

# RICCARTON HOUSE & BUSH

Riccarton House

*Phone:* 341 1018

*Fax:* 3416839

*Email:* mail@riccartonhouse.co.nz

*16 Kahu Road,*

*P.O. Box 8276*

*Riccarton,*

*Christchurch 8440*

19 March 2014.

Bill Bayfield,  
Chief Executive,  
Environment Canterbury Regional Council,  
PO Box 345,  
Christchurch 8140.

Dear Sir,

## **Variation 1 to the proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan.**

### **1.0 Introduction.**

The purpose of this report is to convey a resolution from the Board of the Riccarton Bush 17 March 2014 Board Meeting with regard to Variation 1 to the proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan.

### **2.0 Background And Context.**

The Riccarton Bush Trust administers a 6.73 hectare native bush remnant in accordance with the Riccarton Bush Act 1914. Riccarton Bush, the sole remnant of Kahikatea alluvial floodplain forest on the Canterbury Plains is of national and international significance. The predominant Kahikatea species of native tree are in excess of 650 years old, predating European settlement of New Zealand by several hundreds of years.

William and John Deans were the first permanent settlers on the Canterbury plains at Riccarton Bush in 1843, 7 years before the First Four Ships. Their reasons for settling at Putaringamotu were threefold:

The pure water in the adjoining Avon ( Otakaro) River

The fertile soil

The resources of Riccarton Bush .

### **2.0 Groundwater and Drainage... Effect on Riccarton Bush.**

On the lower Waimakariri fan, groundwater is a factor of considerable importance to the establishment and survival of forest such as Riccarton Bush. Changes in the water-table levels have probably contributed also to the establishment and destruction of the buried forests of Christchurch. Prolonged high water-table conditions may drown species of trees intolerant of wet conditions, while prolonged low water-table and drought conditions may kill water dependant species .

The volume of flow from the springs which provide the base flow of the urban rivers is affected by the quantity of groundwater pumped from wells in the western area of Christchurch. Prolonged pumping from the groundwater system such as occurs during summer droughts, and low flow in the Waimakariri River, would result in diminished spring-flow and a lower flow in urban rivers. The Avon ( Otakaro) River flows close to the northern margin of Riccarton Bush and low flows in the river will generally



coincide with low water-table conditions because of the lack of rain in the Christchurch area.

The water-table at Riccarton Bush currently varies between 0.5 and 2.4 metres below ground level and a wider fluctuation than this could cause significant damage to the ecosystems and biodiversity of Riccarton Bush.

Clearly the purity of the groundwater in Christchurch has changed since European settlement commenced and this will continue to change as land use changes and intensifies in the area covered by Variation 1.

### **3.0 Riccarton Bush Trust Submission .**

The Riccarton Bush Trust has resolved as follows:

- 3.1 That Environment Canterbury Regional Council be thanked for the opportunity to make a submission on Variation 1-Proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan.**
- 3.2 That Environment Canterbury Regional Council be asked to confirm that policies and rules proposed for Variation1-Proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan take into account the groundwater needs of Riccarton Bush, including water-table fluctuations and purity.**
- 3.3 That the Riccarton Bush Trust give notice that it wishes to be heard at any hearing to discuss this matter.**

Yours sincerely,



Rob Dally.  
Manager Riccarton House & Bush