

# WHAREKOPAE RIVER

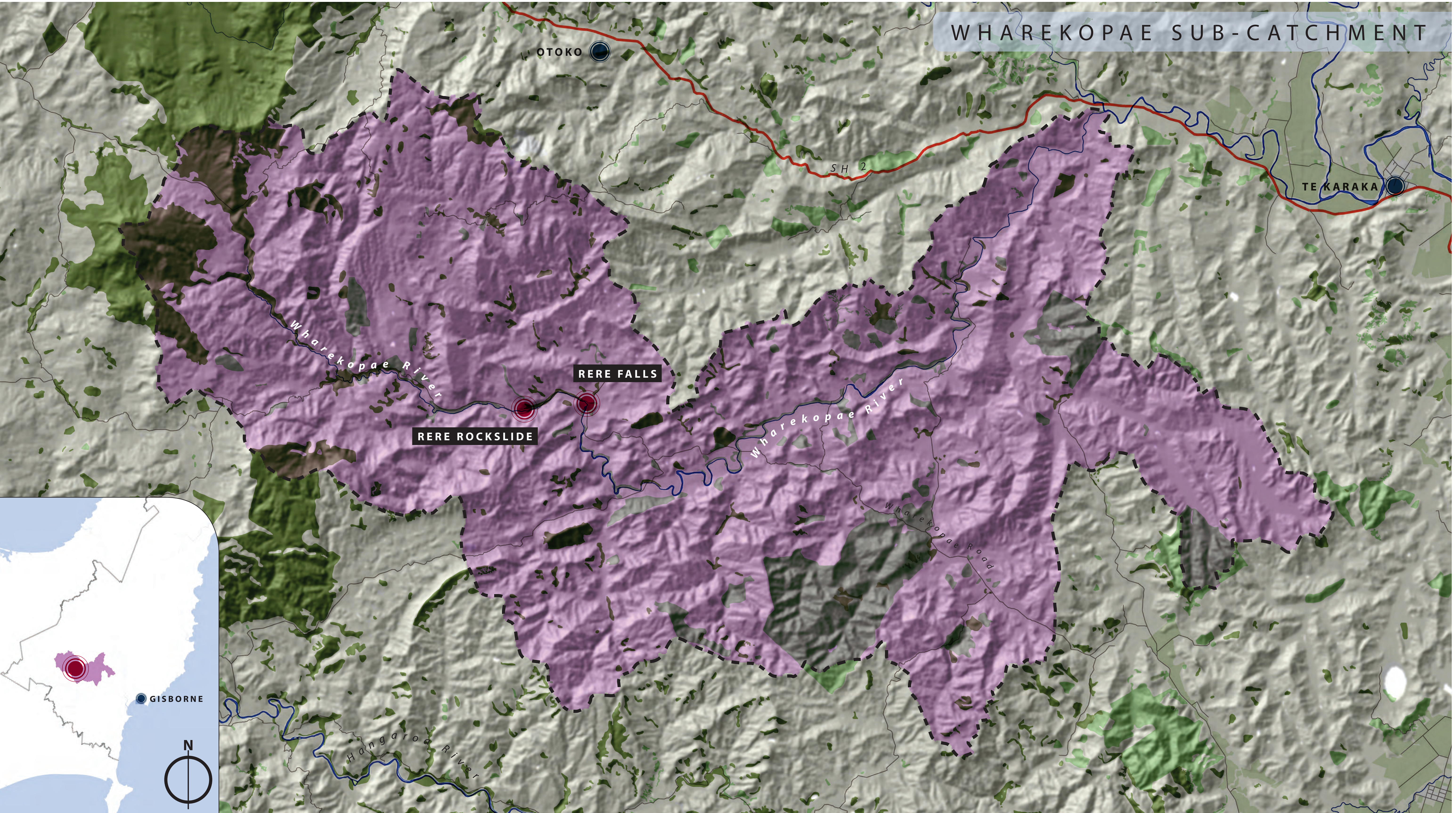
## WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

### PROJECT OUTLINE

The Wharekopae River is a significant tourist destination, home to both the Rere Rockslide and Rere Falls. Water quality at these sites is degraded with E.coli levels frequently exceeding safe swimming standards, resulting in the installation of permanent signage advising people not to swim.

### COLLABORATION

The project is collaborative, with Gisborne District Council, Ministry for the Environment, Beef and Lamb and the Wharekopae Farming Community. Driven by a common goal of restoring water quality in the Wharekopae River, and the removal of permanent signage at the Rockslide and Falls, the project has seen high levels of community engagement, and attracted attention of both the public and regional authorities in both Gisborne and across New Zealand.

