



Mackenzie

DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

**Upper Waitaki Zone Water Management
Committee Meeting**

18 August 2023

**MINUTES OF
UPPER WAITAKI ZONE WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE WRINKLY RAMS , OMARAMA
ON FRIDAY, 18 AUGUST 2023 AT 9.30AM**

PRESENT: Chairperson Matthew Bayliss, Deputy Adriana Theobald, Richard Subtil, Marcelo Carena, Kieran Whyte, Michael McMillan, Cr Scott Aronsen, Cr Nick Ward (online).

IN ATTENDANCE: Andrew Oliver (Ecan facilitator), Murray Griffin (Ecan), Shirley Hayward (Ecan), Gary Rushworth (Ecan), Peter Burt (Ecan), John Benn (DOC), Arlene Goss (Governance Advisor), Rick Ramsay (Alpine Salmon) and Douglas Lee (Mount Cook Salmon), Jessica Halsey (EOS) and others.

1 OPENING

The meeting opened with a karakia from Michael McMillan. The chairman welcomed everyone and noted this was a public meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Members Brent Cowles and Rynee de Garnham were absent without leave.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member Marcelo Carena said he was a member of the Biosecurity Advisory Group, South Canterbury.

4 REPORTS

4.1 MINUTES OF UPPER WAITAKI ZONE WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 12 MAY 2023

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION UPP/2023/105

Moved: Cr Scott Aronsen

Seconded: Deputy Adriana Theobald

1. That the Minutes of the Upper Waitaki Zone Water Management Committee Meeting held on Friday 12 May 2023 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

CARRIED

4.2 EOS ECOLOGY

EOS Ecology is the Ministry for the Environment provider organisation responsible for delivering 'Wai Connection' in Waitaha/Canterbury. Jessica Halsey (jessica@eosecology.co.nz) from EOS gave a presentation on their project aims, objectives and how they may be able to assist catchment groups in the Upper Waitaki Zone.

Questions were asked about the practical help she could provide to the local catchment groups. She said there would be a regional hui held on September 18 and she would like to invite a representative and facilitator from each catchment group.

She asked catchment groups to fill out a survey to express their interest at www.waiconnection.nz

The chairman suggested the Ahuriri Catchment Group as a worthwhile group to work with. This group was set up to address the issues in the Ahuriri arm of Lake Benmore.

Sparsely populated areas did not have as many people with the time to be catchment group facilitators. The chairman noted the difficulties of finding volunteers in rural areas who were not already over-committed.

Marcelo Carena asked if the programme funding was long term. It was only funded until June 2025. They were currently looking for continued funding to carry on after that date.

Jessica Halsey was thanked for her presentation.

4.3 AHURIRI TLI (TROPIC LEVEL INDEX)

This report was to inform the committee of the latest trophic level status (TLI) of Lake Benmore and its catchment, specifically the Ahuriri Arm. This report was written by Shirley Hayward and Gary Rushworth.

Gary Rushworth introduced himself and Shirley Hayward. They gave a presentation titled Water Quality Update – Ahuriri Arm of Lake Benmore. A copy of that presentation is available as an attachment to these minutes.

Member Richard Subtil questioned the charts in the presentation and said they were misleading. The water quality at the Haldon Arm was deteriorating faster than the Ahuriri Arm. Gary Rushworth said this was not a trend, it was the raw data and a year-to-year analysis.

Shirley Hayward took over the presentation and discussion took place on the number of farmers in the Ahuriri Catchment and how many had trigger levels of 2.75 and how many had trigger levels of 2.9.

How did this impact on those farmers with a 2.75 limit (nine farmers)? They would be required to make a five percent reduction in inputs they used when they applied for the consent. If it triggers the next year it would be a 10% reduction, and the following year 15%.

This means there would be a small number of farmers with lower limits who would be asked to reduce lower and more due to the timing of their consent. The chairman said there was the expectation that the TLI would continue to increase and this would have a significant impact on some people.

Richard Subtil noted that agricultural use was a big factor, but there was also the impact of climate change (floods) and some people were exploiting loopholes in regulations.

Shirley Hayward continued with her presentation. She said the Willowburn Stream was a nitrate hotspot. Discussion took place on the need to put more effort into solving this hotspot.

She said she was concerned about the climate change effects on all the lakes in the zone, including Pukaki and the others.

Questions included the following:

Rick Ramsay asked if the surface water and ground water went in different directions. Yes. This was complex. Improving the Willowburn catchment would also improve the groundwater flowing into the Kellands Pond area.

