

From: [Trudy Ballantine](#)
To: [Mailroom Mailbox](#)
Subject: Response to Representation Review
Date: Wednesday, 26 September 2018 5:40:11 PM

Dear Environment Canterbury

Re: Representation Review Objection

I object to the Proposal for Representation for the 2019 elections notified by Environment Canterbury.

I object on the basis that the proposal exceeds the +/- 10% fair representation criteria required by the Local Electoral Act in not just one, but four out of the seven proposed wards.

In 2010 the National Government sacked democratically elected Councillors and replaced them with Government appointed commissioners. For eight years we have been denied our democratic rights. Full democracy has yet to be returned.

This is a shameful stain on New Zealand's proud democratic history.

You now have the opportunity to put this injustice to an end and restore democracy to the people of Canterbury.

But the representation structure proposed will not return full democracy. Instead, it will continue to deny hundreds of thousands of our citizens their right to fair representation.

In general, the proposal grossly over-represents rural voters and under-represents urban voters. In some cases the difference in representation is extreme.

However, the representation structure proposed would mean that the vote of people in Central Christchurch will count for 40% less than the votes of people in South Canterbury.

That is not democracy.

It's not democracy when some people's votes count significantly more than others.

Fair representation is a critical pillar of the healthy functioning democracy that New Zealanders expect and is guaranteed to them both in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Local Electoral Act 2001.

That's why the first principle of the Local Electoral Act is "fair and effective representation for individuals and communities." ([Legislation.govt.nz](http://legislation.govt.nz))

And to put that into effect, section 19V(2) of the Act directs that when determining numbers of members to be elected, the population of each ward should be divided by

the number of members to be elected by that ward and should produce a figure no more than 10% greater or smaller than the population of the region divided by the total number of elected members.

This is known as the +/- 10% rule. The proposal breaks this rule in over half of the wards. This in itself should be a cause for alarm.

However, even more alarming is the fact that over-representation, above what the law allows, occurs only in rural wards. Under-representation, below what the law allows, occurs only in urban wards.

This grossly unbalanced representation proposal runs counter to core constitutional values, most importantly that of a free and democratic society.

There is simply no logical, rational or compelling case given in the proposal to warrant such an undemocratic representation structure.

My objection to this proposal stands on democracy arguments alone.

However, I additionally consider a return to full democracy of the regions principle environmental regulator is a critical part of preventing further degradation of the region's waterways.

The sacking of Councillors and appointment of Commissioners at ECan has gone hand in hand with more irrigation and more industrial dairying.

Since 2010, when councillors were sacked, ECan has allowed another several hundred thousand dairy cows to be added to Canterbury's already swollen herd.

Under the anti-democratic rule of nationally appointed commissioners ECan has given its consent to ecologically devastating irrigation and dairy conversion proposals.

The most extreme of which is the consents granted for the mega-dairy farm at Simons Pass Station in the Mackenzie Basin. These were apparently granted by ECan, without public notification.

This is just one example of many in the last eight years where ECan has put the interests of industrial dairying first, no matter how high the environmental cost.

In 2016, it was revealed that irrigators were recorded taking hundreds of millions of litres of water above their entitlements. ECan issued few fines and there were no prosecutions. The vast majority were not punished at all. [\(The Press, 2016\)](#)

Also in 2016, the plan change for Selwyn/Te Waihora, one of the most severely polluted catchments in Canterbury, became operative. NZ has been described as "Clean and Green", this is definitely going to change if we don't stop polluting NZ.

Put plainly, I believe that for the last eight years ECan has relentlessly served the interests of the irrigation and dairy industries over the interests of clean, safe water and all those who rely on it.

Canterbury is now in the midst of a worsening freshwater crisis and sadly it serves as a grave example of what happens to our environment when democracy is steamrolled by industry.

Us New Zealanders have clearly signalled that dirty rivers and unsafe drinking water will no longer be tolerated.

I support the return to full democracy that has been denied to us Cantabrians for eight years. It is a critical step towards solving the regions freshwater crisis.

Thank you and please consider our pleas seriously,

Dr Trudy Ballantine