

IN THE MATTER

**of the Resource Management Act
1991**

AND

IN THE MATTER

**of applications by the Central Plains
Water Trust (CPWT) and a notice of
requirement for the designation of
land by Central Plains Water Limited
associated with the construction and
operation of the Central Plains Water
Scheme**

Statement of Evidence of Andrew Harry Malcolm Couper

1. My name is Andrew Couper. I was born in Christchurch and have lived in Canterbury for all my life. I am an itinerant music teacher and I live in St Albans, Christchurch. I am married with two children.

2. I note that I belong to three groups who have already made submissions against this proposal, **Malvern Hills Protection Society, Forest and Bird Society, and New Zealand Historic Places Trust** and have contributed financial support to the **Water Rights Trust**.

3. This is only the second time in my life I have actually spoken in support of a submission though I have written many, including ironically, a submission on the first draft of the Resource Management Act. The first time I spoke to a submission was when I objected to a neighbouring pub wishing to extend its licensing hours and spoke on behalf of the local residents' group. I'd like to think I'm looking beyond my backyard today though it's a similar scenario (the scale is different) and instead of the neighbourhood's concerns about the sound of loud music leaking through a porous building it is contaminated water leaking through porous soils and gravels.

4. From when this scheme was first publicised I have had serious concerns about the adverse consequences I believe it will have on residents of Canterbury. I think that initially my concern was piqued by the applicant being able to use the Public Works Act to purchase land. I still fail to see how this scheme can be seen as a "public work" from which benefits to many Cantabrians could outweigh the cost to some.

5. Irony is something that adults are supposed to learn to live with but the loss of land under and around the dam, in an area in which farming can occur in a more (there is no other word for it) sustainable fashion, I also struggle with. Pastoral farming can be one of the more productive and energy efficient means of farming when it is carried out in the right places without huge inputs of electricity and oil products.

6. Concerning local economic and environmental affects of the dam, its construction, and the limited proposed recreational benefits I endorse the points that have already been made by the **Malvern Hills Protection Society**.

7. I do understand the need to innovate in order to progress and survive as a nation, or thinking more broadly, for us as a species. The means of farming that will result from this water-grab by Central Plains Water is not innovative. It goes against any sensible investment strategy (with regard to economic, social or environmental requirements) which is to maintain diversity as much as possible. When it comes to ideas and concepts New Zealand has been seen as a leader but when it comes to actually changing the way we act, we often seem unable to do anything but follow on blithely and repeat the mistakes of larger and more populous nations. While searching for evidence on the internet to reinforce points made in this submission, a list of websites appeared that contained many businesses promoting the sale of nitrate removers for domestic water consumers in the United States, in particular California. This is not surprising when further searching revealed Food and Drug Administration figures showing that between 1991 & 1993 California applied half of the United States total figure for total nitrates released on land. Are there any shares left in local companies producing water filters or have they been snapped up by those prepared to risk the quality of water in our aquifers? A wise investment strategy indeed!

8. I have also heard it said recently that city people should consider what they have done to urban waterways before they criticize dairy and crop farmers who are intensifying their production methods and ruining rural waterways. However many of the rural waterways were fine up until recently. It seems to be only latterly that many Canterbury streams have been declared health hazards in a short space of time and at a time we know the benefit of hindsight about pollution caused by intensive dairy farming. With the majority of New Zealanders living in coastal areas we are hugely dependent on farmers to maintain the disproportionately larger rural water catchments for the sake of the country's health.

9. I understand that those keen to increase the scale of irrigation on the plains have my best interests at heart but already I can't see how, when for example, I see the affect of current irrigators running their pumps 24 hours a day throughout much of the year has on the cost and availability of electricity.

10. I don't know where I heard it and you may have already heard it here in this room, but I can understand that intensive dairying on the Canterbury Plains is like "**hydroponics without the tray**". This is a greedy & foolish venture that I believe is unsustainable economically and environmentally in the long term. I resent the fact that the applicant audaciously tells me it's for my own benefit and I don't believe this project benefits the people and environment of Canterbury: economically, socially, aesthetically and environmentally

I don't believe that the scheme being proposed by the applicants will benefit the people and environment of Canterbury and therefore ask that all resource consents be declined and the Notice of Requirement be withdrawn.

Andrew Couper

Christchurch

12 August 2008

