

**IN THE MATTER OF**

the Resource Management Act  
1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

applications by Central Plains Water  
Trust:

Canterbury Regional Council for  
resource consents to take and use  
water from the Waimakariri and  
Rakaia Rivers and for all associated  
consents required for the  
construction and operation of the  
Central Plains Water Enhancement  
Scheme

Selwyn District Council for resource  
consents to construct and operate  
the Central Plains Water  
Enhancement Scheme

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

a notice of requirement by Central  
Plains Water Limited to:

Selwyn District Council for the  
designation of land for works  
associated with the construction and  
operation of the Central Plains  
Water Enhancement Scheme

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ERIN JAMIESON**

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## **Qualifications and experience**

1. My full name is Erin Jamieson. I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Canberra, Australia. I am a member of the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand and have been a communications practitioner for the past 16 years. I am currently a Director of Convergence Communications & Marketing. My background includes working with small communities on contentious issues as well as working with larger corporate organisations, both as an in house corporate communications manager and as an external communications advisor.
2. For the past two years my company has been employed by Central Plains Water Limited to assist with the communications and consultation leading up to the resource consent hearing.

## **Scope of Evidence**

3. I have been asked to outline the extent of consultation that Central Plains Water has undertaken relating to the proposed irrigation scheme. I have been involved with Central Plains Water for the past two years and will comment on the work undertaken over that timeframe. I will also comment on the consultation work undertaken from the inception of the Scheme in 2000 to 2005, prior to my company commencing work with Central Plains Water Limited.

## **Consultation Objectives**

4. Best practice is to undertake consultation with affected stakeholders and interest groups from a very early stage in any planning process. At the inception of the Central Plains Water Scheme (“**the Scheme**”) it was recognised that consultation was required with interested and affected parties and, to be effective, those parties must have the opportunity to share their views from a very early stage in that process. However it is important to note that consultation does not always result in a win/win situation.
5. With respect to the consultation undertaken by Central Plains Water, it has not always resulted in agreement between parties, but it has gone much further than simply notifying parties of the proposed irrigation scheme. The overall objective of the consultation has been to find a balance between enabling sustainable use of the Scheme while, where possible, avoiding or mitigating any adverse effects of the Scheme.

6. Although operating with limited resources and budget, Central Plains Water has consulted with a wide range of stakeholders and landowners and that their opinions have been listened to and, where possible, the Scheme's design has been changed to accommodate their views.

## **Consultation History**

### **Formation of the steering committee**

7. Proposals to irrigate central Canterbury have surfaced at least three times since 1880 but for reasons of apathy, poor understanding of the benefits and lack of community organisation, none has succeeded.
8. In 2000 the Christchurch City and Selwyn District Councils formed a joint steering committee to examine the feasibility of a large-scale water management scheme for the province, capable of creating or enhancing environmental, social, economic and recreational opportunities.
9. It was immediately identified that a key to the success of the initiative was to embark on a sound consultation and communication strategy. One of the first initiatives of the Central Plains Water Steering Committee was to establish a potential water users group within the proposed scheme area. Early consultation revealed strong interest within the area for the proposed scheme.
10. A public relations company, PR South, and a community consultation company, Byfield Budd, were engaged to help define the communication and consultation strategy, and to assess support for and address concerns about the proposals among local and national stakeholders. There were two strands to the consultation – one focused on the interest within the farming community for a community based water enhancement scheme and the principles on which such a scheme should be based. The other sought to identify potential issues and how those issues might be addressed in a sustainable way.
11. The first stage of the strategy involved organising public meetings with farmers to determine opinions and attitudes towards irrigation, water enhancement and the prospect of a large community scheme in central Canterbury.
12. In August and September 2000 six 'woolshed' meetings were held to determine what demand there was for water and what were the issues and options for the rural community. Six stakeholder forums were also held with representatives from environmental interests, commercial and tourism interests, river rate and drainage committees, Tangata Whenua and existing

river users and government departments. These meetings sought to identify the issues of concern to these groups and the outcomes they would be seeking in the consultation process

