



To Environment Canterbury
Hearings@ecan.govt.nz

Application Details:

Consent: **CRC190445** - Application to Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) by Christchurch City Council to discharge from the comprehensive stormwater network.

Applicant Name:

Christchurch City Council

Submission Details

Full Name:

The Avon Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust (AHEIT)

Contact:

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Kit Doudney 31st August 2018

We request email to be the primary contact regarding all hearing information

We **oppose** the application

We **do** wish to be heard in support of our submission



Preface

The Estuary Trust (AHEIT) congratulates the City Council on revising their application and listening to the concerns of others.

However, the Estuary Trust also views the consent process as a significant point in the city's development. Seldom is there an opportunity such as this to actually make a one-step major improvement in the quality of the city's natural and physical environment.

Historically our perceptions of the estuary have come almost full-circle. It was originally a great source of mahinga kai, then a sump for industrial effluent, a repository for the city's sewerage, and more recently viewed as an internationally recognised feeding ground for rare migratory birds such as the godwit.

The thrust of our submission initially was that the council needed to show more commitment in its consent application to actually cleaning up stormwater. The Trust still holds that position.

The Avon Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust

1. The Avon Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust (AHEIT, The Trust) is a charitable society registered in 2003. It was formed as a result of community requests over many years for the formation of an organisation that included committed representation from statutory bodies, tāngata whenua and other agencies.

2. The vision of the Trust is

Communities working together for
Clean Water
Open Space
Safe Recreation, and
Healthy Ecosystems that we can all enjoy and respect

*Toi tū te taonga ā iwi
Toi tū te taonga ā Tāne
Toi tū te taonga ā Tangaroa
Toi tū te iwi*

3. Further details about the Trust, its Constitution, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury and the Trust, the Trust's Management Plan, and its activities can be found on our web-site at www.estuary.org.nz

4. The Trust's Constitution (2002) includes in its objects the achievement of "...healthy working ecosystems for the Estuary and its catchments..." Further, the Trust in its Management Plan (2004) states that references to the Estuary in the Plan should be read as encompassing the Estuary and its catchments.

5. The key role for the Trust is the implementation of the Ihutai Management Plan 2013. Goals and actions in the Management Plan that particularly relevant to this resource consent application are:

GOAL 2: Promoting Clean Water

- Contribute during the development of Stormwater Management Plans, and submit during the consultation and consenting stages.
- Advocate enforcement of conditions on stormwater discharges and for improvements to current stormwater treatments.
- Work with local catchment groups to advocate and assist with projects designed to improve water quality in the rivers.

The Trust's submission

6. The Trust regards our waterways and the Avon Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai (The Estuary) as one of our most threatened ecosystems, which should be highly valued and cared for with measures to facilitate water quality improvements incrementally year on year.
7. The real value of these ecosystems to our city and its communities is not fully accounted for by our government agencies, and the strategies and provisions to improve them need to be brought to a much higher level of governance for adequate implementation.
8. There have been major engineering works and expenditure to improve the Estuary's health, with the 2010 installation of the wastewater treatment outfall pipe, though the direct sewage discharges during the earthquakes delayed the anticipated improvements to the Estuary's water quality and ecology.
9. Stormwater discharge into the contributing rivers and directly to the Estuary now have the most significant detrimental impacts on the Estuary. Much of the stormwater from the urban catchments is directed into the Christchurch City Council's reticulated system and then into the Heathcote River/Ōpāwaho and Avon River/Ōtākaro, bringing contaminated sediments down the waterways and into the Estuary. These are loaded with household run-off materials, heavy metals, hydrocarbons from the roading infrastructure, nutrients and bacteriological contamination.
10. The Trust understands the need for the Christchurch City Council to continue to discharge stormwater into waterways in Christchurch District.
11. In the "Water Quality and Quantity Standards" conditions proposed by CCC (below), the word "reasonable" or "practicable" is used repeatedly. We ask the applicant to define their meaning - does it mean "if there is money available?" or does it mean "if we feel like it"?

The use of these terms gives the consent holder a way out. Their use also signals a lack of commitment by the consent holder to actually clean up water flows associated with stormwater. The words reasonable and practicable need to be defined. Better still, delete the words and make each of the statements more definite.

