

CULTURALLY ENHANCED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT – INTEGRATION WITH TE AO MĀORI

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ABSTRACT

The economic, social, amenity and environmental values of stormwater management are widely understood; often seen in practice and well documented. However, cultural involvement and knowledge incorporated within these core values, either as a standalone value or delicately weaved throughout, are often considered as a 'last minute addition', whilst at other times it seems they are being ignored completely.

Māori culture recognises that environmental management has integral links with the mauri (wellbeing) of the environment and concepts of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) further promotes stewardship and protection of these resources, through the intrinsic relationship of people to water, and the natural environment.

Integrating core stormwater management values with mātauranga Māori (indigenous knowledge) and principles of tikanga Māori (traditional indigenous practices) would provide a holistic culturally enhanced approach to water management. This would be to the benefit of the wider environment (people and natural) as it prioritises the mauri of the community, and their surroundings. This would ensure that cultural and social outcomes are not diminished as a result of monetary focused cost-benefit analysis.

Whilst this approach may be considered different, a holistic culturally enhanced stormwater management approach can be a successful, long-term solution to the effects of urbanisation. An example could be the importance of Kaimoana (seafood) to Māori. Continued water degradation has had a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of downstream mahinga kai (food gathering place). The inability of Māori to continue the longstanding food gathering tradition has lasting impacts to their overall cultural and social wellbeing. However, introducing mechanisms to undo the degradation in a manner that not only consider these downstream uses, but also incorporates mātauranga Māori within the solution itself, has positive effects that go beyond water management.

This paper recognises that both culture and stormwater management can be a successful, long term holistic solution to what is becoming an increasingly important environmental objective.

KEYWORDS

Mātauranga Māori, Water Sensitive Design, Cultural values, Mauri, holistic water management, Stormwater

PRESENTER PROFILE

Troy Brockbank (Te Rarawa, Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi) is a civil engineer and the Design Manager with Stormwater360 New Zealand. He has over 10 years professional experience in the stormwater industry across engineering consultancies, civil contractors & suppliers. He has developed specialist skills in investigation, design, manufacture, construction, and project management of stormwater management devices for public and private developments.

He has developed a real passion and ability for water sensitive design, in particular solutions to protect and restore the quality of waterways and the environment.

He considers himself an intermediary, having the advantage of seeing aspects from both an engineering and a Te Ao Māori world view. He is passionate about the widespread adoption of a holistic culturally enhanced water sensitive design approach and will continue working towards raising awareness as a leader in this field both nationally and internationally.