13. In September and October 2000, 15 'issues and outcomes' meetings were held with key stakeholder groups – commercial and environmental interest groups and the rural community. The opinions expressed at these meetings drove initiatives such as the Farm Management Accord and other aspects of the Scheme design. All feedback was given to the Steering Committee.
14. Following consultation with other interested stakeholders, a consultative working party was established in mid-2000 representing the diverse organisations with vested interests in water management for the region. This included representatives of groups that included potential water users, the Dam Action Group (later to become the Malvern Hills Protection Society), Salmon Anglers, Forrest & Bird, DOC, Fish & Game, Ngāi Tahu, conservationists, outdoor enthusiasts, township committees, host communities, existing irrigators and people living to the east of the proposed Scheme where aquifer recharge from the Scheme could be an issue.
15. In September 2000 and December 2001, 20 meetings of the consultative working party took place. The working party agreed that the following were the most important issues arising out of the Feasibility Study:
  - Abstraction and diversion -The effects of abstraction from the Rakaia and Waimakariri Rivers
  - Logistics - Water transport and storage
  - Host communities - The impact of a scheme on the host community.
  - Secondary impact - The regional effects of the intensification of land use, including on the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water, specifically on rivers, lowland streams and Te Waihora.
  - Economics - The cost of the water from the Scheme to those who wish to use it.

As a result of the feedback from these meetings, a number of modifications and enhancements were incorporated into the Scheme proposals, reflecting community values in relation to water management.

16. Other parties that were consulted included property owners at the potential water storage sites, including the Waianiwaniwa Valley and property owners

on the proposed canal route. Meetings were held at Darfield, Hororata and Windwhistle.

17. In November and December of 2000, meetings were held combining groups who expressed a view that land use intensification should be minimised, for example the Dam Action Group, Forest and Bird, DOC, Fish & Game, Ngāi Tahu and Salmon Anglers. This was called the 'Least Impact Option Group' and at the meetings discussion focussed on the principles and concepts of the Scheme and how major environmental impacts of the scheme could be addressed. Information was fed back to the Steering Committee and technical team for consideration in the overall design and development of the proposed scheme.
18. In March 2001 six rural township meetings were held to communicate directly with communities in the scheme area. They were held in Sheffield, Springfield, Glentunnell, Coalgate, Whitecliffs and Darfield. The meetings were informed that much of the detail that was being sought was not yet available. It was acknowledged that while this was frustrating for some, it was important to determine what the Scheme involved before any in depth study began.
19. In April 2001 five meetings were held to discuss water storage options. The meetings were held to record the views of the Whitecliffs / Glentunnel / Wairiri / Russell's Flat / Windwhistle to Coalgate / Highpeak Station communities on the storage options for Central Plains Water. Initiatives to come from these meetings included farm levies, environmental trusts and other ideas that were incorporated into the overall Scheme design.
20. Communication with affected landowners, including those in the Waianiwaniwa Valley, began in the early phase of the Scheme and meetings took place in August 2001, September 2003 and October 2005. At these meetings and other one-on-one meetings it was communicated and recognised that there was considerable uncertainty associated with a scheme of this nature and this was causing a high level of concern.
21. From 1-6 November 2000, four 'canal' meetings were held to inform property owners that water scheme canals would potentially affect their property. Meetings took place at A Campbell's (north side of the Hororata River); T Thwaites (south side of the river); Whitecliffs Hall, G & D Innes, Longspur, Windwhistle.

22. In August 2001 four meetings took place with the Lake Ellesmere River Rate and Drainage Committee.

### **Formation of Ritso Society**

23. It was important to develop confidence among farmers and enable them to take “ownership” of the Scheme. To achieve this the most forthright and articulate farming supporters of the project were brought together to establish the Ritso Society (“**Ritso**”), which was incorporated in April 2002 with the following aims:-

- To promote and develop knowledge of water enhancement schemes in central Canterbury.
- To represent the interests of the area’s primary producers on water management issues.
- To raise awareness of the potential that irrigation brings for economic development.
- To promote understanding of the issues associated with the use of irrigation and accompanying land use change.

24. Membership of Ritso came to include business people, primary producers and others with an interest in promoting the economic well-being of Selwyn District and the wider Canterbury region. On behalf of Ritso, funding was applied for and gained from the Ministry of Agriculture’s Sustainable Farming Fund, enabling Ritso to commission PR South to undertake a communications project to develop the processes and information systems needed to give farm families the confidence for major investment decisions.

25. In summary, this was achieved by: .

- Identifying “champions”, being motivated farmers able to command respect among their peers, organise members of their local community and articulate the issues relating to irrigation. .
- Preparing and maintaining an extensive database of all property owners in the area. .This created a series of geographically-based groups through which to communicate directly, often face-to-face with farmers. .

