
From: Anthony Green <info@connotations.co.nz>
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Subject: LTP SUBMISSION

This is a response to the Consultation Document on your “Long Term Plan 2018 – 2028”

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Introductory comments:

In giving some limited feedback to the specific questions that you have posed I would also like to make some comments over this exercise and to issues related to the environment in Canterbury and in NZ.

Personal key concerns

My concerns relate to sustainability, environmental future-proofing (which must include agriculture), transport, and (very importantly) water.

The narrowness of the focus:

Your Consultation Document welcomes submission "on any part of the LTP" **but** (with regard to Christchurch) it makes particular reference to options concerning the six bus routes planned to be axed; “Options for public transport” (this meaning here simply bus routes; apart from the Diamond Harbour ferry, there is no other public transport in Canterbury); and (pp 16-17) matters concerning rates income and funding increases in that income.

On pages 14/15 of your document you give three options for comment on on public transport. Being asked to comment on small issues on specific bus routes and the adjustment or manipulation of fares seems to me to be just fiddling with tiny issues and avoiding the much bigger questions that ought to have been posed when the central city was effectively broken in February 2011.

In a sense the transport issues you have made particular reference to are just micro-elements in a larger picture. Any comment on these specifics without the bigger picture ever being examined (without questions about “how we got here and where are we going?”) can never lead to adequate responses in planning for future scenarios.

Bus routes – in particular the 145

Since I work from home I can offer only very limited comment on bus routes. The nearest bus route to our house is the 145. Ever since that service started it has mystified me as to who on earth could have designed the route. It seems to have been designed for a small, quirky group of people who have a great deal of time on their hands to go nowhere much in particular. It twists and snakes all over the place and more than that, in contrast with a route like the Orbiter which connects places that people might want to go to (malls, PMH etc) there is no sufficient, compelling reason connecting the two end-points (Eastgate and Westmoreland) or the paths taken. Two kinds of buses operate – the regular, long Red Bus and the red minibuses but whichever type of bus is used I have never seen more than two, perhaps three passengers on them. If the route designer wanted to ensure they created something that would

deter people and would not be used then they've done a fine job. The waste of diesel oil over the life of this route is clear.

In all of this I am well aware that creating public transport networks in a place like Christchurch / Canterbury and especially when the central city that could serve as a major "attractor" does not really exist is a challenge. That is why an integrated approach to Christchurch and to the city as a central node in the surrounding region should have been taken post 2010/2011.

Some thoughts on the bigger picture for transport

With Christchurch as the regional centre there must be (or will be) considerable work- and business-related travel from outlying regions into and out of Christchurch. I know that this is incredibly obvious and that you know it but the previous government seemed not to be aware of this. Minister Brownlee seemed driven (I recognise the pun) by a thinking solely based on the private motor vehicle (witness his lambasting of the CCC for taking away roadside car parking spaces along St Asaph St) and not on any notion that there should ever be a restriction on the numbers of cars allowed into any one city area. Rail options and a proper re-design of the city around a genuine transport hub rather than a bus station seem never to have been adequately considered. Or, rather, the negative consequences of the impact of the inevitable increase of road transport by vehicles driven by internal combustion engines seem never to have been considered. Nor, as far as I am aware, has any study been carried out on changing patterns of driver behaviour and the clear danger from the frequent jumping of amber and red traffic lights, sometimes by large, truck and trailer units. They maybe don't show up as figures in columns of statistics and may seem like subjective judgments but I would invite you to stand for half an hour at the junction of Waltham Road and Brougham Street and judge for yourself. Increases in road traffic have detrimental impacts on community. Private motor vehicles prompt certain behaviours.

"A resilient, multi-modal transport system"

On p.13 of the consultation document you refer to "a resilient, multi-modal transport system." You say that a "multi-modal" transport system "limits the environmental impact of transport; improves social connectedness and well-being in communities; supports visitor strategies and tourism; enables a strong economy; and improves road safety."

Under "Transport and urban development" on your website (<https://rates.ecan.govt.nz/#2018>) you state your work as "Enabling a resilient, multi-modal transport system for the efficient movement of people and freight into, out of, and within the Canterbury region."