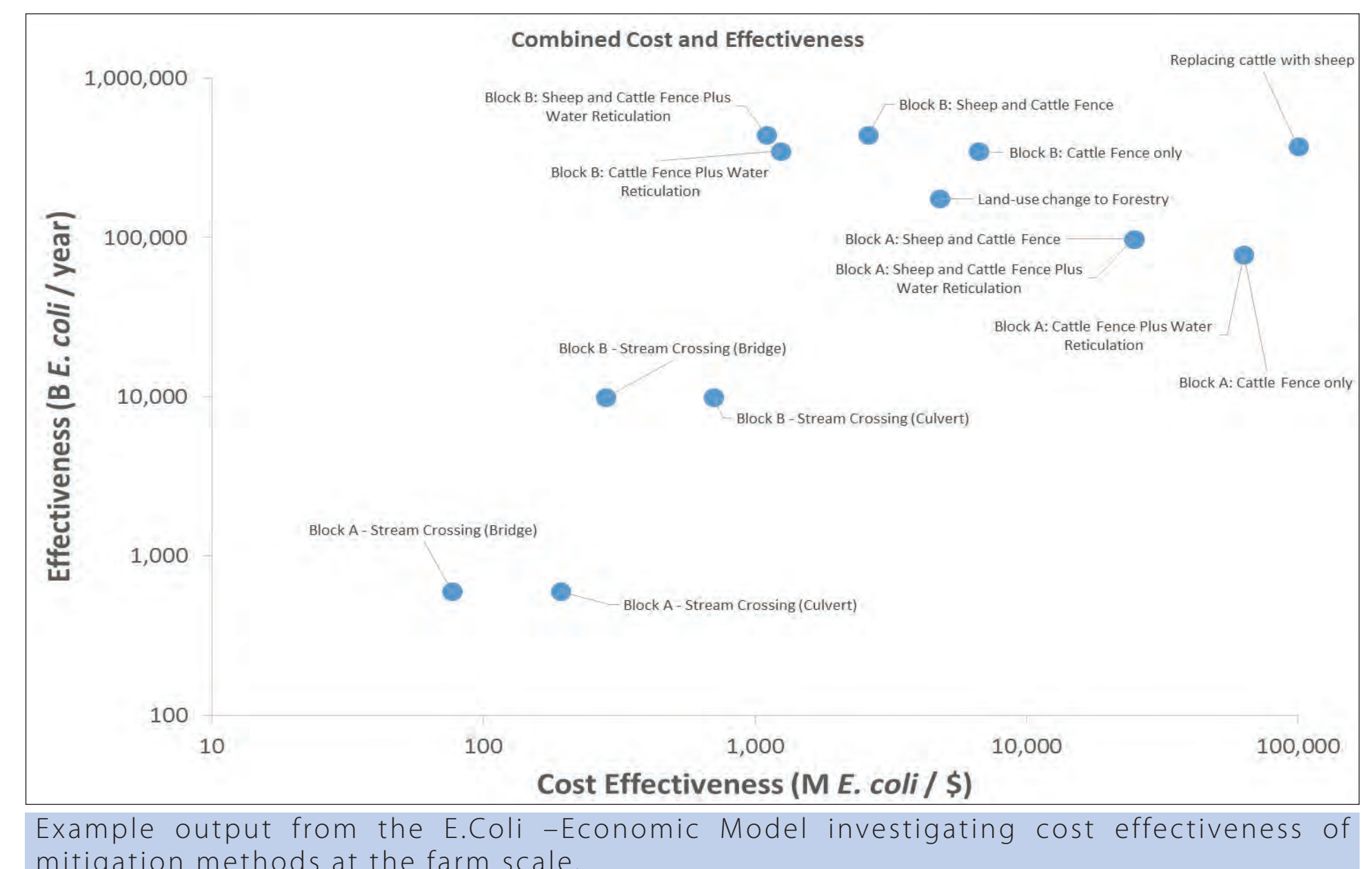
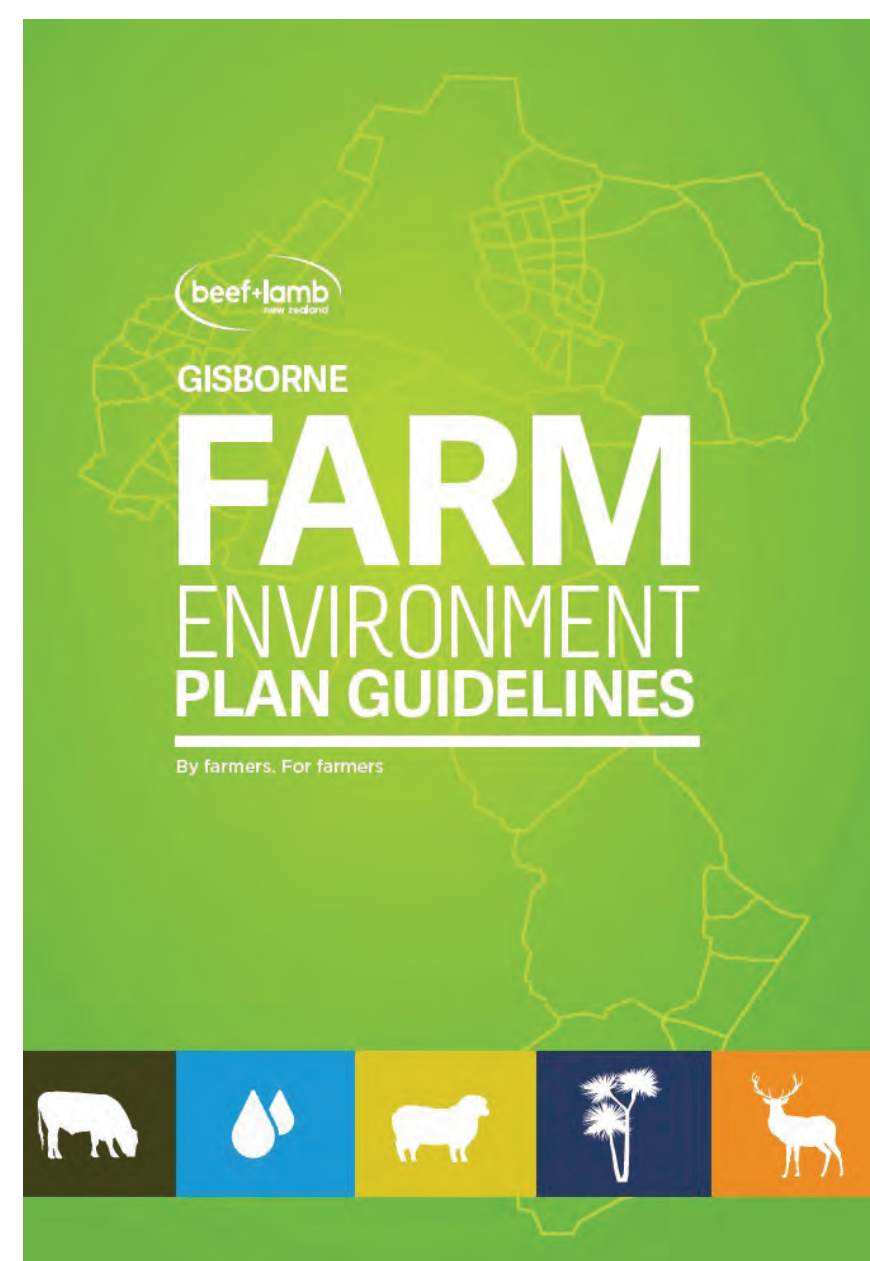


