

BEFORE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONERS

UNDER the Resource Management Act
1991

IN THE MATTER of Plan Change 5 to the
Canterbury Land and Water
Regional Plan

SPEAKING NOTES OF KATHRYN WHITE

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1. My name is Kathryn (Kate) White, I am chair of the Lower Waitaki-South Coastal Canterbury Zone Committee (**Zone Committee**).
2. I live in the Lower Waitaki zone and own a 70 ha irrigated farm on the south bank of the lower Waitaki River. I am also a partner in a commercial bee-keeping business, with hives in the Waitaki and Hakataramea Valleys.
3. I am actively involved in the Lower Waitaki community and have been involved in issues associated 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. I began the Waitaki Environmental Trust (Save the Waitaki) was a founding member of the Lower Waitaki River Management Society.
4. I have been a community representative member of the Zone Committee since its inception. I became Chair of the Zone Committee in February 2016.

ZONE COMMITTEE

5. Members of the Zone Committee are listed in Appendix H of the Section 42A Report at page 108.
6. A Zone Implementation Programme (**ZIP**) for the Lower Waitaki and South Coastal Canterbury Zone was adopted by the Zone Committee in March 2012.
7. Section 12 of the Section 42A report outlines the process the Zone Committee has been through since September 2014 in preparing a ZIP Addendum for the Lower Waitaki. The ZIP Addendum provides recommendations on water quality limits, an allocation regime for Whitneys Creek, and other non-statutory actions to implement the CWMS in the Lower Waitaki Water Management Zone.
8. The recommendations in the ZIP Addendum were agreed at the Zone Committee meeting on 15 April 2015 and received by the Canterbury Regional Council on 23 June 2015.

Collaborative Process (Paragraphs 12.29 to 12.36 of the Section 42A report)

9. In September 2014 the Zone Committee began a process of working with the community to determine the recommendations contained in the ZIP Addendum.
10. In developing the ZIP Addendum, the Zone Committee split the Lower Waitaki into three management areas, based on hydrology, to tailor recommendations to the needs of each area. The three areas are:
 - a. the Hakataramea Valley;
 - b. the Northern Fan of the Waitaki, which includes Whitneys Creek, and Waikākahi, Elephant Hill and Waihuna; and
 - c. the Waitaki Valley and tributaries.
11. During the community process from September 2014 to April 2015:
 - (a) the Zone Committee held frequent, at times fortnightly meetings in the Hakataramea Valley between a core community group and staff;
 - (b) a group of the community had six meetings with staff and two without in the Northern Fan management area; and
 - (c) In the Waitaki Valley and Tributaries management area water quality outcomes were deemed met and natural constraints existed that would reduce the risk of over-allocation. Therefore, a simpler consultation process was carried out, three community meetings were held in Kurow.
12. Updates on consultation in the three management areas were provided to the full Zone Committee each month. Final reports were provided and integrated into an addendum in April 2015.

Water quality recommendations (Paragraphs 12.37-12.55 of the Section 42A Report)

13. The ZIP Addendum contains recommendations that aim to protect the high water quality in the Waitaki River, enhance biodiversity across the valley, and provide for opportunities for new and existing businesses; maintain low nitrate concentrations in Whitneys Creek and reduce *E.coli* and sediment in the creek; to gradually improve the Waikākahi Stream, and maintain water quality and community values in the Hakataramea catchment.

14. Individual outcomes were developed for each of the three management areas. Major pathways were developed to achieve the outcomes and form the basis of the ZIP Addendum recommendations. They are designed as an integrated package and include:
- a. Support for Catchment Groups: for collective action and support for practices to reduce losses of sediment, phosphorus and nitrogen.
 - b. Direct Actions to address specific issues in specific catchments.
 - c. Use of Farm Environment Plans to facilitate and demonstrate Good Management Practices (GMP).
 - d. GMP requirements for agricultural, urban and industrial discharges.
 - e. A Simple Framework to support limits implementation.
 - f. A Monitoring System that provides feedback on progress and the effectiveness of the plan.