What exactly is "multi-modal" about what you are presenting? The only real mode is by road. Apart, of course, from freight trains.

The post-earthquake scenario for housing has seen considerable developments through Selwyn and Waimakariri districts. What that means is that a broad sweep from Lincoln, through Rolleston, Wigram, Yaldhurst, Rangiora through to SH1 and the Main North Road has seen the development of housing estates that have all the ingredients of mini-Aucklands in the making – separate, stand-alone houses with small plot and everything predicated on private vehicle transport. Nowhere in the planning for post-earthquake Canterbury were easements set aside through compulsory purchase by government of land that could be set aside to be used for future rail (light or heavy). Maybe not deemed appropriate now but for the future. Almost the only thing that travels on the rail lines through Christchurch are diesel-hauled coal trains. As a visual metaphor, coal belongs in the 19th century and diesel in the early to middle 20th.

On the site of the former Christchurch railway station a petrol station has now been built. Frankly it's sad – and regressive, not forward looking.

Amongst its attractions Dunedin has the Taieri Gorge Railway and trains that can pick up passengers straight from their ship at Port Chalmers. Christchurch is the starting point for one of "The Great Journeys of New Zealand" – the TranzAlpine. When the time comes (God willing) that the city is back and fully functioning and (just perhaps) cruise ships start to reconsider including Lyttelton / Christchurch as a port of call will we see, as I've seen in the past, fleets of ordinary, city buses like the Red buses used to ferry passengers from the quay into the city? Of course, Lyttelton Port is a working port but aside from the pick-up being not too far from coal wagons and raw timber logs, it never

struck me as a great welcome to Christchurch. A rail connection from ship to the TranzAlpine route could be a very attractive offering to cruise passengers since they are all presented with tour options at each port.

In your talk of supporting visitor strategies and tourism, and enabling a strong economy you have added that "to make this happen requires the integration of many agencies." Cruise ships bring money into economies. I have my reservations about them but as long as they continue to visit NZ might this not be another potential opportunity and might there not be some integration of different agencies in discussions on such possibilities?

"Ah, but rail is not part of our brief"

You may say that rail or other currently non-existent modes are not part of the brief of ECan. But where will the discussion begin – in public or behind the scenes – between agencies as to what might seriously work as a strategic, environmentally appropriate transport system to link the region? I was asked last year to give a talk in Ashburton. I travelled as one person for about one hour in one vehicle there and did the same on the way back. It would have been infinitely better, and environmentally kinder, to have had the option of a rail service.

Every vehicle travelling from a place like Rolleston or Yaldhurst or Pegasus with one person inside is a question mark and possibly an opportunity lost. I know that population density and potential travel numbers and critical masses are key criteria in determining what's possible but so is future planning. I am aware that suggestions of rail have been dismissed on the basis of cost and need and therefore effectiveness but I have never read any report on any place on earth where effective, lasting transport solutions were delivered by road networks. Cities are made liveable by other means.

Water and freshwater

Bottling plants

In the introductory paragraph to your "Consultation Document" you state that "We are incredibly lucky in Canterbury . . . water is plentiful; and our largely agriculture-based economy is strong. We are one of the few places in the world where there is an abundance of freshwater." You follow this with the warning that, "there is work to do to manage this, to fix the things that aren't right and to act now to ensure generations to come can also enjoy Canterbury." "Luck" should be treated with the utmost respect. It can be taken away or lost.

The second paragraph describes the work of ECan as contributing to this management; saying that you work on behalf of the Canterbury community; that through our rates we pay you to do this work, and makes reference to people like myself as ratepayers. Your website says "We Guide Communities' Water Sustainability." Under the "Home" page you state that, "Through the work of Environment Canterbury you, as a rate payer, are helping to ensure we have the environment we want in Canterbury, and that together we can leave a legacy for future generations."

BUT in this matter of freshwater extraction I refer you to your own words: "there is work to do to manage this, to fix the things that aren't right."

