

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
AND
IN THE MATTER of the hearing of submissions on
Proposed Plan Change 3 to the Land and
Water Regional Plan

BY **OTAIO WATER USERS GROUP**
Submitters

TO **CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**
Local Authority

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF KERRY WARD

Dated: 10 November 2015

**GALLAWAY COOK ALLAN
LAWYERS
DUNEDIN**

Solicitor on record: B Irving
Solicitor to contact: B Irving
P O Box 143, Dunedin 9054
Ph: (03) 477 7312
Fax: (03) 477 5564
Email: bridget.irving@gallowaycookallan.co.nz

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Kerry Ward. Our farm is located on the northern bank of the Otaio River just below the Otaio Gorge, consisting of 327ha of river flats. Our family have farmed sheep and cattle here continuously for the last 115 years. Today we still farm sheep and cattle, but also grow cereals and brassicas to feed stock through the winter. The soils on our farm are light silts upon river gravels. These soils have a low water holding capacity, limiting plant growth in dry years.

EVIDENCE

2. Over the years we have adapted our farming programme to fit within the limits of our soils and the environment. We grow drought tolerant plants along with selected quick growing crops with an aim to maximise spring and autumn growth, to finish stock as quickly as possible in order to reduce our stocking rate over summer.
3. Over the last thirty five years we have had the opportunity to draw water from the Otaio River to irrigate 67ha of pasture and crop. This water has been invaluable to us to grow feed when the rest of the farm does not. It provides some certainty for us because we know we will be able to grow feed for our stock through dry summers and for the winter.
4. Our water supply is very reliant on it raining in the hills. In dry summers we have a gradual reduction in the amount of water available to irrigate from spring until mid summer when there can often be very little water available. With the proposed minimum flows for the Otaio we would have been unable to irrigate at all last year. Without our irrigation last year we wouldn't have been able to grow any feed to carry stock through the winter. This would have forced us to sell a lot more of our capital stock, and reduced the number of cows we grazed. This would have potentially cut our income in half.

5. Over the years we have built our farming business around the use of the irrigation. The reliability of the current arrangement is in the order of 65% at full rate but 75% considering that takes are self-limited. Whilst that might not be great we work with this and adapt our system to cope. Any reduction on the amount of water we can use will affect our business greatly. Other potential sources of water to us are the proposed Hunter Downs Irrigation Scheme or water storage.
6. To improve our current system to achieve 95% reliability of water supply we would need 30,000 cubic metres of lined water storage, at a cost of approximately \$5/cubic metre. Post plan with a minimum flow in place and no B permit water we would need 200,000 cubic metres of storage. Post plan with a minimum flow in place and a B permit for water this would reduce storage to 172,000 cubic metres.
7. We are just inside the area for the proposed Hunter Downs Irrigation scheme. This would give us reliable water but at a proposed cost of \$10,000/ha it would cost us \$670,000 to water the area we do now, along with an annual cost of \$53,000. We are at the furthest, highest corner of the scheme making it very likely that we would have an additional pumping charge to our property.
8. All of these options represent a hugely significant investment given our current farming model. In essence it is not possible to justify the expenditure required without increasing revenue. Our only option in this regard is dairying. There are, of course, other issues that arise from land use intensification.

Kerry Ward

10 November 2015