

Tabled at Hearing 17 June 2015

Hinds Hearings

To put our submission into some context

History of district

1. One of the least desirable areas to settle...the original estates were poor farms
2. Dry, no access to water, poor soils and tough climate.
3. Grigg installed most significant infrastructure ...drainage network...to not only create Longbeach, but to facilitate the close settlement of our part of the district which once drained had water and good soils.
4. This was the creation of the heart of the Ashburton district and the land that used to be Longbeach is characterised by small farm sizes, although land amalgamation in the last few years has changed that.
5. The drainage infrastructure is a considerable engineering feature. Each drain was hand dug for different purposes.
6. The Hinds river was to give an outlet to the river that existed up country.
7. The Parakanoi was a straightening and deepening of an existing stream.
8. The Home Paddock drain was dug to specifically supply water to the steadings at Longbeach to run the flour mill, dairy, electricity and Homestead grounds. It serves as a poor drain as it was dug on high ground for much of its length.
9. All the drains have or had an important role in providing stock water to farms in the district and there are several significant off takes and weirs in the drainage network to ensure the ability to divert water for this purpose.
10. Most of the cropping and dry-stock farms still rely to some extent on the drains for stock water.
11. The drainage network underwent a major reconstruction after the war [1945] as many of the drains had been neglected due to a shortage of man power.

The Drains

1. The drains are designed to lower the water table.
2. The water table is dependent on drainage from the plains up gradient of Boundary road.
3. Although the drains do drain the land within the drainage district the majority of the water comes from up on the plains.
4. In the 70's and 80's as a consequence of more border dyke irrigation, higher rainfall and land development in the spring country several of the larger drains were significantly enlarged to cope with increased flows.
5. There were some significant floods that blew out bridges and inundated farms although this has been a recurring theme for the area since settlement.
6. When in high flow and flood the drains move large amounts of shingle. They behave very like larger rivers in cleaning their beds .
7. The drains have cut down into the shingle as a result of these high flow events and are now significantly deeper than 20 years ago.
8. In the last 10 years flows over the summer months have been significantly less and most of the drains now go dry for long periods.

9. This is entirely due to less drainage and more abstraction up on the plains. See HDWP recommendations.
10. The demise of the suitability of the drains as aquatic habitat is almost entirely due to less water in the summer.
11. The ECGIS drains have maintained healthy aquatic habitat because we have ensured good summer flows
12. This plan seeks to threaten the one thing that has protected flows in our drains.