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As a resident and rate payer of Canterbury I am horrified to find that ECAN is proposing a voting system that is heavily weighted to giving more representation to rural voters than city voters. The power of a vote in Central Christchurch is 40% less than a vote in South Canterbury. This representation proposed is so unbalanced that it breaches section 19V(2) of the Local Electoral Act (the +/- 1-% rule) in four out of the seven constituencies. Fair representation is a critical pillar of democracy, guaranteed by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Local Electoral Act 2001. Voters in Canterbury have not had full democratic representation on ECAN since 2010. I have been hoping that at the coming election we would be returning to a fully democratic system so I am gutted to learn that this is not the case.

I can see why it may be tempting to ECAN officials to think that country voters need more control over ECAN management of water and land resources than do city voters, but they have to see that what happens with land use, waterways and aquifers in rural areas have an impact on all people throughout the province, both residents and visitors. Many of the city voters like me have their ancestral roots in country areas. I have been very upset having had to watch how mismanagement of water and farming practices have led to a degradation of our rivers and aquifer water. This degradation is a result of rural representatives encouraging water use that led to profits for some farmers but ignored the greater good of Canterbury. Your proposal to establish another undemocratic voting system leads me to think that once again water allocation may be heavily weighted towards dairy farming, a further increase in cow numbers and more nitrogen pollution in our waterways.

Lets get back to full and true democracy (and clean water)

Dot Lovell-Smith