

Submission Number: 41
Response ID: C18C/104775
First Name: Elizabeth
Last Name: Soal
Organisation: Waitaki Irrigators Collective LTD

Good afternoon,

Please find attached a Submission from the Waitaki Irrigators Collective in relation to the Environment Canterbury Representation Review 2018.

Kind regards,
Elizabeth Soal

Elizabeth Soal
Director of Strategy and Policy
WAITAKI IRRIGATORS COLLECTIVE LTD



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Waitaki Irrigators Collective Limited

Submission to Environment Canterbury

Environment Canterbury
Representation Review
2018

July 2018

Representative:	Elizabeth Soal, Director of Strategy and Policy
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Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E Soal", is positioned over the "Signature:" label.

Date: 30 July 2018

About the Waitaki Irrigators Collective

The Waitaki Irrigators Collective Limited (WIC) is a company comprised of the five irrigation schemes and a society of individual irrigators that take water from Lake Waitaki, the lower Waitaki River or its tributaries or connected groundwater, and use that water to irrigate land downstream of the Waitaki Dam.

WIC was formed in 2010 in response to a number of common issues which the schemes were facing at the time. In mid-2011, WIC expanded to include the incorporated society of individual irrigators.

WIC represents over 600 irrigators, with an irrigated area of approximately 80,000 hectares across North Otago and South Canterbury.

The overarching goal of WIC is to ensure the ongoing surety of water for its members. There are various dimensions to water surety, including surety of supply, reliability of supply, resource consent conditions relating to water take and usage, and community support for irrigation. WIC seeks to gain surety of water within an approach which recognises the need for continuous improvement and environmental protection.

WIC recognises the need to work with the community within which it operates, to promote and support social and economic development. WIC's role is neither technical nor operational (although it may facilitate operational or technical projects), but to lead the development of an integrated social contract between irrigators and the wider Waitaki community of interest.

The shareholders of WIC are:

- the Kurow-Duntroon Irrigation Company Limited (KDIC);
- the North Otago Irrigation Company Limited (NOIC);
- the Morven, Glenavy, Ikawai Irrigation Company Limited (MGI);
- the Maerewhenua District Water Resource Company Limited (MDWRC);
- the Lower Waitaki Irrigation Company Limited (LWIC); and
- the Waitaki Independent Irrigators Incorporated Society (WII, including Haka Valley Irrigation Limited).

These schemes and individuals use irrigation water for production across the primary sector, including the agriculture, horticulture, dairying and viticulture industries. Some of the schemes also provide water to other industries, town supplies and sports clubs.

The irrigators within the Collective have water permits administered by Environment Canterbury territory. LWIC and NOIC land-use is within the Otago region, the rest having land-use within Canterbury. Our schemes and individual members are spread across the Waitaki and Waimate Districts.

Summary

WIC submits that the electoral model proposed by Environment Canterbury **does not provide fair representation for South Canterbury Ōtuhituhi** and requests that the **total number of elected members increases to 14**, with **two elected members for South Canterbury Ōtuhituhi**.

Submission

WIC submits that the proposed model of having 12 elected members within only one elected councillor for South Canterbury Ōtuhituhi does not provide fair representation, as the proposed model sees the area being significantly under-represented in terms of population, by a margin of close to 30 per cent.

The Report made to Council at its meeting of 21 June notes that:

The 4 City constituency model reflects distinct and identifiable communities of interest that align to city ward boundaries, provides the ability for members to be recognisable and effectively represent the views of their electoral area, and creates a balance of representation across the region (*apart from South Canterbury*) [emphasis added].

The Local Electoral Act 2001 provides that the number and boundaries of constituencies must provide effective representation of communities of interest, and that constituencies may be defined and regional council membership distributed amongst them in ways which do not reflect population distribution, to “ensure” fair representation (section 19V(1)).

The Council’s report referred to above also states that only having one elected member for South Canterbury Ōtuhituhi balances the “principles of fair and effective representation...between one area and the remainder of the region” and that “the under representation in south Canterbury reflects the geography of the Canterbury region.”

The implication is that the proposal potentially results in *unfair* and *ineffective* representation for South Canterbury Ōtuhituhi and that this is acceptable. WIC submits that this should not be an acceptable outcome and it does not “ensure” fair representation as required by the Local Electoral Act.

Increasing the number of elected members to 14 would not reduce the representation provided to other constituencies. Although it is acknowledged there may be concerns about South Canterbury’s population being over-represented under this proposal (although by no greater degree than the proposed option creates under-representation of the constituency), if regard is had to the diversity of South Canterbury’s landscapes, catchments, and communities of interest, then the balance should fall in favour of having a further elected councillor.

The issues which Regional Councils are tasked with managing under section 30 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) are not the same as those facing municipal urban authorities and the resources required to manage these issues does not necessarily correlate to population size or density. These issues include the control and

use of land across the region (including soil conservation, fresh and coastal water quality, fresh and coastal water ecosystems, contaminated land and natural hazards); coastal marine areas; freshwater allocation and use; the discharge of contaminants; regional transport, and so on. These issues require management across the entire region, regardless of population.

It is noted that the management of the region's freshwater resources is the largest of Environment Canterbury's functions and services, and arguably its most critical. The proposed South Canterbury Ōtuhituhi constituency covers three geographically distinct water management zones¹ each with their own challenges, issues, and opportunities. The constituency also includes four Districts, more than any other constituency, which demonstrates the area's diversity.

Achieving democratic *outcomes* is just as important a feature of the democratic process as is the voting system itself. Democratic outcomes may not be realised if methods are not established to ensure that communities feel adequately represented. Adequate representation may not occur where small communities are geographically isolated or dislocated from a representative due to the size (in area) of the electorate.

WIC notes that the South Canterbury District Councils of Waitaki, Waimate, Mackenzie, and Timaru have made a joint submission seeking a 14-member council, with two elected representatives to come from South Canterbury. The Councils note that prior to the intervention of central government and the appointment of commissioners, Environment Canterbury consisted of 14 elected members.

WIC supports the submission of the Councils, and the reasoning put forward in their submission.

Appearance at hearing

WIC wishes to be heard in relation to this submission at the Council hearing to be held in August.

¹ Namely the Lower Waitaki South Coastal Canterbury, the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora, and the Upper Waitaki Zones.