

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 Waitaki Catchment
Water Allocation Regional Plan

BY **GREG METHERELL**

AND **WAITAKI IRRIGATORS COLLECTIVE
LIMITED**

Submitters

TO **CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Local authority

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GREGORY ROBERT METHERELL

Dated: 22 July 2016

Prudence Steven QC
Canterbury Chambers
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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Greg Metherell. I have lived in North Otago for 23 years. I am an active member of my local community, including being president of the North Otago Dog Trial Association. I am also a committee member of the Otekaieke Community Water Scheme.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

2. My evidence will provide information about my farming operation and the implications of proposed Plan Change 5 to my farm.

MY FARMING OPERATION

3. I farm a 2,981 hectare sheep and beef property at Special School Road on the Otekaieke River, which is a south bank tributary of the Lower Waitaki River. The majority (2,861 hectares) of the property is dryland hill tussock country, with 120 hectares being flat irrigated land.
4. Under the operative Land and Water Regional Plan, my farm is located in the 'Green' Lower Waitaki Nutrient Allocation Zone, meaning that good water quality outcomes are currently being met. Under the proposed provisions of Plan Change 5, my farm is within the Valley and Tributaries Zone.
5. We are a mainly extensive farm as only the 120 hectares of irrigated land is developed, which is less than 5% of our total land area. There is only potential to develop another 30 hectares but we are limited by water availability. This current irrigation is the only change we have made over the last 23 years that we have been farming this property.

THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE

6. Under Proposed Plan Change 5 we would have to get a resource consent to continue to farm in the same way that we have been doing for a long time. We would have to pay consultants to carry out a comprehensive OVERSEER budget for us, complete a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) and to prepare and lodge the consent application. This is a large cost for us when the environmental impact of our property is already very low and the profitability of a hill country property is also low.
7. We already work with Ravensdown to prepare fertiliser recommendations and carry out soil testing. We have not yet carried out an OVERSEER model for our property. We have asked for it to be completed, but are on a waiting list. We have been told that we are not high priority as we are not an intensive farm. If all farms in the

catchment require OVERSEER then how will it be completed if we can't even get ours done at present? We use less fertiliser than we did 20 years ago due to better technology and understanding of what our soil needs.

8. Using a model like OVERSEER to determine how we can farm is scary when we hear a lot about the inaccuracies it has. We also don't understand how a portal can take our "number" and change it over time. What are the controls about how this will work? How will this deliver better water quality results if we have to reduce nitrogen leaching when we already live in a Green Zone?
9. All of these layers of bureaucracy and paperwork take away from us spending time and money on farm to improve the things that we can. This is what the focus should be on and implementing the good management practices that will show a real impact on water quality in our region. We are better off spending time and money fencing waterways, improving our water use efficiency and protecting vulnerable areas from sediment loss.

CONCLUSION

10. In conclusion we feel that this Plan is not delivering on what we as a community wanted and will not deliver on improving water quality unless the focus changes from modelled Nitrogen leaching restrictions to good management practices on farm.
11. We have been farming our property for 23 years and in that time the only changes we have made is to irrigate 120ha of our farm. We are extensive and feel that our low environmental impact should be recognised as long as we implement good management practices on farm.
12. We understand that Waitaki Irrigators Collective has proposed an alternative rule framework and we support their submission and the outcomes sought. We support a framework that does not result in an obscene amount of additional consents.

Greg Metherell

Date: 22 July 2016