- Classifying the issues on which farmers required further information before being able to confidently make appropriate and correct decisions about irrigation. .
  - Commissioning independent experts in agricultural productivity, rural property valuation, irrigated farming systems and hydrogeology to prepare reports that met these information requirements.
  - Ensuring by written and verbal communication that the findings of these reports were well understood by all the relevant farming families.
26. This programme, implemented over some 15 months, sought to establish a base of knowledge and a groundswell of support among the 500 or so farmers who would be asked to support the subsequent Central Plains Water Limited share issue for irrigation water rights.
27. To ensure farmers had relevant information the following was undertaken during 2003/04:
- Bi-monthly newsletters from Ritso with farmer success case studies, personalised as much as possible for impact and relevance.
  - Development of websites for both the Central Plains Water Trust and Ritso to hold the wealth of data available on technical, economic and agricultural issues pertinent to irrigation.
  - Farm field days to provide farmers with practical examples of the issues, as testified by people they could identify with.
  - Regular articles and press releases in local rural publications, addressing newsworthy topics on the impact of community water enhancement schemes.
  - A programme to explain the issues to members of various professional disciplines who deal with farmers, such as bankers, accountants, lawyers and farm advisors.
  - A series of “woolshed’ briefings by Central Plains Water Limited prior to the opening of the share issue, to which all local farmers were invited and which attracted close to 80 per cent of the 500 primary targets.

### **Raising funds to enable the scheme to proceed**

28. In 2003 the Central Plains Water Trust sought to raise funds to enable the Scheme to apply for the resource consents needed to proceed. This required further consultation with the farming community and involved numerous meetings and focus groups to clarify scheme details, funding options and other preferences.
29. Central Plains Water Limited was established in late 2003 as a commercial entity to raise sufficient share capital to obtain the resource consents. In 2003, during the fund raising phase, members of the Central Plains Water Trust met with farmers in the Waianiwaniwa Valley to discuss the Scheme and the potential impact it would have on their farms.

### **Moving into the resource consent phase**

30. Moving into the resource consent phase from May 2005, Central Plains Water embarked on another round of consultation, this time focussing on key interest groups and affected landowners. Convergence Communications & Marketing was appointed to work with Central Plains Water Limited to assist with communication and consultation. Byfield Budd assisted Convergence Communications in the initial phase of the resource consent process.

### **Consultation with key interest groups**

31. One of the priorities during this period was to consult with key interest groups such as Ngāi Tahu, Fish & Game, Water Rights Trust and the Department of Conservation. Many meetings were held including two hui with Ngāi Tahu. In August 2005, representatives spent a day visiting the site hosted by Central Plains Water representatives. Central Plains Water Limited commissioned a cultural impact assessment study that has been the foundation of discussion between Ngāi Tahu and the Scheme's technical advisors as is explained in Ms Jolly's evidence.
32. Numerous other meetings and briefings took place in this period with the Selwyn and Malvern Area Community Boards; Selwyn District and Christchurch City Councillors; Ellesmere Trust, various Drainage Committees; and local and national politicians.
33. In February 2006, a comprehensive background paper about the Scheme was developed and was sent to 500 groups ranging from MPs, community boards, landowners and shareholders.
34. As a result of the ongoing consultation with key interest groups such as the Department of Conservation, Fish & Game and Ngāi Tahu, the technical

investigations undertaken by Central Plains could focus on addressing the issues that had arisen and preparing appropriate mitigation measures.

### **Communications with affected landowners (resource consent phase)**

35. One of the key messages of the communications strategy with affected landowners was regularly updating them via letters to their home. While sometimes these letters were not individually addressed to each farmer, they provided updated information on the Scheme and let landowners know of ongoing opportunities to consult with Central Plains Water Limited's throughout the resource consent process.
36. On 23 November 2005 different versions of letters were sent to affected landowners informing them that their property had been identified as potentially being affected by the Scheme and advising them that it was Central Plains Water Limited's intent to consult as the Scheme progresses. Landowners were also informed that Central Plains Water Limited had lodged its Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) with Environment Canterbury and that its application to become a requiring authority had been approved by the Minister for the Environment.
37. On 19 December 2005, all affected landowners were sent a general update on the progress of the Scheme which reiterated Central Plains Water Limited's intent to continue with consultation.
38. On 21 February 2006 a letter informing relevant landowners that there was flexibility regarding the location of proposed distribution races was sent. It stated that Central Plains Water Limited had no wish to cause disruption by placing structures through people's homes (as had been reported in the media). It also stated individual concerns would be addressed prior to Central Plains Water Limited confirming final layout of races.
39. In March 26 individual letters sent to all farmers affected by the main headrace canal asking them to attend one of a series of woolshed meetings on farmers' properties set up by Central Plains Water Limited.
40. On 12 April 2006 three different versions of letters were sent about the Scheme's proposed distribution race layout (to over 800 people). After consultation with landowners at a series of drop in meetings and one on one with meetings with landowners, a number of race locations were changed to accommodate concerns. The three versions of the letters advised people: a) that their land was now affected, or b) that their land no longer affected, or c)

