

read at Hearing 07/09/2016

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 **MFS VENTURES LIMITED**

AND **WAITAKI IRRIGATORS COLLECTIVE
LIMITED**

Submitters

TO **CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Local authority

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GREORY KEITH JOHN NELSON ON BEHALF OF MFS
VENTURES LIMITED AND THE WAITAKI IRRIGATORS COLLECTIVE LIMITED**

Dated: 22 July 2016

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Greg Nelson. My family and I have farmed in the Waitaki (both North Otago and South Canterbury) for the past eight years.
2. I am a director of the Haka Valley Irrigation Company ("**HVIL**") and the Kurow-Duntroon Irrigation Company ("**KDIC**"). I am also a member of the Waitaki Independent Irrigators Incorporated Society ("**WIII**"), which is a shareholder of the Waitaki Irrigators Collective Limited ("**WIC**").

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

3. My evidence will provide information about my farming operations, and what effect the Proposed Plan Change 5 ("**PC5**") will have on them.

MY FARMING OPERATIONS

4. I have three properties within the Waitaki Catchment that will be affected by the rules within PC5. The first is an 831ha partly-irrigated dairy support farm in the Hakataramea Valley. Some of this farm, up to 40%, is within the 'River Zone' and the remainder is within the 'Flat Zone'. I also have two irrigated dairy farms within the 'Valley and Tributaries Zone', one is 203ha and the other is 424ha. My dairy farms are located along either side of the Otekaieke River.
5. Under the original provisions of the Land and Water Regional Plan, my dairy support farm was within the 'Orange' Hakataramea nutrient allocation zone, and the dairy farms were within the 'Green' Lower Waitaki nutrient allocation zone.
6. My farm in the Hakataramea is a combination of irrigated and dryland. It receives water from HVIL. HVIL holds a water-take consent which has an attached nutrient discharge allowance, which expires in 2020. I also have two individual consents to take water for this property. As one of the shareholders in the company, I am subject to the conditions of this permit, including having an externally-audited Farm Environment Plan, undertaking flow metering, and water supply agreements with conditions I must comply with in order to receive water from the scheme.
7. HVIL also undertakes water quality monitoring for the Hakataramea River which each individual is responsible for and pays for. This commenced with a comprehensive baseline study that was undertaken in 2012 for the whole of the sub-catchment in order to determine the current state of water quality. HVIL undertakes ongoing monitoring across seven sites on the Hakataramea mainstem, as well as tributary streams.

8. My two dairy farms also both operate under Farm Environment Plans (FEP), required by our water permits and dairy discharge consent on the newer farm. Our water takes are authorised by consents held by MFS Ventures and by the Otekaieke Community Water Company Limited.

PROPOSED RULES UNDER PLAN CHANGE 5

9. It was my understanding that the Plan would not be nearly as complex and difficult to interpret as it is. It seems to be solely focused on Nitrogen, however wind-blown erosion in the Hakataramea is a significant contributor of nutrients (in the form of phosphorous) to surface waterbodies.
10. Rather than an emphasis on modelled OVERSEER outputs, the focus should be on actual water quality outcomes, which are also affected by river flows. There are consent applications in place for further potential abstraction from the Hakataramea River. If these are going ahead then we need to know that water quality in our catchment is not going to be compromised and a catchment approach is taken to improving and maintaining water quality, not just holding everyone to a nitrogen leaching limit.
11. This was brought up by the community at the meetings which I attended, and it is disappointing to see that very few of those recommendations have been taken up in the Plan drafting process. We considered in the community meetings that the emphasis should be on implementing industry-agreed Good Management Practices (GMP) not focused solely on a strict nitrogen leaching limit or managed by a number.
12. As a farmer, my expectation is that I should be able to pick up a plan and easily understand where I fit in. However the plan is very complicated and there are a lot of layers which don't actually deliver on improving water quality. It seems that many farmers under this plan would require a consent to farm, I myself would require three additional consents (on top of those already obtained), based on modelled OVERSEER numbers which will make it very difficult to implement and enforce.
13. I also have concerns about the use of maps by Environment Canterbury to delineate which areas of land are subject to which rules, and the accuracy of these maps. For example, the map showing the differentiation between the 'near river' versus the 'flat land'. It makes a large difference to us as to what percentage of our farm is within the 'River Zone' and therefore the accuracy of these maps needs to be scrutinised to ascertain that including more land will have measurable improvements on water quality. Use of roads for boundaries does not seem to me to be very scientific.

14. One of my dairy farms was converted at the end of the Baseline period which means that I can assume that it was fully operative for the purposes of the Baseline calculation. My other dairy farm was converted in 2014, outside of the Baseline period. Originally we applied for a land use consent as the N loss was increasing by more than 10%, however during this consent process we became a permitted activity as our N loss was going to be less than 20kgN/ha/yr in a green zone. Now, under proposed plan change 5 I would need a resource consent under rule 15B.5.35 to exceed my Baseline N loss rate and have no certainty around what number I might end up with on my consent at the end of it

CONCLUSION

15. In conclusion the Plan as it is written is not going to deliver on the water quality outcomes our community agreed upon in consultation meetings. The focus is on limiting N loss instead of focusing on implementing GMP on farm. The extra consent to continue to farm is superfluous in my business as I already have consents which require me to implement a FEP and industry agreed GMP.
16. I wholly support the proposed rule framework presented by Waitaki Irrigators Collective as it is simple, enforceable and workable and does not result in an obscene number of additional consents.

Greg Nelson

Date 22 July 2016

