

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
AND
IN THE MATTER of the hearing of submissions on Proposed
Plan Change 5 (Nutrient Management and
Waitaki Sub-region) to the Canterbury Land
and Water Regional Plan

BY **KATHRYN WHITE**

AND **WAITAKI IRRIGATORS COLLECTIVE
LIMITED**

Submitters

TO **CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Local authority

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KATHRYN ANNE WHITE

Dated: 22 July 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and experience

1. My name is Kate White. I am a partner in a bee-keeping business with hives in the Waitaki and Hakataramea Valleys. I also own a 70 hectare irrigated farm on the south bank of the lower Waitaki River, at Otekaieke. The farm owns shares in the Kurow-Duntroon Irrigation Company ("**KDIC**"), and we also hold a separate, independent water permit from Environment Canterbury. I am a member of the Waitaki Independent Irrigators Incorporated Society ("**WIII**").
2. I consider myself to be an environmentalist, and spent several years as a film producer/director for Natural History New Zealand. I am an active member of the community, and have been involved in issues to do with water allocation and use in the Waitaki since 2001. I initiated the Kurow Aqua Liaison Committee and was a member of the Waitaki First Incorporated society (both formed in response to Meridian Energy's Project Aqua proposal), I was also founding member of the Lower Waitaki River Management Society.
3. I strongly believe in the Treaty partnership and the rights of the Tangata Whenua to have good food sources and Toanga protected.
4. I have been a community representative member of the Lower Waitaki South Coastal Canterbury Zone Committee ("**the Zone Committee**") since its inception, I believe I have been a well rounded member being both an irrigating farmer and an environmentalist. I am the current chair of the Zone Committee.
5. I am making this submission in my personal capacity, not in my role as chair of the Zone Committee.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. My evidence will provide information about what I understood to be the agreed community outcomes developed through the collaborative process undertaken by the Zone Committee and Environment Canterbury, and how these differed from the provisions of the Proposed Plan Change; and my perspective of how the communities view the proposed Plan Change 5.

AGREED COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

7. The various communities of the Waitaki participated fully in the consultation process undertaken by Environment Canterbury in order to determine what the shared community outcomes, aspirations, and values were for each sub-catchment.

8. For some, such as those in the Hakataramea, this process began as long ago as 2003 when the applicants for resource consents in the Waitaki catchment were "called in" by the then Minister for the Environment Marian Hobbs. It was because of this the Zone Committee identified the Hakataramea as being a priority catchment, with extra effort needed in the community. Many meetings and discussions have been held and this has, at times, been a stressful and difficult process to be involved in. This was made worse by the very tight timeframes imposed on the process by Environment Canterbury.
9. However, by and large, there did seem to be a general level of agreement amongst the communities on broad principles. These included the desire develop a simple rule framework, driven by a focus on a range of good management practices, and avoiding the need for a high number of resource consents for individual farms - particularly as the majority of farms within the Lower Waitaki are already farming under Farm Environment Plans and in many areas, good water quality outcomes are being met.
10. The drafted rules of Proposed Plan Change 5 do not reflect these principles.
11. Stakeholders at the workshops before the Plan was drafted specifically asked that there be a move away from more consenting. They felt a nutrient budget (OVERSEER) as a monitor was not the best way forward - instead water testing and water quality should be the measure.
12. All stakeholders embraced the concept of landowners adopting Good Management Practices ("GMP") and felt this, along with Farm Environment Plans as the method to identify and monitor GMPs, was innovative and forward thinking, and would have a wider scope than OVERSEER which essentially is food in, processed food out.
13. At community meetings held after the release of the draft Plan stakeholders were frustrated they felt they hadn't been heard and the Plan did not reflect the outcomes that were generally agreed on by themselves and the Zone Committee.
14. 99% of farmers want to be good caretakers of the land and FEPs gave them the tools to do this, but once OVERSEER is introduced as the monitor for water many will farm "to the number" and not to the environmental outcome. It all becomes how to beat the number a bit like driving at 104kmph (as fast as possible whilst avoiding a speeding ticket) instead of travelling at the speed limit of 100kmph.
15. On more than one occasion, the Environment Canterbury Commissioner sitting on the Zone Committee agreed that this level of consenting should not be required in the green area of the Waitaki mainstem and not what the Council wanted to

achieve. At a further meeting I spoke with another Commissioner and he too agreed we did not want more consenting.

16. I later spoke with the senior manager from the Environment Canterbury consents/compliance team and asked him how he thought the Council would even be able to physically process the number of consents required under this proposal and how would it implement and monitor them. It was agreed by him that it was an impossible task.
17. The way people and communities live and interact with their rivers, their aspirations, and their understanding of their land cannot be captured or addressed by the kinds of rules drafted in this Plan. This is what is making it so difficult for people to accept this Plan Change. It's focus on modelling and abstract concepts does not capture the critical physical processes and actions which actually have the most immediate and appreciable impacts on our waterbodies - actions which we are still seeing consents granted for.

CONCLUSION

18. I feel frustrated by this process, its like a consultative folly. Since the formation of the Zone Committee I have witnessed very talented intelligent people with an enormous amount of knowledge spend thousands of hours of voluntary time attending meetings, contributing to public forums, participating in Zone Committee meetings and being members of the Zone Committee. I have seen them dwindle in number attending the forums and leave the Zone Committee because they entered into the process believing they could make a difference and this Plan has shown them they can't, Environment Canterbury will instead do what it chooses. I am the only original community member to remain on the Committee.
19. The Waitaki Community have been participating in the region's water processes and submitting on issues since Project Aqua was announced in 2001. That's over 15 years and they are tired. Tired of spending hours learning the issues, understanding the problems, attending meetings, holding forums and writing submissions. And for the most part they feel they aren't listened to and their views are seldom incorporated in the Plans. I think a major number of stakeholders feel completely beaten with Plan Change 5 and they don't feel its been a true collaborative process.

Kate White

22 July 2016