

Comments

LTP 2021-31

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Are you submitting on behalf of an organisation?	No, I'm submitting as an individual
Are you willing to tell us more about yourself?	Yes
Which age category are you in?	65+ years old
Which suburb or area do you live in?	
Do you think we've prioritised the right issues and opportunities?	Don't know
Which of the proposed options would you like to see us progress with?	Other option (please specify)

I am submitting a broad philosophical position statement in the belief that this form of one-off submission is no longer fit for purpose (most able and interested members of society are suffering donor-fatigue), but rather there needs to be a new form of ongoing 'think tank' engagement with vested community to address the multiple emergencies the planet, NZ and the region face. see item 10 below. This is not something for a 10 minute submission once every 3-10 years!

It is important that we hear what you would like to keep in the plan, what you think should be removed, and anything that you think we have missed?

Submission to ECan LTP
Colin D Meurk ONZM PhD

11th April, 2021

Context

As I see it Environment Canterbury has responsibility for a host of specific activities, actions, policies, regulations, and assisting communities meet environmental needs.

Like all institutions, there is a need to operate in a more joined-up, integrated fashion with left and right hands recognising each other and in synch and, in particular, having a unified vision of a sustainable, equitable, inclusive, place-specific or legible environment, landscape, resource provision and work context. Partnership with Mana Whenua and transparent meaningful engagement with community are paramount.

Whilst day to day actions must continue, there must also be a quickly developing culture that acknowledges the multiple (ecological) emergencies we are facing (and which are declared) and that sooner or later we will either have to change our ways or suffer catastrophic consequences.

Big Picture Context

There will need to be recognition that we are transitioning away from Business as Usual to a distinctly different economic and material paradigm. This is not a mere optional extra or choice, but will increasingly become an imperative for survival. ECan along with Central and City Governments must take a leadership role – intellectually and by example, and through engagement, collaborative learning, and co-design of solutions.

An important caveat here is that all future projections are subject to error, so what is suggested here is very likely but not certain. But the response to this uncertainty is not to wait until it is too late to act, but rather to take a precautionary approach - hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

A key recommendation is then the necessary establishment of 'think tanks', somewhat akin to the technical advisory groups that ECan runs for water districts and biosecurity. But there needs to be larger picture groups (jointly from Councils, Centres of Higher Learning, Mana Whenua and community) addressing integrated economics, futures scenarios, transition engineering, regenerative agriculture, urban sprawl/versatile soil stocks, population vs material carrying capacity, and the role of unique landscape and engagement with nature (from young to old) for well-being.

Day to Day

Biodiversity – is an essential component of our identity or unique sense of place – a contributor to well-being. We must preserve all remnants now - lowland Canterbury with <1% natural land cover is way below critical mass – which has variously been placed at 10-20%. All remnant fragments must now be protected in hedgerows/fence-lines, water races, country road verges. Visibility of nature is key to a public conservation ethic; and groups like Te Ara Kakariki are actively providing habitat steppingstones through the most de-natured part of the country. These are a model for action across the whole region and should be supported.

Biosecurity (if we don't tackle some big problems now – 'one year's seeding, seven year's weeding' – they will overwhelm us and we will inexorably lose our natural landscapes, even in the mountains.

Environment (water, air, marine, etc) – we know what has to be done.

Transport – we know what has to be done – light rail, other public transport – smart shuttles, high-tech aerofoil sailing ships, engaging with innovation and engineering schools, subsidised e-bikes. If a more inclusive co-creative relationship was entered into (as above) then we could all chill out, slow down, be less urgent and stressed, knowing there was a more relaxed and inclusive assurance of being heard – this alone would result in a major reduction in speed, carbon emissions and stress.

Landscape, branding, marketing, sustainable-long stay eco-tourism: Canterbury has an amazingly rich environment, generally undersold except in high profile mountainous areas. We need to spread the visitation more evenly to prevent over-use impacts, and to acknowledge the much greater range of special places and experiences that we have to offer. Canterbury and our distinctive cities and towns

should be destinations and our landscape part of the journey of discovery of our nature and culture. Specific and low-cost innovations for celebrating and marketing our main city are Christchurch360Trail (first urban great walk in NZ), Waitākiri Eco-Sanctuary and Banks Peninsula (adding value to our increasingly restored habitat), and National Park/Biophilic City (first in NZ) – acknowledging that conservation is a social construct and the point for humans is to be able to experience nature – which then becomes a positive feedback.

Budget

If there is any problem with meeting increased relative expenditure on the above, then the obvious solution is to start the process of flattening the salary hierarchy (the imbalances have become extreme and unsustainable economically or socially), taking on more on-the-ground staff with the shared/released resources, and accepting more support from able community volunteers while at the same time supporting them.

Personal

This submission is made at the 11th hour and in very general terms because many of us older heads and younger activists are exhausted with demands, emergencies and providing free services. Making submissions is usually a wasted and demoralising effort, and hence a key component of this submission is in fact providing a mechanism for ongoing meaningful engagement – not just involving those who are already inside the tent, but with those who are innovative and outside the square yet evidence-based thinkers. In other words, the Council should provide leadership – not just in believing they know everything, but specifically in terms of establishing open forums for interested and able citizens to address bigger issues in a co-creative manner.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Do you generally support the activities proposed in the following portfolios:

Water and Land	Unsure
Biodiversity and Biosecurity	Unsure
Climate Change and Community Resilience	Unsure
Air Quality, Transport and Urban Development	Unsure
Regional and Strategic Leadership	Unsure

Do you have any further comments on the activities proposed in specific portfolio/s (please select all those you wish to comment on):

Is the proposed increase in rates affordable as a whole for the Canterbury community? Yes

Any further comments on affordability for the community?

see my comments on budget under item 10. Yes it is necessary and affordable if there are institutional and ultimately national change to the current unsustainable economic paradigm.

Do you support the changes we're proposing to how we apply Uniform Annual General Charges? Don't know

Any further comments on Uniform Annual General Charges?

i don't have time to come up to speed on this now - but propose more open forums to discuss these big picture matters.

Would you support the use of borrowing for operating expenditure to offset some of the first year rates?

Don't know

Any further comments on the use of borrowing for operating expenditure?

i'm concerned about passing on more economic burden to the next generation. see my proposition under item 10

Do you support the rationale and proposed changes in the draft Fees and Charges Policy?

Don't know

Where do you live in Canterbury? Select your district below:

Christchurch city including Banks Peninsula

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Kaikoura

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Hurunui

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Waimakariri

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Christchurch

On-demand public transport services

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Selwyn

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Ashburton

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Mackenzie

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Timaru

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Waimate

Would you like to see us investing in the following initiatives in your area? Waitaki

Do you wish to speak to your submission?

Yes

We may use your phone number to contact you to arrange attendance at a hearing. This information will be kept private.

Phone number

Would you like to be kept up-to-date with the outcome of this consultation? Yes

How did you find out about giving feedback? . Environment Canterbury website

Your information is held and administered by Environment Canterbury in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020 and Environment Canterbury's Privacy Policy.

There is personal information/contact details in my submission I do not want disclosed: Yes

Tell us which information you do not want disclosed: my home address and phone number