

Media release

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Investment to help inform regions about water resources

Better information about critical regional water resources will be provided through Aqua Intel Aotearoa, a new collaboration between GNS Science and Kānoa REDIU (formerly the Provincial Development Unit).

Kānoa REDIU and GNS Science have signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing Aqua Intel Aotearoa as a national science platform with \$10 million funding from the Provincial Growth Fund over three years.

The Minister for Regional Economic Development Stuart Nash says the Government recognises that access to water is one of the keys to unlocking the potential of the regions.

“We are investing in Aqua Intel Aotearoa to provide the high-quality science and data we need to make good decisions about how and where to invest in land development, while protecting Te Mana o Te Wai, the health and wellbeing of the water,” says Stuart Nash.

Robert Pigou, Head of Kānoa REDIU and Ian Simpson, Chief Executive of GNS Science, say Aqua Intel Aotearoa will improve understanding of water storage opportunities and water availability, starting with four regions over the first three years - Northland, Tairāwhiti, Otago and Southland. Subject to regional conditions, the platform will use the latest airborne geophysical survey technology for 3D aquifer mapping surveys.

“Councils, iwi and landowners will have better information about areas where there is both water available and good-quality land that could be brought into higher-value production in an environmentally sustainable way – in particular, to benefit Māori landowners” says Robert Pigou.

Ian Simpson says the platform will provide independent, scientifically-robust data, that will align with and contribute to GNS Science’s ongoing programme of hydrogeological research. Findings will be drawn on and applied across the country as well as providing benefits to the regions involved in the assessments and investigations.

Aqua Intel Aotearoa’s first project is in Northland, in response to a proposal from a collective group of Māori and non-Māori landowners, local councils and government agencies. The Te Hiku water study aims to understand more about water resources in the Aupouri aquifer system.

Aqua Intel Aotearoa is at the start of planning in the other regions.

Based on initial indications of most productive water sources for each region, it will be talking to councils, iwi and local experts to get local input on where best to focus in-depth investigations and assessment in each region.

For more information

www.aquaintel.co.nz