### PROJECT DELIVERY

To reduce E.coli levels, the project has investigated and implemented E.coli mitigation methods at the farm level through Farm Environment Planning. A model has also been developed by Richard Muirhead (AgResearch) and Graeme Doole (Waikato University) to investigate reduction-economic tradeoffs for a range mitigation methods.

#### SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR FARMERS

- Beef and Lamb facilitated workshops
- Complete a Farm Environment Plan (with a consultant)
- Yearly Farm Environment Plan review
- Funding for mitigation methods
- On farm water quality test
- Regular updates and communication with GDC staff



### PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Three rounds of funding
- 10km fencing
- Riparian planting
- Water reticulation and sediment traps
- Culverts for formal stock crossings
- Green Ribbon awards
- Freshwater improvement funding

This is a long term project, reductions in E.coli levels are not going to be instantaneous, however, to date the project has already seen some exciting tangible results. Farmers voluntarily conduct water quality samples on farm, with weekly results assessed against on farm activities, such as stock crossings, fenced areas and use of cattle yards. All 21 farms in the upper Wharekopae Catchment have voluntarily completed, or are signed up to complete a Farm Environment Plan.

The success of the project to date has attracted attention both locally and nationally. This has led to the implementation of a social research programme to investigate the key drivers which have resulted in high levels of community participation in the project. The research conducted by WEAVE consultancies investigated what worked, and what didn't work in the project. Thirteen key messages were derived from the project. It is hoped that these key messages will be able to be applied to projects in other catchments both in the Gisborne Region and Nationally.

For more information on the project visit the GDC webpage – [www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz) or contact Alice Trevelyan – [alice.trevelyan@gdc.govt.nz](mailto:alice.trevelyan@gdc.govt.nz)

### PARTNERS

