

From: [G Barnes](#)
To: [Mailroom Mailbox](#)
Subject: Plan Change 7 to the LWRP Submission
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To: Environment Canterbury
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Name of Submitter:
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This is a submission on the following proposed plan: Proposed Plan Change 7 to the Canterbury Land and Water Plan.

I could not gain an advantage in trade competition in making this submission.

The specific provisions of the proposal that my submission relates to are:

- o Part A – Omnibus
- o Part B – OTOP
- o Part C – Waimakariri

My submission is that:

As a potato farmer in mid-Canterbury I support, in general, some of the opinions of Potatoes NZ and Horticulture NZ - which state that "Not all rural production activities are equal in value to the community or equal in environmental effect." Plus I also wish to prioritise 'the common good' over private profit.

I would also submit that the way eCan currently distributes water consents to irrigation companies needs to be broken-down and re-assessed, as first priority - and will enable much improved environmental benefits. Water must be charged on WHAT IS ACTUALLY USED, per cubic metre, not on a l/s rate. The way water is currently distributed, per l/s encourages 'maximum' use in order to gain full advantage of the farmers, often significant, expense. Therefore irrigation companies maximise the design of their irrigators to ensure the farmer gets full use of the water rights they are paying for, as a first design principle, and then the design is based on what their crops needs actually are. This will encourage more efficient use use of water, immediately.

My submission is that:

- Not all rural production activities are equal in value to the community or equal in environmental effect. The value of vegetable growing for **domestic food supply** and security and the ability to feed people in the future is not reflected in proposed Plan Change 7. Nor are the effects of climate change considered in maintaining the status quo land use activity mix. I think that you must take into account LOCAL FOOD SECURITY, in your decision making - alongside water security, when making decisions that will affect both the ability to farm healthy food, and also ensure a healthy water eco-system.
- A tailored approach is required for commercial vegetable production if land with high production value is to be realised for its food production purpose, while achieving

catchment wide water quality improvements and other environmental benefits in the longer term. But, I also submit that any regulations that encourage the removal of intensive-animal-farming on land that has been scientifically proven to be high-leaching, with potential to threaten to aquifer ecology, particularly the shallow drylands on the northern side of the braided rivers, be supported to return to extensive-farming or forestry. I support that this land should have greater regulations applied to it, particularly in terms of the application of nitrogen fertilisers, and stock effluent, whilst keeping in mind that short-rotation vegetables, within a broader extensive-farming system is occasionally required.

- Rural production systems are very diverse with a wide range of fruits, vegetables and other crops being grown across Canterbury. Potato production systems rely on rotations; often enabled by sharing and leasing agreements. The current Canterbury approach has significantly degraded the ability to undertake new leases. Plan Change 7 presents significant further obstacles and requires amendment to avoid wider effects that are most likely unintended.

- The assessment process underpinning the proposed Plan Change 7 does not adequately provide for new growing operations to meet future food demand. Existing production is also at threat from the restrictions on movement of activities across property and catchment boundaries.

- I have concerns about my ability to accurately assess nutrient discharges from horticultural systems, specifically the deficiencies in OVERSEER to model horticultural crops, and would support a more generic method for tallying nutrient losses. The potato sector is supporting a more accurate “direct measurement” based approach. As a small organic farmer, we are faced with ever increasing costs to ensure we meet current regulations, which are not adequately measured by Overseer. This tool was designed for farmers who use chemical fertilisers, particularly the ecologically devastating UREA. We do not use this chemical and as an organic farmer, are already practising ‘good management’ under our certifying organic rules, and this should be sufficient.

- The real water quality improvement come from the practices I adopt to manage discharges from land I manage (often only temporarily). I support requiring all growers to operate at good management practice, and beyond.

- I propose provisions be added to enable existing areas of vegetable growing to move onto different land in a different catchment, to account for crop rotation, leased land arrangements and to enable growers to move to less environmentally sensitive locations.

*NB: The following submissions are made in full support with those of the Common Good, but also in reference to the statement : “Not all rural production activities are equal in value to the community or equal in environmental effect. The value of vegetable growing for **domestic food supply and security** and the ability to feed people in the future must also be reflected in proposed Plan Change 7”*

FOR THE ORARI, TEMUKA, OPIHI, PAREORA AND WAIMAKARIRI SECTIONS:

- I strongly support the caps on any new water allocation.
- I strongly support the setting of nitrate limits for rivers and groundwater and the policies and rules that restrict any further increase of nutrient discharges.
- I strongly support higher required reductions in nitrogen losses in High Nitrogen Concentration Areas beyond “Good management practice” but want to see greater reductions required in the life of this current plan.

- I strongly request all minimum flows and associated partial restrictions to provide for the ecological health of the stream, river, hapua (lagoons), etc. within the life of this current plan.