that their land was still affected. Central Plains Water Limited sought input from the landowner about the revised location of the races and all were invited to view new maps at 12 locations in the Scheme area. A phone number was given where people could ring to get a CD Rom sent to them or they could view the maps on the Central Plains Water Limited website. They were also informed about four drop-in meetings that were taking place in the Scheme area. The letter included a common questions and answers paper. Landowners were again assured that changes they made did not mean they were locked in and further changes were possible at a later date. About 100 farmers came to the meetings and others were contacted outside the drop in meetings.

41. In May 2006 new maps and a letter advising of changes to the Scheme's design due to this phase of consultation were sent to over 150 farmers.
42. On 9 June 2006 a letter was sent to all affected landowners advising that since writing to them in April, the Scheme had consulted with community groups and landowners and many changes had been made to the location of the main headrace and distribution canals. The major changes were listed. Landowners were also informed that Central Plains Water Limited had lodged its land use consents with the Selwyn District Council and the next steps were outlined. Landowners were told further drop-in meetings were being arranged and that consultation was ongoing. A contact and phone number was given for people to call if they required further information. Again it was reiterated that Central Plains Water Limited wanted to work with landowners and promised to keep them informed of the Scheme's progress. A booklet: The Designation Process - An Everyday Guide to the Resource Management Act (from the Ministry for the Environment) was posted to all affected landowners.
43. On 14 June 2006 an information update was sent to all the chairs and secretaries of the Township Committees and Community Boards in the affected area.
44. In July 2006 an invitation to attend one of a series of drop-in meetings within the Scheme area was sent to all affected Landowners – over 600 people. The letter was also sent to Township Committees and Community Boards and the AEE was included.
45. In July 2006, local farmer Bob Bennett was contracted by Central Plains Water to consult with affected landowners. Individual follow up letters and

maps sent to all the landowners on the proposed main headrace canal and Wainiwaniwa Valley that Bob Bennett had consulted with.

### **Public Meetings (resource consent phase)**

46. On 22 November 2005 a Coalgate / Glentunnel Community Drop in Information Day was held from 3:00pm to 8:30pm at the Coalgate Tavern. Flyers were distributed around the two towns alerting people of the meeting.
47. On March 2006 a meeting for landowners affected by the proposed distribution races was attended by 20 landowners at the Darfield Community Centre. Woolshed meetings for farmers affected by the main headrace canal were also organised.
48. On 29 March 2006 a public meeting to discuss the content of a dam safety report was held at Coalgate. This meeting was held prior to Central Plains Water Limited lodging the dam safety report with Environment Canterbury, so residents could be fully informed first. Every letter box in Coalgate and Glentunnel received a flyer (placed in box by a Central Plains Water Limited's representative) alerting them to the meeting.
49. On 12 April 2006, four public meetings for community members and affected landowners in the Scheme area to give input into the Scheme's design. This letter was sent to all people affected by the proposed distribution races. The dates and venues for these meetings were Darfield Service Centre 20 April (6-9pm) / Te Pirita Hall 21 April (9-12pm) / Sheffield Hall 26 April (9-12pm), and Hororata Hall 26 April (1:30-4:30pm)
50. Maps of the proposed distribution races were left at six locations across the Scheme area with information on how the community could provide feedback to the Scheme's engineers. The locations included Glentunnel – Store, Library Post; Sheffield – Garage; Hororata – Hororata Motors, Café; Coalgate – Coalgate Motors; Kirwee – Kirwee Challenge Service Station; Darfield – Council Service Centre, Library, CRT, PGG Wrightson; Dunsandel – Tavern
51. In July and August 2006, six public meetings were held for community members and affected landowners in the Scheme area to view maps and talk to scheme representatives. The dates and venues for these meetings were Darfield Service Centre 20 and 27 July/ Te Pirita Hall 3 August, Sheffield Hall 20 and 27 July, Hororata Hall 3 August. These meetings were advertised for three consecutive weeks in local papers, the Canterbury Times and the Central Canterbury News. All affected landowners were sent an invitation via

mail to attend one of the meetings. All Selwyn District Council Township Committee Chairs were also sent an invitation alerting them to the meetings.

