

## **SUMMARY STATEMENT OF BRENT WALTON FOR WAIMAKARIRI IRRIGATION LIMITED**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 My full name is Brent Walton and I am the Chief Executive of Waimakariri Irrigation Limited (*WIL*).
- 2 I provided a statement of evidence for WIL dated 17 July 2020.

### **SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

- 3 My evidence outlines WIL's unique position as the potential core driver of water quality management in the Waimakariri District, and its support for the environmental outcomes that underpin proposed Plan Change 7 to the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (*PC7*).
- 4 WIL is of the view that the desired outcomes will be best achieved through the 'WIL solutions package' rather than PC7 as currently proposed. WIL is committed to making water available for immediate catchment interventions such as Managed Aquifer Recharge and Targeted Stream Augmentation. This would be further bolstered by a large water storage proposal that is proposed by the Scheme and has now received resource consent.
- 5 WIL's solutions package is a more targeted and focused approach, which will deliver desired outcomes sooner, while maintaining the viability of farming in Waimakariri.
- 6 WIL does not support the inclusion of long-term staged reductions and the sub-area approach to those reductions, but WIL is supportive of requiring reductions to 2030 and recognises that if water quality outcomes are not being met, or at least on track to being met, at that time then reductions proposed for 2040 may be justified. Even the reductions proposed at 2040 would be very significant to the viability for a large number of WIL shareholders. At a scheme level, the impact would similarly be very adverse.
- 7 Collective ownership, treatment and responsibility is fundamental to the Scheme. PC7 must incentivise shareholders and the wider community to get behind environmental improvement.

### **WIL and its resource consents**

- 8 Environmental stewardship is a core part of WIL's operations and an integral part of its 'culture'. The company has been very proactive in terms of (for example) voluntarily seeking a farming land use consent/nutrient discharge consent and moving WIL's day-to-day operations from simply being a supplier of water to the 'farm gate' to having an active and direct role in working with shareholders on careful water and nutrient management.
- 9 A key part of this culture is all shareholders being in this together and working together to deliver good management practice across the whole scheme and wider area. As a Scheme many of the initiatives we have in place (including our plans to

build scheme-wide storage) would be undone were shareholders required to approach issues separately, such as the staged reduction requirements on a sub-area basis.

- 10 Together, WIL's consent framework, day-to-day management and support provided to shareholders, and policy framework have created a cultural shift in the way WIL and its farmers shareholders operate. This extends right up to the WIL Board level, with the Board taking an active role in nutrient and wider scheme management issues. WIL has been active in implementing a number of initiatives which demonstrate the Scheme's contribution to sustainable farming and communities in the command area.
- 11 Scheme initiatives include:
  - 11.1 a biodiversity and planting programme;
  - 11.2 the Silverstream infiltration trial;
  - 11.3 a community sponsorship policy; and
  - 11.4 training initiatives.
- 12 The WIL Board has been having regular communication with shareholders through this PC7 process, who are asking what they can do to reduce nutrient losses and improve environmental outcomes. WIL and its shareholders are very engaged in wanting to find a solution that works for them, the wider community, and the environment.

#### **Wright's Road storage ponds**

- 13 On 28 August 2020, and since filing my Evidence in Chief, the Environment Court has approved the final conditions of consent for the Wrights Road storage ponds.
- 14 WIL have a significant workstream in place to give effect to the consent. Its implementation is subject to the support of at least 75% of the WIL shareholding, and WIL expects that such approvals will not be forthcoming unless shareholders have greater certainty around viability going forward.
- 15 The Wrights Road storage ponds are seen as a key part of delivering the 'solutions package' and desired environmental outcomes that are sought as part of PC7. The presence of scheme-based storage will enable WIL and the wider community to access water that can be used for catchment interventions such as Managed Aquifer Recharge and Targeted Stream Augmentation.
- 16 Building the ponds will be a considerable and long-term investment by the Scheme (construction costs estimated to be in excess of \$40 million). This will most likely be funded through a contribution of shareholder advances and debt funding, which will require all shareholders to contribute.
- 17 The future of the storage ponds could therefore be greatly assisted (or inhibited) by the outcome of PC7. To reap the benefits of Managed Aquifer Recharge and Targeted

Stream Augmentation, it is critical that the long-term reductions do not inhibit farm viability and confidence.

**Brent Walton**

**11 November 2020**