

Results of community consultation

Six hundred and six individuals and organisations made submissions on Environment Canterbury's draft 2009-19 Long Term Council Community Plan. Submitters also had the opportunity to present their material at hearings held in Christchurch (two and a half days) and Timaru (one day). While submissions covered all aspects of the draft plan, there was a definite focus on ten *What do you think?* topics where community feedback was being sought.

Water management cost recovery: Over half of the submissions related to water management cost recovery. Of the 360 submissions, 320 were opposed to seeking \$2.2M from consent holders to pay for 31% of the council's water resource investigations and monitoring work (previously 100% was paid for under general rates across the region). The proposal, in response to increasing pressure on water resources, drew widespread opposition from irrigators, as well as hydro-electricity generators, Federated Farmers and three district councils. Because of the number of submitters who raised concerns around the details of the proposal, the Council decided to defer water management cost recovery for 12 months to allow more time for consultation with stakeholders. In the meantime the work will continue to be funded from general rates.

Uniform annual general charge: The introduction of a uniform annual general charge to fund councillor representation and provision of public information was supported by 64 out of 85 submissions on this topic. With a low overall cost per ratepayer (\$8.63), a decision was made to go ahead with the proposal. The charge is fixed per property, regardless of the value of individual properties, and is used to fund core services which benefit all ratepayers equally.

Bovine Tb: In response to concern from submitters the Council decided to reinstate the regional contribution to the national Bovine Tb control programme in Canterbury for the next two years. This will allow time for the outcome of the National Pest Management Review to be known. Seventy two submitters indicated a willingness to pay for the reinstated programme, with many saying that cutting back the programme at this stage would result in a loss of gains made in recent years.

Clean Heat Project eligibility – Christchurch: Submitters fell into two groups, those in favour of reducing the burden on ratepayers, while others felt that reducing eligibility for the full incentive programme and the landlord subsidy would disadvantage low income householders. The Council decided to go ahead with reducing the targeted rate for the Clean Heat Project in Christchurch. The concerns raised by submitters will be mitigated to some extent by the Central Government budget decision on EnergyWise™ energy efficiency incentives, which will enable homeowners with a Community Services Card to receive a modified full assistance programme.

Household energy incentives for Christchurch: Generally submitters supported the introduction of a household energy incentive programme in Christchurch City. This programme will be in partnership with Christchurch City with significant funding from EECA, through the EnergyWise™ incentives programme.

Waimakariri Flood Protection Project: There was strong support for the Waimakariri Flood Protection Project designed to provide additional protection from the effects of a significant flood in the Waimakariri River. A call to seek removal of a Class B rating district, where property owners receiving benefits pay a lower targeted rate, with the funding to come instead from general rates, was not supported by the Council.

Regional Parks: The majority of submitters supported proposals to establish an Ashley/Rakahuri Regional Park. Submitters supported protecting natural values and providing recreational opportunities. They also emphasised the importance of protection of river birds and other biodiversity and providing opportunities for horse riding and less mobile visitors. The Council adopted the proposal and undertook to promote management of the Ashley Estuary in ways that are compatible with the park. There was support for a funding proposal for the Tekapo Regional Park (based on a mix of 60% regional general rates and 40% fixed targeted rate over Mackenzie and Timaru districts). In response to submitter concerns, the area covered by the targeted rate has been extended to cover Waimate and Ashburton districts. The rate will amount to 41 cents annually per rateable property.

Resource Management Act charges: Submitters generally supported the introduction of a flat customer services annual charge. This will cover administration and supervision related to compliance with resource consents (previously charged out at an hourly rate), as well as short-term contact queries from consent holders.

Public passenger transport: Most submitters favoured the proposal to include Lyttelton and Diamond Harbour in the Christchurch rating area for public transport. This will now be introduced, along with an extension of the rating area to include Purau, Church Bay and Charteris Bay. A proposal to rate public transport in Selwyn district via a 90:10 (urban:rural) split was not so clear-cut, with an even balance of support and opposition. A decision was made to go ahead with the proposal, with requests from submitters for a fixed targeted rate to be considered as a separate issue.

Waste: There was opposition to a proposal to reduce funding for waste exchanges by \$20,000. The exchanges are contracted to a combination of councils and community organisations, and work with industries to find re-use options for waste. In response to the concerns raised the \$20,000 was reinstated for three years.