

Tabled at Hearing - 30/09/14

SUBMISSION ON VARIATION 1 – PROPOSED CANTERBURY LAND AND WATER REGIONAL PLAN

Submitter:

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Subject:

Variation 1, Section 11.4.34, Proposed requirement for a Resource Consent to discharge stormwater into the Halswell River/Hurutini catchment area.

The Lansdowne Environmental Issues Society (LEIS) **supports** the proposed change to require a Resource Consent to be obtained for discharges of stormwater into the above area.

LEIS is a representative group of Lansdowne Valley residents, a number of which are directly and significantly affected by flooding issues within the valley.

Lansdowne Valley is located approximately 10 kilometres Southwest of Christchurch city.

The valley covers an area of just under 1000 hectares from the Halswell River in the west to the Sign of the Bellbird on the Summit road at the eastern end. It is bounded on the northern side by Kennedy's Bush road and on the southern side by Burkes Bush road which is a paper road located within the Selwyn District.

It is mostly rural land and is actively farmed by its residents with sheep, cattle and various crops. The flat land of the valley amounts to less than 15% of the total valley area and is inevitably where all of the runoff from the extensive hills catchment eventually ends up for the duration of a rain event.

Flooding, when it does occur usually results in complete inundation of large areas of the valley floor, often to a depth of 50cm or more.

An Environment Canterbury (ECan) maintained drain (Minson's Drain) runs north/south across the mouth of the valley, and parallel to Old Taitapu road. This falls towards the south where it enters the Halswell river via a drain which runs under Old Tai Tapu road.

During flood events the valley cannot drain into the river until the river level has dropped to below that of Minson's Drain which is often completely inundated. This normally

takes about 24 hours during which time the runoff from the hills continues and the flooding levels increase, however if the river cannot drain quickly Lansdowne Valley remains flooded.

The existing Rule WQL7 under which landowners are currently allowed to increase the discharge of stormwater from their property does not provide adequate control of various issues which significantly affect the property and livelihood of other residents.

Rule WQL7 does not recognise the cumulative effects of stormwater discharges from ad hoc subdivisions, particularly in parts of the catchment where these discharges are already having significant adverse cumulative effects .

Any damage caused to the property of others as a result of a stormwater discharge consent issued by ECan under Rule WQL7 is not deemed to be the responsibility of Environment Canterbury. Compensation is seen to be a matter to be resolved by court action.

However land, crop or property damage which has resulted from excess stormwater from discharges consented under WQL7 is difficult or almost impossible to prove. Whose water actually caused the damage?

Valley residents currently do not have any opportunity to comment or submit relevant information on any proposals that may adversely affect their properties or the environment.

The existing Rule WQL7 consenting process effectively removes Environment Canterbury's control of river levels, and associated flooding and land drainage. According to ECan's river engineer Mr Ross Vesey, the Halswell River is running at its maximum capacity in time of extended rainfall. It is essential that full control of the river volume is returned to ECan.

For the above reasons Lansdowne Environmental Issues Society fully supports the proposed change to require a Resource Consent to be obtained for discharges of stormwater in the Halswell River catchment area.

Finally, it is important to note that Lansdowne residents have never requested any authorities to remedy or improve the flooding issues in the valley. They simply do not want anyone to make the situation any worse than it already is.

Paul Sintes

President