Water Quality and Quantity Standards

19. *For any development or redevelopment within a catchment which does not have a certified SMP, stormwater quality and quantity mitigation shall meet the General City conditions as specified in Schedule 3.*
20. *The consent holder shall use **reasonable** endeavours to mitigate the effects of the discharge of stormwater on surface water quality, instream sediment quality, aquatic ecology health and mana whenua values. The extent of mitigation of effects shall be measured by the Receiving Environment Objectives and Attribute Target Levels monitoring described in Schedules 4 and 5.*
21. *The consent holder shall use **reasonable** endeavours to mitigate the effects of the discharge of stormwater on groundwater and spring water quality. The extent of*

mitigation of effects shall be measured by the Receiving Environment Objectives and Attribute Target Levels monitoring described in Schedule 6.

22. *The consent holder shall use **reasonable** endeavours to mitigate the effects of the discharge of stormwater on water quantity. The extent of mitigation of effects shall be measured by the Receiving Environment Objectives and Attribute Target Levels monitoring described in Schedule 7.*

23. *The consent holder shall use **reasonable** endeavours to ensure that construction phase stormwater quality mitigation is implemented for all development sites prior to commencement of stripping of vegetation or earthworks on the site.*

24. *The consent holder shall use **reasonable** endeavours to ensure that operational phase stormwater quality and quantity mitigation is implemented for all development and re-development (where required) prior to issuing certification under the relevant legislation.*

25. *The consent holder shall provide retrofit water quality and quantity mitigation for existing development where **practicable**.*

(extract from document CRC160056 CSNDC additional information proposed conditions)

12. The City Council **MUST** commit to **IMPROVING** the surface water quality in all the catchments and sub-catchments in Christchurch. Maintaining the current poor quality is not acceptable to the Trust, or to the communities we represent.

13. However, we are supportive of the objectives of this consent:

Waterways receiving environment objectives:

1. Enhance ecological values.
2. Decrease sediment input to prevent adverse effects on water clarity and aquatic biota.
3. Reduce copper, lead and zinc levels in surface water to prevent adverse effects on aquatic biota.
4. Reduce nutrient levels to limit excessive growth of macrophytes and filamentous algae.
5. Improve sediment quality to prevent adverse effects on aquatic biota.
6. Enhance tangata whenua values and provide for the values and interests of Ngāi Tahu associated with freshwater resources.

Coastal Receiving environment objectives:

1. Reduce sediment input to prevent adverse effects on water clarity and aquatic biota.
2. Decrease copper, lead and zinc levels in water to prevent adverse effects on aquatic biota.
3. Reduce phosphorus input to limit excessive growth of macrophytes and filamentous algae.
4. Enhance tangata whenua values and provide for the values and interests of Ngāi Tahu associated with coastal waters and resources.

14. However, the Trust submits that these objectives will NOT be met by merely maintaining the current poor water quality in the rivers. The conditions on this consent must be such that there is commitment by the City Council to provide the necessary implementation

plans and funding to achieve these objectives. The current suggested conditions are not adequate.

15. The Trust supports the mitigation measures proposed by the City Council, particularly;

9.1. Best Practice in Stormwater Treatment is the process of removing a portion of the contaminants before discharge into the receiving environment.

- Selection of the best treatment method is based on a number of factors such as required treatment level, soil permeability, receiving environment, available space, maintenance requirements etc.
- In addition to these considerations, CCC is committed to a 'multi-value' approach to management of surface water through its Surface Water Strategy 2009 – 2039 (CCC 2009).
- The six values supported, include drainage as well as landscape, ecology, recreation, culture and heritage. Culture stands for Tangata Whenua values predominantly, but not exclusively.
- Mechanisms that support a range of values are sometimes called 'water-sensitive' as in Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), or 'low impact' as in Low Impact Urban Design (LID).
- Examples of stormwater treatment devices currently used in include:
 - Wetlands, e.g., Prestons subdivision.
 - Dry infiltration basins, e.g., Aidanfield.
 - Rain gardens (limited application currently, some located in Addington).
 - Proprietary filtration devices (nearly all privately owned and maintained).
 - Swales, e.g., Spencerville.
 - Wet ponds, e.g., Tranz Rail pond in Matipo St.

