

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of applications for resource consent by the Central Plains Water Trust and a notice of requirement for the designation of land by Central Plains Water Ltd associated with the construction and operation of the Central Plains water scheme

EVIDENCE OF ROBYN MARGARET JEBSON AND BARBARA MARGARET JEBSON

Introduction

1. My name is Robyn Margaret Jebson. I have a long association with the Malvern District. I grew up on Flockton Farm at Sheffield, a property that has been farmed by the Jebson family for five generations. Since that time I have maintained strong ties with the farm and area, spending significant time there. In the future I am likely to be a beneficiary of part of the property.
2. I am speaking on behalf of a separate submitter, my mother Barbara Margaret Jebson and myself. She and my late father Peter Robert Jebson farmed Flockton for over fifty years. My mother lives on a property called The Croft on the Malvern Hills Road, plus still owns farmland adjacent to the Hawkins River.
3. We are strongly opposed to the proposed Central Plains Water Scheme applications and notice of requirement as outlined in our submissions. I now wish to highlight the following:

Designation of Private Land To Benefit Central Plains Water Shareholders

4. We strongly oppose the designation of private land for the benefit of other private individuals (i.e. shareholders) as proposed under the Central Plains Water Scheme. We believe such a designation is not in keeping with the intent of the Public Works Act (i.e. what is being proposed is not a “public work” or an “essential service”). In this regard as non Central Plains Water shareholders we question the appropriateness of the relationship between the Central Plains Water Trust and Central Plains Water Ltd in terms of protecting the wider community interest if the scheme were to proceed. We support the evidence provided by Michael Parker in this regard.

Unproven Economic Rationale For Scheme

5. Central Plains Water has put forward major economic benefits as the main rationale for this scheme proceeding yet we feel they have failed to provide an adequate cost benefit analysis of the wider economic impacts (including environmental effects) to establish whether the scheme would result in overall net benefit. In our opinion this is essential with such a large-scale project where the economic benefits and costs mostly fall on differing individuals and communities. For example the economic cost of environmental damage caused by increased dairy farming doesn't appear to be factored in (e.g.

methane and nitrous oxide emissions and pollution of waterways and aquifers). The environmental cost of providing additional electricity requirements for sectors such as the dairy industry (e.g. proposed wind farms in Central Otago) is another example.

6. We also believe the applicants have overstated the economic benefits of the proposed scheme (e.g. farm productivity from the “magic water” as outlined by Professor Hazledine). The limitations of the submitters economic case put forward by Central Plains Water and the risk that the irrigation scheme would result in a negative net economic benefit if it were to proceed are clearly shown in the evidence of Professor Hazledine, Dr Brown, Mr Butcher and Mr Copeland, which we adopt.

Major and Unjustifiable Environmental and Social Impacts

7. The Malvern Hills area and the local community are very precious to us and we are aware that many of the negative environmental impacts of this proposed irrigation scheme would be major, permanent and unavoidable. Yet overall the assessment of such impacts by the applicant has often appeared very superficial (e.g. negative impacts on ecological and social values, landscape and recreation amenity). We therefore fail to see how the proposed development of management plans at a later stage (post receipt of consents) would be an acceptable way of attempting to mitigate such impacts, as firstly these have to be understood. More importantly, we don't believe the major environmental damage and negative social impacts the would result from the scheme can be justified especially when the applicant has yet to prove that the scheme would result in a net benefit to the wider community.

Unacceptable Loss of Productive Land

8. As my late father, Peter Jebson said, and I can't say it better, “The hectares and stock units being lost with this scheme are a hell of a lot of pastoral production to forfeit with no more land being made...highly productive, naturally drought-proof land is a finite resource and should be protected, not destroyed.”

Inadequate Consultation and Information Provided

9. The lack of adequate consultation and information provided by Central Plains Water continues to be very stressful for many in the community and we believe the way they have acted in this regard is totally unacceptable. Originally the intake canal between the Waimakariri River and the Wainiwaniwa Valley was proposed to go directly through the middle of Flockton Farm and it was our direct experience that Central Plains Water was very adept at providing non-information. In the few dealings we managed to have with them they came across as very arrogant in their approach.
10. We believe greater details of the scheme and its construction should have been made available prior to this public submission stage to enable affected parties to better understand the likely impacts if the development was to proceed.
11. For example with regard to Flockton Farm we still want to know what will be the impact of the proposed long tunnel between the upper Waimakariri River

intake canal and the Wainiwaniwa reservoir on the Hawkins River and tributaries natural surface and groundwater flows due to the creation of physical barriers (tunnel minimum depth 30m) and potential leakage of water? The Hawkins River ground water table is very shallow and therefore easily impacted. The environmental assessment provided by Central Plains Water in this regard is very superficial and inadequate.

12. In addition what will be the environmental impacts of the proposed operational bywash and emergency discharge at the Hawkins River location? The Hawkins River location lies immediately upstream from Flockton Farm and it is proposed that under normal circumstances 0.3 cubic metres per second would be discharged at the end of network races and under emergency conditions up to 2.5 cubic metres per second could be discharged directly into the Hawkins River.
13. The section of the Hawkins River adjacent to Flockton Farm is privately owned by my family and we object to the proposed discharge of such water immediately upstream due to the likely degradation of in-stream water from increased nutrients and pollutants, especially if there is more farming intensification, and because of the increased risk of flooding.
14. Immediately downstream of the proposed discharge point, the Hawkins River is prone to flooding (active river channel 250m at the Hawkins Bridge). Negative impacts of flooding on Flockton Farm can include erosion, stock deaths, destroyed fences and other farm utilities, plus dumping of sediment and ponding of water on adjoining pasture. We believe any additional emergency water discharge is likely to exacerbate this flood risk at times of high river flow.

Conclusion

15. We request that the applications for resource consent by the Central Plains Water Trust and a notice of requirement for the designation of land by Central Plains Water Ltd associated with the construction and operation of the Central Plains water scheme be declined.