



Many of us have enjoyed swimming in our rivers and lakes. We drink fresh water from the tap every day. Our waterways are a part of who we are—many of us have deep connections to our rivers and lakes. But the more we use our water, the more we introduce risks to its quality. So how do we enact kaitiakitanga and protect our water resources for generations to come? In this activity we will explore the importance of freshwater and the policies that can protect it.

→ Go to [policy.nz](https://policy.nz) and find the elections in your area

→ Choose an election and browse the candidates' profiles to learn about who is standing

1. “Te Mana o te Wai”—the mana of our freshwater. That’s the term the New Zealand Ministry for the Environment use to talk about the importance of our water. Read [this](#) website.
  - How do you understand what mana means when we think about freshwater?
  - Does Te Mana o te Wai matter to you? Why or why not?
2. Read [this](#) website, and with the people around you discuss the following questions:
  - Where and how are our waterways polluted?
  - Why are our freshwater species and ecosystems under threat?
  - How might climate change affect our freshwater?
  - How might tourists affect our freshwater?
3. Agriculture and tourism are important to New Zealand’s economy—but both can harm our waterways.
  - What could we do to balance their benefits with the costs to our rivers and lakes?

→ Find a regional council election and browse candidates' policies in the *Freshwater* topic

→ Save the policies you agree with by clicking the heart icon

4. For one of the policies you have chosen, write a PMI Chart (plus, minus, interesting).
5. Think back to what you said about how climate change could affect our freshwater. Imagine you are the Minister for the Environment.
  - Can you think of a policy that would reduce our carbon emissions and improve our freshwater at the same time?
6. Imagine you are the Prime Minister, and you need to give a speech about freshwater in New Zealand. Write at least the first five sentences of your speech, thinking especially about including the idea of kaitiakitanga as a strong message in your speech.