With all of this I have to say that reports such as the the March 16, 2018 report in "Stuff" anger me:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/102307238/ecan-accused-of-bending-the-law-over-consents-for-water-bottling-plants>

This, to me, and I am sure, to many others (see the anger in Ashburton some time back) is something that absolutely isn't right and that needs to be fixed.

In what can be described a a singularly unhelpful remark John Key dismissed the concerns of thousands of New Zealanders over water with the throwaway line that "nobody owns water." This may be legally correct but it seemed to me flippant and to avoid serious, mature and necessary discussion – and listening, the kind of listening that one would like to see from Environment Canterbury.

Nobody may "own" water and yet the rights to take it seem to be granted very easily. There are many reasons why I and many others object very strongly to current practice. Here are just a few:

1 To grant to overseas, commercial, profit-making entities the “right” to take water at virtually no cost to then sell using the good name of this country is like an act of self-destructive altruism. Frankly, these people (Coca-Cola, Nestlé, sundry Chinese companies, etc) must be laughing all the way to the bank. If there is no ownership, per se, in the “western” materialist way of seeing these issues there is clear sense of responsibility and trusteeship in the senses that would be recognised by all traditional communities. You make repeated references in your “Consultation Document” and on your website of sustainability. I fail to recognise any evidence of that concern when I read of permissions being granted to companies to take water for bottling in the ways described in the Stuff article.

2 If it were the case, or if it were to be argued, that we cannot block overseas entities from water extraction because it might be seen as offending some trade treaty then the buck for such a failure to protect our great grandchildren’s inheritance would lie with those who signed those treaties. Many countries recognise and safeguard what they identify as strategic assets. Often they are in the form of companies / entities / airports (viz Singapore Airlines and Changi Airport in Singapore). Many do not allow overseas people to buy land (perhaps China is one such place, Indonesia another). For NZ, good farming land and clean water are strategic assets in a world getting more distressed each day.

3 One last comment on bottled water: Surely you have all read some of the many articles on the massively detrimental impact of plastics on the oceans and how plastics, aside from destroying aquatic and avian life, are entering the food chain; articles on the great oceanic garbage patches; articles that predict there being more plastic than fish to be in the oceans in 2050, or that have already identified micro-plastics in our food? Any action that increases the amount of single-use plastic bottles for water (as bottling plants do) should never be countenanced or encouraged by a body with the word “environment” in its name and with phrases like “environmental sustainability” in its mission or vision statement.

To pick up your own words (on p.2 of the document) “This means we work to enable economic growth in a way that **enhances our quality of life** and **does not compromise environmental sustainability.**” (the emphasis is mine).

Bottled water detracts from our quality of life and compromises environmental sustainability. I am absolutely opposed to any approvals for rights being given to overseas companies for the extraction of freshwater through deep bores in this way.

Paying for freshwater management

On p.17 you make reference to “paying for freshwater management.” Given the timeframe for responses and for the fact that I am busy I have not had time to read your financing policies carefully but in a time when overseas entities are allowed to make a profit after having just spent a pittance any talk of extra payments from ratepayers seems odd.

What is a long-term plan?

Your document is described as a “long Term Plan.” It covers 2018 – 2028. my own response is that (especially in regard to the environment) it beggars belief that a time-span of ten years can be called “long-term.” Zealandia in Wellington (<http://www.visitzealandia.com>) – admittedly a seemingly quite different undertaking – is looking at 500 years. OK – that’s a bit long, but in The Dominion Post, 22 March 2018, Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, was quoted as saying, “We have a plan for weaning New Zealand off fossil fuels and it has a timeline that stretches out nearly 30 years into the future.” 30 years seems gesturing a bit closer to long-term. 10 years is short term.

Measured against that time scale, I wonder what long-term sustainability considerations have gone into the models of farming that have seen incredible increases in dairy farming on the Canterbury Plains and into the Mackenzie Country on land that never looked like dairy land. Could the great grandchildren of today’s farmers inherit and operate such a model of farming?

There is much more that could be said and I have not touched on all the issues but I have no time to better order this response and I am not an expert, just one person dissatisfied over lost opportunities for this city and this region and greatly disturbed by some of the directions being taken.

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