### **Shareholder Communication (resource consent phase)**

52. A shareholder newsletter, Currents, was sent to all shareholders in: May 2005; July 2005; October 2005; November 2005; April 2006; May 2006; June 2006; July 2006 (two issues) ; August 2006; October 2006; November 2006; December 2006; March 2007 and a special report was sent to Shareholders in May 2007.
53. Shareholder meetings were held in July 2005; October 2005 and July 2006. Comprehensive presentations were given to shareholders.
54. The Central Plains Water Trust and Central Plains Water Limited website was set up. It has comprehensive information that is regularly updated, about the scheme and carries a series of fact sheets and FAQ's on different issues along with maps of the scheme area.

### **Communication through the Media**

55. Since the Scheme's inception both Central Plains Water Trust and Central Plains Water Limited have been proactive in issuing news releases to inform the general public about the Scheme. Central Plains Water Limited has also written opinion pieces and provided background material that has been published in the Christchurch papers.
56. In October and November 2006 two advertorials, informing the affected community about the Scheme and answering some questions ran in the Central Canterbury News. People were given information to contact the Selwyn District Council to voice their concerns or to support the Scheme if they chose to do so. A website was also advertised where people could obtain further information.

### **Conclusion**

57. Central Plains Water at all stages of the process has endeavoured to effectively communicate with affected parties. It has held workshops and arranged numerous one-on-one meetings, particularly with affected landowners. It has released reports on key aspects of the concept to affected parties as and when appropriate. It has disseminated information regularly via media interviews, press releases, "fact sheets", a web site and FAQ answers. The Chair and other Trustees regularly presents to community service and

business groups, educational institutes, recreational groups, regulatory bodies, and key interest group meetings to explain what is proposed and to get feedback on it.

58. Many of the features of the Scheme have been influenced by the consultation process, for example:

- The bottom of the storage dam will not be allowed to dry out to offset potential dust issues and maintain recreational activities.
- The adoption of a Farm Management Accord (now termed the Sustainable Farming Protocol) that addresses potential water contamination issues.
- The use of gravity to move water where ever possible.
- The change to the 'long tunnel option' from the canal option for the upper Waimakariri intake.
- Significant changes to the location and alignment of the proposed headrace and canal distribution system.
- The establishment of an Environmental Trust Fund to support and encourage various environmental enhancement initiatives (e.g. riparian planting and habitat restoration) within and 'downstream' of the Central Plains Water Scheme area.

Other opportunities to mitigate the effects of the Scheme include:

- Enhancement work at Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere).
- Introducing wetland areas.
- Establishing high environmental standards that require efficient use of water.
- Creating opportunities for water based recreation on the reservoir and on other structures associated with the scheme.
- In consultation with DOC, developing a proposal for creating new wetland habitats and developing habitat designed specially for mudfish. These could be both in the Waianiwi Valley and near the Selwyn and Hororata river catchments where mudfish are plentiful now, and perhaps other locations.

59. From the Scheme's inception it was decided that consultation with a wide range of stakeholders was an important element of the overall Scheme. Best practice states that some elements of consultation should include:

- listening to what others have to say and considering the responses
- allowing sufficient time for consultation
- making a genuine effort to consult
- conducting the process in mutual good faith
- providing enough information to enable the party being consulted
- holding meetings, providing relevant and further information on request

60. From my review of earlier consultation initiatives, and my involvement in consultation over the past two years, I consider that, from the Scheme's inception there has been a genuine commitment from both Central Plains Water Trust and Central Plains Water Limited to engage with a variety of stakeholders. There have been numerous occasions over the years for affected landowners to seek out information or to attend a public meeting or a landowner meeting. It is evident that the Scheme's technical advisors have consistently taken on board feedback from a variety of sources and modified or changed the Scheme's design (where possible) to reduce adverse impacts of the Scheme.

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**Erin Jamieson**