FOR THE WAIMAKARIRI SECTION:

- I consider the implications of nitrate leaching in the Waimakariri ‘Nitrate priority area’, which is modelled to result in a nitrate level of 3.8 mg/l, poses an unacceptable risk to the drinking water of current and future Christchurch citizens.
- I consider that the implication for future nitrate pollution of Christchurch’s drinking water is inconsistent with the following Strategic Policies in the Land and Water Regional Plan:
 - 4.4 Groundwater is managed so that: ...e. Overall water quality in aquifers does not decline
 - 4.5 Water is managed through the setting of limits to safeguard the life-supporting capacity of ecosystems, support customary uses, and provide for community drinking-water supplies and stock water, as a first priority...’.
- I consider the nitrate reduction rules should require appropriate reductions in the ‘Nitrate priority area’ which will maintain or improve the current quality of the Christchurch drinking water aquifers as is required under the NPS for Freshwater.
- The decisions we make today will have serious and lasting implications for current and future generations and I believe it is entirely inappropriate for the activities of private individuals and enterprises to put at risk the drinking water of nearly 400,000 people, with population projections estimating 500,000+ by the time nitrate contamination levels are expected to reach 3.8 mg/l.
- The economic assessments, which informed PC7, state: “The total reduction from Current Pathways to the Solutions Package will be approximately \$5.8 million in operating profit, and \$5.7 million per annum in regional GDP” and appear to have a minor impact (0.3%) on the \$1.57 billion GDP for the Waimakariri district.
- I consider that economic externalities must be taken into account alongside farm operating surplus assessments, such as the cost to younger and future generations if they are faced with needing to treat their drinking water or source alternative supplies. The future cost to the Christchurch public is likely to vastly exceed that of any short term economic impact on farm profits.
- I strongly support a science-based precautionary approach to both the protection of human health and the protection of Christchurch’s drinking water sources, which rely on functional, healthy aquifer ecosystems.
- Graham Fenwick (NZ’s leading groundwater ecosystem scientist) suggests in his evidence to the Te Waikoropupu springs WCO hearing a trigger value of 0.4–0.5 mg/l as a precautionary value to ensure ecosystem health.
- Chris Hickey (NZs leading ecotoxicologist) recommends in his evidence to the Te Waikoropupu springs WCO hearing that where long lag times apply, a management limit of 0.55–1.1 mg/l is appropriate (Hickey considers a ‘long time lag’ to be 8 years, whereas in the lag effects for the Waimakariri ‘Nitrate priority area’ is modelled as being 50+ years).
- I would like to see limits set in the life of this proposed plan that achieve those ranges of limits suggested as part of the Te Waikoropupu springs WCO hearing.
- In Graham Fenwick’s presentation to commissioners on behalf of Wellington Regional Council in 2018 he states: “Available research evidence empirically demonstrates that this standard [NZ Drinking Water Standard], designed to protect human health, is inappropriate for ensuring the health of aquatic ecosystems and invertebrates under long-term exposure.”
- In light of Fenwick’s and Hickey’s findings mentioned above, it is clear that further to being inconsistent with policies 4.4 and 4.5 the proposed nitrate limit of 3.8 mg/l will not provide for the ecosystem health of the Christchurch drinking water aquifers.

- Even though the biodiversity within New Zealand’s aquifers is poorly known, the New Zealand Conservation Act 1987 and the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy requires regional councils to ensure that the intrinsic and other values of all biodiversity (including that of “underground aquifers”) are adequately maintained and safeguarded for future generations.
- The ecosystem services delivered by groundwater biodiversity are integral to sustaining groundwater and surface water resources, cultural identities and economies at local, regional and national levels.
- The Resource Management Act 1991 (and amendments) requires regional councils to ensure the sustainability of these ecosystem services (safeguard “the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems” by “avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment” to ensure that the needs of future generations are met.).
- The NPS-FM Appendix 1 sets out national values and uses for freshwater, which explicitly includes “aquifer” as one “freshwater body type”. These compulsory national values for ecosystem health are:
 - The freshwater management unit supports a healthy ecosystem appropriate to that freshwater body type (river, lake, wetland, or aquifer).
 - In a healthy freshwater ecosystem ecological processes are maintained, there is a range and diversity of indigenous flora and fauna, and there is resilience to change.
 - Matters to take into account for a healthy freshwater ecosystem include the management of adverse effects on flora and fauna of contaminants, changes in freshwater chemistry, excessive nutrients, algal blooms, high sediment levels, high temperatures, low oxygen, invasive species, and changes in flow regime. Other matters to take into account include the essential habitat needs of flora and fauna and the connections between water bodies.
 - For these reasons, I consider that the aquifer ecosystem which provides Christchurch’s drinking water requires specific protection, greater than that is afforded in the current plans rules for nitrate reductions.
- I do not believe that because the modelled nitrate pollution is 50+ years away, that it is of any less immediate concern (particularly because ECan’s monitoring shows the northern bores are already showing increasing nitrate levels – in line with the model’s predictions). Younger and future generations will be facing much greater challenges in the form of climate disruption and all the social, cultural, environmental and economic issues associated with such disruption. The least we can do is provide them a safe, ecologically functional water supply, just like we enjoy today.

FOR THE OMNIBUS SECTION:

I support the rules applying to:

- Greater restrictions on activities to improve protection of the remaining habitat of native freshwater fish;
- Additional stock exclusion provisions for swimming sites,
- Greater recognition of values (such as mahinga kai) and protection of sites of significance to Ngai Tahu, including wahi tapu (sacred sites), wahi taonga (treasured sites), tuhituhi o nehera (limestone rock art sites) and waipuna (springs), and,
- The addition of new salmon spawning sites.

My farm operation is located in Highbank and comprises of the following crops and acreage - potatoes, carrots, parsnips less than 5 hectares.

Plan Change 2 is likely to affect my business in the following ways:

It has the potential to affect our financial ability to intensively farm organic vegetables for domestic consumption, Canterbury-wide.

It has the potential to weaken our social licence to farm, via adverse effects to the community's drinking water and risks to the aquifer ecology.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Thank you for considering my submission.

regards
Gaylene