

MEDIA RELEASE

June 16, 2016

Decisions on Waitaki water allocation plan

Environment Canterbury announced today that Council had accepted the recommendations of the Independent Hearing Commissioners on Plan Change 3 to the Waitaki Catchment Water Allocation Regional Plan.

Commissioner Peter Skelton said the Plan, which became operative in July 2006, addresses issues relating to water allocation in the Waitaki catchment. It sits alongside the Land & Water Regional Plan, which covers water quality issues.

“Plan Change 3, not to be confused with Plan Change 3 to the Land & Water Regional Plan, addresses uncertainty in the Allocation Plan about the management of water in times of low flow,” Professor Skelton said.

“It provides certainty for the replacement of consents for abstraction and for hydro-electricity generation activity. It also provides cultural and environmental benefits by reserving water from the existing allocation limit. Water is reserved for enhancement of mahinga kai and associated tangata whenua values, and for augmentation flows into Wainono Lagoon.”

Plan Change 3 responds to recommendations made by the Lower Waitaki-South Coastal Canterbury Zone Committee. “The Zone Committee considered consent holders’ rights, aiming to give them certainty and to arrive at a solution with multiple benefits,” Professor Skelton said.

The water sets aside by the Plan Change for specific purposes is not additional water; it comes from within the water already allocated. “The purpose is to enhance mahinga kai and associated values of Ngāi Tahu. Consent is needed, and applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with the three local rūnanga, Arowhenua, Waihao and Moeraki, to understand their values,” Professor Skelton said.

“In terms of augmentation, there is allocation for one cubic metre per second for flows into Wainono Lagoon. Consent is needed, but the water can be taken continually due to the benefits to the Lagoon.”

The Plan Change will be subject to an appeal period of 15 working days. Appeals (on points of law only) can be filed in the High Court. Once any appeals have been resolved the Plan Change in its final form will be made operative.

More information

<http://ecan.govt.nz/our-responsibilities/regional-plans/Pages/waitaki-catchment-regional-plan.aspx>

<http://ecan.govt.nz/news-and-notice/minutes/pages/CouncilAgenda160616.aspx>

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