

**From:** [Keri Johnston](#)  
**To:** [Plan Hearings](#)  
**Subject:** Geraldine Water Solutions - Plan Change 7 Hearing Evidence  
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**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[Geradline Water Solutions Hearing Evidence Plan Change 7 FINAL 170720.pdf](#)

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Please find this attached.

Kind regards,

Keri



Keri Johnston | [Natural Resources Engineer \(CMEngNZ\)](#)


p 03 308 8587 ext. 2

m 027 220 2425

f 028 899 4423

e [keri@irricon.co.nz](mailto:keri@irricon.co.nz)

w [irricon.co.nz](http://irricon.co.nz)

a 16 Hilton Highway  [New Location](#)  
PO Box 2193, Washdyke, Timaru

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**BEFORE INDEPENDANT HEARING COMMISSIONERS  
APPOINTED BY THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**UNDER:** the Resource Management Act 1991

**IN THE MATTER OF:** Proposed Plan Change 7 to the Canterbury Land  
and Water Regional Plan – Section 14: Orari-  
Temuka-Opihi-Pareora

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NICHOLAS GEORGE WARD ON BEHALF OF  
THE GERALDINE WATER SOLUTIONS**

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## Introduction

1. My name is Nick Ward and, with my wife, own a farm near Temuka catchment and are fourth generation farmers.
2. We irrigate 300 hectares of predominately intensive cropping and horticulture from the Ohapi catchment, which is within the Orari catchment. I was a part of the Orari Water Society, whom was involved in the formation of the Orari River sub-catchment plan, Section 14. I am also part of the Ohapi Water User Group and is the Chair of Geraldine Water Solutions (GWS).
3. Fundamentally the success of our businesses and other members of GWS, are a result of irrigation water. Reliable water throughout the irrigation season is key to obtaining growing contracts, sustainable crop yields and milk production. The changing of the planning framework on the Orari and Temuka catchments to meet the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management ('NPSFM' or 'the National Policy Statement') means, in simple terms, that the available allocation to irrigators is being reduced significantly and minimum flows increased. The outcome of this is decreased water reliability and the sustainability of our farming businesses who are reliant on irrigation water.
4. As a result, alternative water supply from alpine water resources must be sought for the Orari and Temuka catchments. Given this, we have a significant interest in how the water resources are managed and allocated within the Orari, and Temuka catchments and the ability to source alternative water supplies.
5. The purpose of GWS is to:
  - (a) Increase awareness of farmer regulatory requirements;
  - (b) Facilitate sharing of information to assist in understanding potential future water supply risks; and
  - (c) Investigate bringing new water from the northern counterparts into South Canterbury (centred around the Geraldine area – Temuka, Waihi, Orari).
6. GWS submitted and presented on the Zone Committee Implementation Programme Addendum ('ZIPA') in relation to the Temuka Catchment. GWS submitted that changes proposed were not economically viable for consent holders and that the Zone Committee must give more time for GWS to find alternative solutions before such adverse measures are imposed. The effect economically is not only on farmers, but a substantial flow on effect to our local communities.
7. GWS fully support the Temuka Catchment Working Party (TCWP) and Orari Water Society (OWS) who are presenting evidence in this Plan Change 7 hearing.
8. I understand that these catchments are all significantly over-allocated for irrigation and the minimum flows are too low in terms of the National Policy Statement. The catchment plans being developed must give effect to the NPSFM, which suggests that unless alternative water supplies found outside of these catchment, significant social and economic impacts will be felt by the farming sector and families in this area, and on those businesses that service the rural sector.
9. GWS believe alternative water will have a positive economic impact to the irrigators and positive environmental effect long term. Therefore this plan must make provision for water to be brought into the catchment. It is hoped that leaving more water in the

catchment by sourcing alternative water, will improve water quality and therefore benefit our waterways and their ecosystems.