Waitaki Valley and Tributaries

15. The Waitaki Valley and Tributaries management area includes the main stem, southern tributaries, and north bank land that drains directly to the Waitaki.
16. The package aims to protect the high water quality in the Waitaki River. The key influence on the water quality delivered to the Waitaki River is the trophic state of Lake Benmore. Accordingly, the outcome for the Lower Valley and Tributaries area of the Waitaki River was in part delivered by the recommendations in the Upper Waitaki ZIP Addendum as catchment loads for Lake Benmore are managed by the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee.
17. This management area was assessed as being highly developed and currently meeting water quality outcomes. A management regime was recommended that requires GMP, resource consent for changing land use above a certain threshold, uses natural constraints and an in-stream monitoring network to manage risk, and uses a formula for calculating catchment loads.

18. Non-regulatory recommendations for the Valley and Tributaries include coordinating biodiversity actions. A regional project has begun in the Waitaki River on managing braided river island habitat to enhance the breeding success of endangered braided river birds.

Hakataramea Valley

19. In the Hakataramea catchment, the recommendations aim to maintain water quality and recreational opportunities in the valley, while providing for a viable and diverse rural economy and the protection of the habitat of native species.
20. A catchment load was recommended based on the current consented load plus 4%. Three 'bands' were recommended to be used for management: Riverside, flat and rolling, and steep and undeveloped.
21. The recommended regime uses GMP for current land use, catchment 'headroom' was only made available in the 'flat and rolling' band. Recommendations proposed that headroom would be available without requiring consent for low intensity changes, and with consent up to a maximum amount. However, after the ZIP Addendum was finalised, advice was supplied to the Zone Committee that the 'headroom' was not sufficient for permitted and consented pathways to access it. The Committee then recommended that the headroom be available without consent for low intensity activity.
22. In the 'Riverside' band, it was recommended that a form of 'maximum cap' was used to manage risk in this area from current land-use, and that this cap was expressed as either a percentage better than Good Management Practice or as a number.
23. Additional actions were recommended to achieve the Hakataramea Valley outcomes, including a whole of catchment non-statutory management plan with community members and agencies, actions to protect native fish, and setbacks for intensively grazed stock of 12 metres from the mainstem and 5 metres from tributaries. The background work to the integrated monitoring framework is complete and work has begun in the development of the non-statutory action plan.

Northern Fan

24. The Northern Fan management area aimed to maintain current nitrate concentrations in Whitneys Creek, while improving values impacted by the presence of *E.coli* and sediment in the Creek, to continuously improve Waikākahi Stream and springs, and maintain a strong local economy and community.
25. Currently Whitneys Creek does not have a flow and allocation regime. The regime recommended in the ZIP Addendum aims to preserve the mudfish habitat in the upper reaches of Whitneys Creek while providing for current abstraction and access to stockwater.
26. Whitneys Creek is considered a highly developed (almost fully developed) catchment. To maintain 95% species protection from nitrate-N toxicity, it is proposed that GMP is required, along with consent for land-use change over a certain threshold. Farms receiving industrial discharge are also required to meet GMP for their current land-use. Emphasis on riparian management is recommended to address persistent *E.coli* in the catchment.
27. Waikākahi Stream is a spring-fed stream in the Northern Fan management area and is valued as a trout fishery. It has been a dairy best practice catchment and riparian management has stabilised or reduced the sediment and phosphorus in the stream, however nitrates have remained elevated in surface and groundwater, and in the springs.
28. The Elephant Hill and Waihuna sub-catchments are connected to the Waikākahi via groundwater. Due to uncertainty about this relationship an investigation is recommended to provide certainty for plan review. This investigation has begun over the irrigation season of 2015/2016.
29. To gradually improve nitrate concentrations in the Waikākahi Stream and springs, GMP is recommended as a requirement for all land uses and a further 10% reduction beyond GMP is recommended for high-intensity land-uses by 2026. Additional land management efforts are also recommended in the areas that feed the Waikākahi springs.

Conclusion

30. In its recommendations, the Zone Committee sought to maintain high water quality in the Waitaki River, while continually improving riparian wetland habitat; to maintain water quality in the Hakataramea Valley,

while addressing areas of highest risk; to maintain overall water quality in the Greater Waikākahi area, while continuously improving stream habitat and to provide for consented activities and flexibility for resource use within the planning framework for the Lower Waitaki.

Kate White

22 August 2016