit www.aquaintel.co.nz or email info@aquaintel.co.nz

For further information on the Council’s freshwater planning work visit <https://www.gdc.govt.nz/council/review-of-tairawhiti-resource-management-plan/regional-freshwater-plan-review>