10. GWS has received funding from the Canterbury Regional Council and Crown Irrigation to investigate the feasibility study for alternative water to the catchment. So that is exactly what we are doing, pursuing feasibility of supply options, of which the Klondyke Ponds is a strong contender.
11. GWS is not a scheme yet, it is a group representing farmers who are using various sources of water and who you will now understand are all under significant threats with reducing allocation and increasing minimum flows. Our goal is to investigate reliable water supply options for existing irrigators under threat, with the long-term aim of investigating the feasibility of bringing stored water south of the Rangitata River to our farmers. We have approximately 40 farmers in our group and I estimate there are potentially 7,000 to 9,000 ha of at risk land that will need alternative water brought into the catchments and communities.
12. The focus by GWS for its evidence on PC7, is Policy 14.4.11 – Efficient Use of Water and 14.4.14 – Out of Catchment Water, as the ability for existing water users who's allocation is being significantly reduced, to have alternative water supplies is critical. Enabling these irrigators to go to alternative water supplies, also has a positive environmental effect with reduced demand on these over-allocated catchments.
13. These policy changes have been discussed with our consultant, Haidee McCabe of Irricon Resource Solutions.
14. Policy 14.4.11 – GWS in submissions supported this policy as notified. However, the amendment to Policy 14.4.11 as per the S42A report discussion and the proposed plan tracked change version of this policy is **supported**. The deletion of where the abstraction is from with reference to the OTOP region means if GWS or any other company do source water from outside the region, this policy will not be contravened. This now meets what GWS was seeking in relation to the submission on Policy 14.4.14, through the change to Policy 14.4.11.
15. Policy 14.4.11 – GWS in submissions sought clarification to Policy 14.4.14 around whether the reference to catchment, was intending water from outside the OTOP region. The S42A report clarifies this was the intent, nevertheless goes on to make further substantial changes to the policy which by-enlarge is its deletion except cultural aspects and therefore relies upon the Region Wide – Policy 4.55, 4.56 and 4.71A.
16. GWS consider our response to S42A recommendation in conjunction with what is achieved with the proposed change to Policy 14.4.11, which is supported as it clarifies the ability to use sources of water from outside the OTOP region. Therefore, to then rely on the general rules with Policy 4.55 for the discharge and Policy 4.56 regarding introduced water makes logical sense and is **supported**.
17. GWS also understand the need to ensure cultural concerns are addressed and ensure the Mauri of the water is not diminished. GWS is supportive of consultation requirements with Ngai Tahu, as this is an important and a sensitive matter, when discharging water from out of catchment.
18. However we do seek clarification that when we consider GWS intention and what our submission has been trying to achieve, that Policy 4.55 and 4.56 may not actually impact an out of catchment scheme if using this water directly from the schemes

infrastructure e.g. not discharging water into any waterways and not impacting the waterways allocation or flow regime.

19. GWS consider these policies would not actually be relevant unless discharging, other than Policy 14.4.11. We understand it is likely that a “use” consent under Region Wide Rule 5.6 to use this water would be required by either individuals or schemes who were seeking to use water from out of catchment.
20. Ultimately GWS are seeking that the plan enables efficient and effective irrigation with new sources of water and alternatives from outside the OTOP region. On that basis we continue to support the recommendations made by the TCWP and OWS particularly given the economic impact of the changes to the flow regimes. Furthermore any departure from the minimum flows and allocation being brought forward from 2040 to 2035 is not supported.
21. Such changes mean, their must be water sourced from outside the OTOP region, and from our experience to date with GWS, this takes a significant amount of time. There is a real need to see what the outcome of this plan is for irrigators to then know what they are dealing with and proceed on the onerous journey of trying to enable a scheme to get up and running to supply water to this catchment. From concept, to design, funding, resource consenting and construction, and depending on the Government in place, this could easily take 15-20 years.

Nicholas Ward  
Geraldine Water Solutions  
17 July 2020