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**Subject:** PC7 EIC - As One Inc (submitter number 387) [DC-Documents.FID2837222]  
**Date:** Friday, 17 July 2020 4:38:23 pm  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)  
[15072020\\_20069\\_CLWRP\\_PC7\\_Waimak\\_evidence\\_Mike\\_Freeman\\_FINAL.pdf](#)  
[Evidence of Mark Nalder for As One Inc \( 11769417 1\).PDF](#)  
[Evidence of Julie Mehrtens for As One Inc \( 11769253 1\).PDF](#)  
[Evidence of Alan Hawkins for As One Inc \( 11769411 1\).PDF](#)  
[Gavin Reed PC7 evidence \( 11769244 1\).PDF](#)

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Good afternoon,

Please find **attached** the following evidence. This evidence is filed on behalf of As One Incorporated (submitter number 387), and also on behalf of individual submitters, where a second submission number is provided:

- Dr Michael Freeman (expert evidence);
- Mark Nalder (submitter number 272);
- Julie Mehrtens;
- Alan Hawkins (submitter number 413).; and
- Gavin Reed (submitter number 374).

I have copied Hans van der Wal into this email, who is also counsel for As One Inc.

We note that additional information was loaded onto the Plan Change 7 hearings website yesterday. Our witnesses have not had the opportunity to review that information, or comment on it in this evidence. We reserve the right to file further evidence in response to those matters, if required.

Kind regards,  
Jamie.

**Jamie Robinson**  
Associate

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## **BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL OF THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**In the matter** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**And**

**In the matter** Plan Change 7 to the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan

Statement of evidence of Julie Mehrtens on behalf of As One Inc (submitter number 387).

Dated: 17 July 2019

### **Experience, background and our farm.**

- 1) My full name is Julie Fay Mehrtens. I am presenting this evidence on behalf of my husband Andrew and I, who are dairy farmers at Oxford.
- 2) We have farmed on this property since 1991. We milk 1100 cows and are fully self-contained, with all animals raised on site, and wintered on. We own 557 ha and lease a further 100 ha. The milking platform is 336 ha effective.
- 3) We have not always been dairy farms. We owned and ran a contracting business, which we later sold. We then leased a mixed cropping farm, during which we endured the 1988–89 drought. We then bought our first farm, which we later sold in order to purchase the farm where we still live and work, buying 216ha in 1991, and adding another 50 ha a few year later. We converted this farm to dairy in 1999, and have operated as a dairy farm ever since.
- 4) We run the farm ourselves. My husband Andrew is predominantly involved in the dairy support aspect and any development, and I oversee the operation of the milking platform. We are hands on, and employ 9 staff. We are careful to ensure that we meet all regulations.
- 5) The property was first irrigated in 1999 from the Waimakariri Irrigation Limited (WIL) scheme. Accordingly, we operate within the confines of the WIL resource consent, including the requirements to comply with our Farm Environment Plan to ensure that the company can manage nutrient loss appropriately.
- 6) All our development since irrigation was first introduced on our farm has been based on what we can do on the irrigated area. Although the cost of irrigation greatly increased our bank loan, the security that it affords us in dry years is critical. It allows us to be confident in our ability to feed all of our stock, year-round.

- 7) The entire milking platform is in the Nitrate Priority Area Zone E, which would currently require the property to reduce nitrogen loss by 90% beyond GMP on the milking platform. Some of the support block is in NPA Zone D.

**My key concerns with PC7 as proposed are:**

- 8) The 6 reduction steps as proposed in table 8-9 for our property will be impossible for us to meet as a business. We will be broke well before the final 'step' that Table 8-9 requires. The dairy milking platform will be non-viable. Immediately there are three apparent impacts on our property:
  - a. The value of our property will plummet. Who would want to purchase a property that is subject to reductions that make farming an impossibility?
  - b. Secondly there is the impact on profitability. The effect on cash flow may not be immediate, as the reductions aren't required until 2030 but the effect on value of the property is.
  - c. Lastly is the impact on our bank security. We imagine we will have trouble retaining the existing level of borrowing, and anticipate there will be no money available to borrow to assist us in steps which could meet the first stage of reductions, because there is no way we can still be farming decades later.
- 9) I have read the evidence of Dr Mike Freeman, prepared for As One Inc. He raises the very valid point that the reduction steps are stated as being needed to improve the water quality in the Cust main drain yet less than half of the Cust surface catchment has been included in Zone E. The remaining area of the Cust surface water catchment requires no reductions beyond GMP.
- 10) By our estimates there are approximately 4900 milking cows that are both in Zone E and the Cust surface catchment. There are an additional 4500 milking cows that are in the Cust surface catchment but not in Zone E. Those 4500 cows are on properties that require no reductions beyond GMP. We do not want to set neighbor against neighbor but this just one example of the concerns we have with what ECan is proposing. I do not understand why ECan is choosing to send us, and our neighbours, broke, when other farmers of the same type, within the same catchment, are not required to do anything further. It feels like ECan are picking winners and losers, and it's luck of the draw what side of the line you're on. Decisions about our livelihoods must be made with more care than that.

- 11) The reductions are primarily to be made by dairy milking platforms and other consented activities. There is approximately 1500 ha of dairy milking platform that is in both zone E and in the Cust surface catchment. That is 8.5% of the Cust Surface catchment of 17,856 ha. That small area is responsible for achieving a large proportion of the required water quality improvement. I accept that many dairy farms have got an important role to play in reducing N loss, and improving water quality. However, it feels that a small proportion of us have been given all of the responsibility for change.
- 12) I am concerned that the changes proposed by ECan will send us, and other farmers within the NPA broke, without improving water quality as the plan change requires (because so much of the relevant area is not required to make the same reductions). I consider that the alternatives proposed by the As One group are significantly more appropriate, both in managing nutrient loss in a fair way to improve water quality, and in ensuring our rural community continues to thrive.
- 13) Under PC5 we are required to be farming at GMP from 1 July 2020 – i.e right now. However it is my understanding that the portal is broken, and it is almost impossible to get an accurate number for GMP. These reductions are all based on the GMP number, and so it is critical that we understand what that looks like.
- 14) I am here because this plan change is of massive significance to me, and my family. Farming is a long-term business. Decisions are made looking forward many years, not just one or two at a time. We farmed through the 1988/89 drought, and we persevered because we knew things would get better. This plan change is a new threat to our livelihood, but the difference is we don't have a light at the end of the tunnel here. We know that farming our property will become more and more unrealistic the closer we get to 2070.
- 15) I ask that you consider how this plan change will impact families and communities within the NPA. I seek that the alternative approach proposed by As One is taken, so that water quality improvements can be made in a way that is economically sustainable.

Julie Mehrtens  
17 July 2020