Did they overlay the rainfall and TLI graphs? Not for this presentation. There was a relationship between them.

Rick Ramsay said he records water temperature in the hydro canals and it got to 20 degrees, which it never has before.

Shirley Hayward asked the committee to consider its recommendations to Ecan. The chairman thanked her and Gary Rushworth for their presentation.

The chairman reminded the committee that when the community was consulted on TLI limits they called for them to stay under 3. It was important for the committee to decide on actions and how they would communicate this with the community.

Peter Burt was asked to update the committee on how Ecan was working with consent holders.

Rick Ramsay called for the changes in Lake Pukaki to be studied more closely. The impacts of climate change, glacier retreat, increases in water and air temperature, would have downstream effects on the whole system. He said there was a gap in the science.

The chairman agreed but deciding actions on the Ahuriri Arm was more immediate. He suggested this matter be raised again as a future agenda item.

The committee stopped for morning tea at 11.27am and reconvened at 11.40am.

Peter Burt from Environment Canterbury introduced himself and spoke about compliance in the zone. He gave a presentation called Compliance Overview, Water Quality Consents, Omarama Catchment. A copy of this presentation is available as an attachment to these minutes.

He said Environment Canterbury compliance officers had allowed non-compliance in the Omarama Catchment due to farms showing initiatives to improve the situation, but over the last few years this had lost momentum.

They were now taking a more stringent approach. The data they get this season will be the baseline for the coming season. This would be the line in the sand. His team would be vigilant regarding all aspects of contribution in the catchment.

Questions included:

Is funding provided to help farmers do a risk assessment? No.

What about the related industries like the fertilizer industry. The new legislation was not targeted at them.

Are we still in the area of forgiveness on TLI? No, that finished on June 30.

He said the compliance team had put a lot of focus on the Willowburn hot spot and the consents they were monitoring there. A lot of the reasons for the hot spot were farming practices that needed to change and the need to move to GMP (good management practice).

What actions are available to the zone committee? Endorsing the science, communicating the science. What are the committee's expectations regarding enforcement and education?

There needs to be room within the compliance framework for discussion around the nature of the land. Cr Aronsen talked about soil structure impacting the issue.

The chairman called for discussion on the actions taken by the committee:

Richard Subtil argued that the people who have engaged the most and put in the most effort would be penalised the most under the current system. People who have not engaged are getting away with breaking the rules.

Peter Burt agreed. He said there was a compliance option that could be taken. By good luck one of the farms had changed owners and the new owner was engaged in changing practice.

Rick Ramsay agreed there was a loophole and Ecan was waving a stick at the wrong people.

Peter Burt listed the actions available for compliance officers to address issues.

The chairman suggested holding a workshop in September to thrash out some actions.

Marcelo Careno asked what actions were currently taking place on the Willowburn. Peter Burt said abatements were being drawn up to address some practices taking place in that area and there would be a focus on consents in that area.

Marcelo Careno suggested inviting Peter Burt and the compliance officers to the workshop.

The September workshop needed to be about both stick and carrot, not just compliance. Also education.

The Benmore Irrigation Company needed to attend the workshop to represent the Willowburn catchment. Discussion took place on the need for the land management advisor or similar to send the science data to the Willowburn landowners in advance of the workshop.

Work towards getting that group in the room for September and then look at actions in October?

Rick Ramsay suggested sending out copies of the consent conditions and the hierarchy of consents for the workshop.

5.6 ZONE FACILITATOR'S UPDATE

Andrew Oliver showed an advert to go into the local newsletters calling for grant applications. He went through some fast items, and then spoke about his appreciation of the work he carried out and the people he worked with during his time as facilitator. This was his last meeting with the committee.

Grant applications were still to be considered by the committee, but this meeting time had run out. The committee asked to delegate decisions on grants to the chairman to allow for these projects to go ahead in a timely manner. A resolution to this effect was passed below.

John Benn from the Department of Conservation updated the committee on current activity in the zone including the Twizel River restoration project and the release of Black Stilts.

The chairman thanked everyone for civil debate and the meeting closed with a karakia from Michael McMillan at 12.54pm.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION UPP/2023/106

Moved: Mr Richard Subtil

Seconded: Member Marcelo Carena

That the Upper Waitaki Zone Water Management Committee delegates the authority to make decisions on the two grant applications in the agenda to the chairman.

CARRIED

The Meeting closed with a karakia at 12.45pm.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Upper Waitaki Zone Water Management Committee Meeting held on .

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CHAIRPERSON