

Tabled at Hearing 08/05/2013

Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan Hearing 8-5-13

- My name is James David Edward Forbes
- I have submitted on behalf of Blue Gum Trading Ltd, our farming company.
- I hold a Bachelor of Commerce and Agriculture from Lincoln University.
- I have grown up on the parcel of land we currently live and farm on. For the past 10years I have earned a living from this land.
- I farm with my wife, leasing my families' farm. Located on the Waipara Flat Rd. The farm bounds the northern banks of the Waipara River for approx. 4km and a small stretch on the southern banks of the Weka Creek.
- The property is a combination of dry and irrigated land, consisting of river terraces, flats, rolling downs to hills. Approximately 25% of the farm is irrigated.
- We farm a number of different types and classes of stock, Breeding and Finishing Cross bred Sheep, Finishing and Grazing Store lambs, Finishing and Grazing Beef Cattle, Dairy Support via grazing of Heifers, Winter Cows and Dry Cows. Also Specialised Vegetable Seed Production and some crop at times.
- To give us the ability to spread our financial risk and provide flexibility in this farming system, a combination of winter and summer forage and supplementary feed crops are grown year round. Every year is different depending on returns and climatic conditions.
- The Irrigation helps mitigate the natural summer dry climate in Waipara and helps smooth out our stocking policy for that period of the year and enables us to grow specialised seed crops and reliable winter feed.
- For our farming business to stay viable, we need to be continuously looking for on going improvements because the cost of our farming business is continuously increasing. To sustain this improvement we need to be flexible with our irrigation, stock and crop policies. Every season and year is different, and markets for our products change and it is vital to make changes to our farming policies to stay in business.

For example: a better return on our winter crops grown one year may mean grazing Dairy Cows versus finishing winter lambs. Every year is different.

- My concern is the lack of practical land and water knowledge that is currently known about and applied to this Proposed Regional Plan. The proposed rules on change of use based on small changes, i.e. a 10% increase in nitrogen losses, aren't practical to remedy, because of natural variation in weather patterns on our farm that effect the way we stock and crop it.
- The Waipara Catchment is identified as a Red Zone for water quality, triggered by the level of Perhipyton growth in the Waipara River. I have observed Perhipyton in the river, in the dryer summer months and have seen it removed in times of fresh's or floods. To classify the Waipara Catchment as a Red Zone because of the naturally occurring Perhipyton growth does not seem to be the right approach.
- I suggest a delay in enforcement of any rules for managing nutrient discharges until the Hurunui/Waiaua Zone Committee has fully considered the Waipara Catchment and reported its findings and recommendations.
- Our farm is in the command area for the Hurunui Water Project and we would like the opportunity to use the HWP water for farming but this activity would also trigger a land use change because of the Red Zoning of the Waipara Catchment.
- The proposed plan provisions will affect the way we can viably farm our land. I have ambitions to own my own farm one day, but to allow for that I will have to develop and increase the production out put of the farm via additional irrigation and dry land intensification, which will be non – complying according to the proposed plan.
- In my view, the lack of future rural farm development, due to the Proposed Plan with added regulations, will increase operating expenses on farm and threaten the sustainability of rural communities.
- There are a number of other points I have submitted on, but for the sake of time, I support my father Richard Forbes in the submission he has made because all of the points he raises effects my farming operation now and in the future.