9.5 Non-infrastructure approaches to stormwater management

9.5.1 Monitoring and Enforcement

9.5.2 Education

9.6 Working with industry

16. While this resource consent application is to permit the discharges into the waterways, the Trust very strongly urges the Christchurch City Council to address the contaminants at source and produce a plan to incrementally improve the water quality of the rivers and the Estuary. Conditions to the Consent should require this.

17. In our view this would include provision for encouraging businesses and residents to instigate on-site stormwater retention and treatment systems, with penalties for site discharges that impact the pollutant load into the system.

18. It would also require investment in education and community engagement to instigate behaviour change to ensure residents and businesses are committing to reducing contaminants in stormwater they discharge from their own sites.

19. We therefore advocate for the resurrection of the Community water partnership, which was dropped by the CCC during the Long Term Planning process.

Non-Infrastructural methods of improving water quality

20. The CCC puts strong emphasis on the individual catchment plans (SMPs) as the descriptors of how exactly water quality can be improved. It also relies on a proposed Implementation Plan to integrate activities of the various SMPS. However the Implementation Plan is not part of the consent application; it is proposed that such a plan be prepared a year after the consent is granted.

In particular, if the Implementation Plan is to include “non-infrastructural methods” then the Council needs to be more explicit about its commitment to those methods. It needs to show that is prepared to put adequate funds into such a programme and for the purpose of the consent it needs to define its own role rather than seeing itself as an instigator of community partnerships.

In its covering letter the council says non-structural methods can be more significant than treatment facilities. If that is the case then the council also needs to show more commitment to those alternatives.

21. Over the past 20 years there have been several education programmes in Christchurch to encourage people to reduce stormwater pollution. These have been sporadic. If the Council is serious about this, it needs to be more specific at this stage how it sees its own role. It must be more than just an instigator, it actually needs to take ownership of such a programme and commit staff and funds and make this clear in its consent application (one such a measure would be the re-establishment of our submission point number 17, the Community water partnership).

The following section of the proposed conditions shows good intentions, but we propose that the Council should be showing more commitment. The word “**reasonable**” is used again, in the first line (what does ‘reasonable’ mean?).

<p>Communication, Education and Awareness</p> <p><i>Make reasonable endeavours to establish a community water engagement programme involving Council, Canterbury Regional Council, Ngai Tahu, DoC, MfE, Universities, and Community Groups with the objective of encouraging awareness and community actions to reduce stormwater contaminant discharges and improve waterways through source control and behaviour change.</i></p> <p><i>Possible initiatives of the community water engagement programme are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing information for property owners on quick actions that they can undertake around the home to stop contaminants from entering stormwater (based on 2017</i> 	<p>Jul-19</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p><i>Community Waterway Survey findings conducted by Christchurch City Council).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implement a sustainable behaviour change programme. Actions aimed at stopping contaminants getting into the stormwater network, such as: sediment, litter, bacterial contaminants.</i> • <i>Undertaking a wider educational programme for schools.</i> 		
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(extract from document CRC160056 CSNDC additional information proposed conditions)

22. We are concerned about the addition of extra discharge sites to the application. We have not had sufficient time to assess the implications of these additions and we may choose to elaborate further on this in our verbal submission at the appropriate hearing.
23. We welcome and encourage the use of ‘non-infrastructure’ measures such as:
- Advocacy for Central Government legislative intervention in outlawing copper in brake pads, zinc in tyres and the adoption of national measures and industry standards to reduce the discharge of contaminants including zinc and copper from metal roofs.
 - Advocacy for research into light weight roofing materials that are contaminant-free
 - Adoption of education and behaviour change initiatives to reduce household contaminants at source (via a scheme such as the Community Water Partnership).

Conclusion

We see that overall there are some **Negative** points in the application

- a. Lack of commitment generally (too much use of the word “reasonable”).
- b. Lack of commitment to non-structural methods – there should be a plan/schedule/strategy/budget.
- c. No clear retro-fitting programme for older areas of the city.

And some **Positive** points

- d. CCC have reduced the application length to 25 years (from 35 years).
- e. Targets set.
- f. Programme outlined for reducing heavy metals (copper, zinc, etc).