

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONERS**

**UNDER** the Resource Management Act  
1991

**IN THE MATTER** of Variation 2 to the Proposed  
Canterbury Land and Water  
Regional Plan

**SPEAKING NOTES OF DONNA FIELD AND GORDON GUTHRIE**

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1. Our names are Donna Field and Gordon Guthrie, and we are members of the Ashburton Zone Committee.
2. I, Donna Field, have been a community member of the Ashburton Zone Committee since its inception in September 2010. I have lived in this zone for 25 years and farm a sheep and beef property in the high country on the Rakaia River. Within the community I chair our Landcare group and became Chair of the Ashburton Zone Committee in 2014.
3. I, Gordon Guthrie, have lived in the Zone for over 50 years. I am the General Manager of local electricity distribution company EA Networks, a director of the BCI irrigation scheme and member of the Hinds Drains Working Party.
4. Members of the Zone Committee are listed in Paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 of the Section 42A report. I would like to introduce those members present: *{ "Please stand briefly as I identify you." The Committee Chair; etc. as appropriate. }* There are two members representing runanga with interests in the Zone; an Ashburton District Council Councillor; a Canterbury Regional Council Commissioner; and either five or six community members at various times.
5. The Zone Committee operates as a joint committee of both councils, the Canterbury Regional Council and Ashburton District Council; under the Ashburton Zone Water Committee Terms of Reference. In brief, the primary purpose of the Zone Committee is to facilitate community involvement in the development and periodic review of a Zone Implementation Programme that gives effect to the Canterbury Water Management Strategy in Ashburton and to monitor its progress.
6. Section 3 of the Section 42A report outlines the process the Zone Committee has been through in preparing a Zone Implementation Programme approved by the councils between November and December 2011. In 2013, the Canterbury Regional Council Commissioners requested that the Zone Committee prepare an Addendum to the Zone Implementation Programme to address water quality and quantity issues in the Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area. It was requested that the ZIP Addendum be delivered by July 2013, however, the Zone Committee considered it appropriate to delay finalising its ZIP addendum until the Council's decisions on the proposed Land and

Water Regional Plan were released. The Zone Committee requested an extension of the delivery date, which was subsequently granted by the Canterbury Regional Council.

7. The ZIP Addendum was adopted by the Zone Committee on 4 March 2014 and accepted by the Canterbury Regional Council at a Council meeting on 13 March 2014. The ZIP Addendum has been used as the basis for formulating Variation 2 to the proposed Land and Water Regional Plan now being heard.
8. The Zone Committee operates in accordance with the Terms of Reference "operating philosophy". The Zone Committee works collaboratively and with a consensus approach to decision-making at its meetings. The extensive engagement with communities and organisations is described in Section 3 of the Section 42A report. The Zone Committee recognises that the ZIP Addendum does not provide all of the answers to over allocation in the Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area, but it is a significant first step. The Zone Committee worked hard to engage stakeholders and the community to achieve a balance between competing interests whilst recognising the significant uncertainty involved in the process.
9. There are three matters of the Zone Committee's work that will be addressed in turn:
  - (a) The collaborative process leading to the Zone Implementation Programme Addendum;
  - (b) Over-allocation of nutrients; and
  - (c) Over-allocation of water.

**Collaborative Process (Paragraphs 3.40 to 3.51 of the Section 42A report)**

10. The Zone Committee led a 20 month community process between November 2012 and March 2014 in order to determine the recommendations contained in the Solutions Package. Three future land use scenarios were discussed; a current state scenario, a development-focussed scenario and an environment-focused scenario.

11. During the 20 month community process, the Zone Committee led:
  - (a) 5 community meetings;
  - (b) 3 meetings with the Upper Hinds community;
  - (c) 1 drop in session;
  - (d) 13 meetings with the Hinds Plains Land and Water Partnership;
  - (e) 3 hui with Arowhenua rūnanga; and
  - (f) 3 updates to Ashburton District Council.
12. In addition, the Zone Committee held 23 workshops that were closed to the general public in which it deliberated on its recommendations.
13. Relevant technical and planning expertise was made available to the Zone Committee for all discussions, including the community and stakeholder discussions. The different scenarios were modelled and evaluated and when required, technical and planning information was provided regarding the scientific rationale, uncertainties and risks associated with each scenario.
14. A significant challenge that faced the Zone Committee was the constantly evolving planning environment. During the 20 month process, the proposed changes to the National Policy Statement were notified (including the National Objectives Framework), decisions on the proposed Land and Water Regional Plan were released, OVERSEER protocols were agreed upon and the Matrix of Good Management project commenced.

**Over-allocation - Nutrients (Paragraphs 3.31 to 3.35 of the Section 42A report)**

15. The Zone Committee considered the available technical information and community feedback and decided to divide the Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area into the upper catchment and lower catchment. The two areas have distinct characteristics and different challenges in terms of nutrient over-allocation. Water quality in the upper catchment is generally good; however, the lower catchment is highly over-allocated in nitrates. Three catchment scale interventions were proposed to address over allocation in the lower catchment, these were: on-farm

mitigation (reduce inputs), increased irrigated area (increase inputs) and managed aquifer recharge. The Zone Committee deliberated on how to share the burden of on-farm mitigation and reached the conclusion that dairy and dairy support should carry a larger portion of the burden to change as these land uses contributed more to the nutrient load of the catchment and had a greater ability to adopt on-farm mitigation measures. As a result, the Zone Committee decided that dairy and dairy support should reach advanced levels of mitigation by 2035 while other land uses should meet good management practice (at least).

#### **Over-allocation – Water quantity (Paragraphs 3.36 to 3.39 of the Section 42A report)**

16. The water quantity status in the Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area is also over-allocated to the point that current minimum flows cannot be achieved. Various minimum flow scenarios were examined, however all were problematic given the unavailability of water (i.e no water in the groundwater system to maintain current minimum flows). The Zone Committee was of the view that some cultural and ecological values could be achieved in other ways, such as by stream enhancement and targeted stream augmentation, as a method to raise minimum flows. This approach required intimate local knowledge of the drainage and stock water race networks along with landowner support and would take time to develop. The Hinds Drains Working Party was established to develop an allocation and minimum flow regime and identify appropriate locations for compliance sites. This work is due to be completed in December 2015 and is intended to form part of a future plan change no later than 2020.

#### **Conclusion**

17. The Zone Committee sought to achieve the identified 26 outcomes for the Hinds/Hekeao Plains Area through community engagement and technical input. These will be achieved through a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory actions and the continuing work of the Zone Committee.

18. The continuing work includes the excellent work of the Hinds Drains Working Party. The interim recommendations from the Hinds Drains Working Party are summarised on pages 26-27 of the Section 42a Report. However, care will need to be taken to ensure that the rules in Variation 2 are not drafted in such a way as to inhibit some of the smart solutions being discussed.
19. The Zone Committee is also aware that for Variation 2 to operate as effectively as possible, the Council will need to have the resources available to ensure that the plan is implemented. This will include resourcing to ensure that permitted activities are occurring lawfully, and that consented activities are being carried out in accordance with the conditions of consents.

**Donna Field and Gordon Guthrie**

16 June 2015