

HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL
Waipara Catchment Environmental Flow and Water
Allocation Regional Plan

Presentation for Environment Canterbury Hearing, March 30-April 5 2011

Thankyou for the opportunity to make a submission at this hearing.

From the outset I acknowledge the difficulty and huge amount work that has gone in to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all parties.

1. This presentation generally represents the views of the elected members of the Hurunui District Council in their capacity to represent and advocate for the residents and ratepayers of the Hurunui district, and specifically the community of Waipara and surrounding area.

It is supplementary to any viewpoints submitted by Council Engineering management with regard to the inter-relationship and issues between flow regimes and the ability to meet the present and future demands for community water supplies in the Waipara area

2. This presentation will not deal with detailed science and technical data, others have done that, but rather give an overview of the issues as we see them to assist delivering the outcome we believe we have a responsibility to seek in the context of reality, and the ability to actually achieve the outcomes being sought.

3. From the information in the 42A report, we do not believe that a clear and unequivocal case has been made to demonstrate that the present minimum flows (50L/sec at White Gorge and 110L/sec at Teviotdale Bridge) are providing insufficient or inadequate protection of in stream values during the periods when sufficient natural water is available in the catchment to achieve these flows.

4. Hurunui District Council wishes to emphasise in the strongest possible way the importance of appropriately managed river flows and abstractions to support land use development and economic activity in the surrounding areas. Such activity and business is the “lifeline” of communities directly in the affected area and beyond, and we urge full recognition and understanding of this fact by the Commissioners throughout this flow plan process. “A thriving local economy” is one of our key community outcomes.

We understand that both Councils under the RMA and Local Govt Acts have a responsibility to give equal importance to environment, cultural, social and economic wellbeing in decision-making.

5. The important point coming out of this statement, is that none of these values are time constrained or have precedent over the other, that is, both Councils share a responsibility to make provision for present and future Development and economic growth in the area dependant on the Waipara River and its catchment, along with environmental, cultural, and recreational protection.

6. With regard to river monitoring in general we suggest the period of monitoring is extremely brief (1988-2011) in the context of the life of the river, and it lacks the depth of experience and knowledge held by many residents and landowners in regard to the rivers natural and modified behaviour over time.

7. We have a concern that while this process may satisfy one statutory requirement by developing a flow plan for the river, it will not by itself deliver a healthy sustainable river or community into the future.

8. We are also concerned there are a number of serious issues identified in the process, which all have a bearing on the integrity of the flow plan. We suggest these could only be dealt with within a robust total river management process.

9. The following points are some of those issues that need addressing as we earlier suggested through a management plan to enable a flow plan to successfully protect all values into the future. These can now be accomplished through the HWZIP (Hurunui Waiau Zone Implementation Plan)

a. Water augmentation or substantial water storage is needed to remove the apparent adhoc and inequitable requirements on some consent holders to store water or compromise reliability to protect other abstractions and provide notional minimum flows to protect in stream values that nature itself has not consistently protected over time.

b. The growing issue of willows, we suggest the abstraction from these in extreme heat and low flow is understated, as the density and size of these trees increases rapidly annually. The encroachment of these willows in streambeds causes islands that divert the flood flows against banks causing erosion, and the massive build up of gravel amongst the trees must hinder the flushing affect of floodwaters.

c. The significant planting of exotic forest in the upper catchment is another factor potentially affecting future flows.

d. We also need to acknowledge that the cost of physical river management to maintain and enhance the river for recreational use and environmental protection falls on the landowner adjacent to the river, with no contribution from those who demand unrestricted enjoyment of the river.

10. Hurunui District Councils commitment to the Waipara River should be evident from the initiative we have taken to facilitate and lead a multi party stakeholder approach to developing a management accord covering recreational, environmental, natural history and landowner interests in the Waipara River.

11. We are aware of a number of specific concerns by individual landowners with regard to the processes and steps within the Environment Canterbury process leading up to this Hearing. Whilst "this submission" does not comment specifically on their concerns (we have left those particular submitters to pursue their issues directly), we note that the existence of such concerns also concern us as a Council, on their behalf.

Further, we would emphasise that most affected landowners are, in our best judgement, longstanding and committed business people with the long-term interests of their local area very much at heart

12. You will be aware that concurrent with this process is the CWMS (Canterbury Water Management Strategy) and HWZIP. A new ambitious and forward thinking process designed to achieve the very best outcomes in delivering the four values previously referred to Economic, Environmental, Cultural and Recreational. While the statutory process we are engaged in today has those same drivers, the CWMS is now recognised as having the potential to achieve a far better outcome due to its comprehensive consultation and collaborative decision making approach. While economic development based on water use, power generation and irrigation is vitally important to the local and national economy, the Zone committee is totally committed, as are my Council and I, to delivering environmental, cultural and recreational outcomes, and the Zone Committee also has a strong desire to deliver higher standards than this process can achieve.

The draft ZIP is committing to water augmentation across the district and particularly for the Waipara, as well as putting measures in place to improve water quality and secure community water supplies.

To even consider raising the flow levels from the present levels, thereby affecting reliability and restrictions would be premature and potentially seriously damaging to current consent holders, their viability, and their livelihoods.

Pastoral producers and viticulturists in particular, have made huge capital investments providing significant economic well being in the area, and importantly providing large-scale employment opportunities.

To threaten this with increased restrictions and less reliability would be disastrous for my district, especially the wine industry which is going through challenging times, as do all food and fibre producers from time to time.

I urge you to seriously consider the probable serious effects on existing producers and my community by playing around with water flows ahead of the ZIP which I sincerely believe is the only way a satisfactory outcome can be achieved for the Waipara River

Thank you for the opportunity to make these points as part of the Waipara River Flow plan process.

Winton Dalley.

Mayor, Hurunui District Council