

Expert evidence on water allocation



What we were asked to do	<p>Kieran Murray, Managing Director at Sapere, was asked to present expert testimony to the Environment Court on measuring the costs and benefits of alternative allocation rules for water from the Waikato River.</p> <p>Changes were being sought the existing allocation rules contained in the Regional Plan for Waikato, known as 'Variation 6'. Specifically, Kieran was asked to consider whether Variation 6 should preserve the existing quantity of water in the river for use in renewable electricity generation by Mighty River Power, or allow additional water to be extracted for consumptive uses such as irrigation.</p>
How we approached the project	<p>Kieran's analysis applied the decision criteria established by the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), and considered the matters that Councils are required to have regard to when making the trade-offs inherent in allocating water.</p> <p>The analysis considered the economic value of multiple different uses for water: electricity generation, agricultural and horticultural uses, and non-commercial uses such as swimming and kayaking.</p>
Our findings	<p>The analysis found that while either use of water would meet the requirement to 'enable people and communities to provide for their social and economic wellbeing', retaining water in the river for hydro-electricity generation would be more appropriate for achieving the other criteria presented in the RMA.</p>