

**BEFORE THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of 35 applications (18 applicants) to take and use groundwater  
from the Waitaki River Catchment

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**STATEMENT BY ROBIN MURPHY IN SUPPORT OF  
THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED BY DAVID STEWART**

**Dated 22 August 2008**

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## **Introduction**

- 1 My name is Robin Murphy. I am a dairy farmer residing at State Highway 1, Glenavy, on the north bank of the Lower Waitaki River. I am the Chairman of the Morven Glenavy Ikawai Irrigation Company Limited ("MGI"). I am making this statement in my capacity as Chairman of MGI.

## **History**

- 2 Information about the company was submitted at the Hunter Downs hearing.

## **Current**

- 3 MGI supports the alternative flow regime as presented by David Stewart on the basis of reliability of irrigation water during periods when irrigation is most needed.
- 4 Key points which MGI believe are very important in the proposal are that using a demand basis for water use for irrigation means:
  - If water is not needed then the water either stays in the river or is stored;
  - MGI operates its scheme by farmers ordering water;
  - Borderdyked farms have allocated times as per roster, they must notify the company of the times of water used on a monthly basis;
  - Spray irrigation farms at present do not record pumping times, however, since 2003 all new pumping stations are required to have flow meters and data loggers installed when setting up;
  - Flow gauging of supply to borderdyked farms is a continuing process.

## **Investment by MGI and shareholders**

- Automation - stage 1 - automating gate control for stonewall and bells pond intakes cost \$265,000  
 stage 2 - automating of key distribution points commenced during winter 2008 at a cost of \$250,000
- Several hundred thousand dollars has been spent on lining races with cloth to prevent seepage with \$50,000 spent during winter 2008.
- NIWA, Attewell Irrigation Consultants Ltd and Environmental Consultancy Services Ltd have been employed by MGI to advise and assist with automation controls for this scheme.

- On-farm investment by shareholders with either rebordering or spray irrigation.
  - MGI has a differential charge rate for water use - 17 day return, 14 day return borderdyked, spray rate.
  - Automation in future will be able to link all pumping stations back to a central computer for water use.
  - MGI have been involved with trials carried out by David Houlbrooke of Agresearch in the Waikakahi Stream catchment area for both borderdyked land and rolling hill country with k-line. The report of these findings is being prepared and results are due to be published.
  - MGI has a waiting list of farmers wanting irrigation water.
  - MGI has a current application to increase land area for irrigation which requires no increase in water take from the river and this is at the consultation stage.
  - MGI does have rights to discharge into the Waihao River which helps the flow in the lower reaches of the river.
  - Below Bells Pond intake the Waikakahi Stream does flow into the Waitaki River west of the Main Road Bridge.
  - MGI support the alternative flow proposal and acknowledge that a collective approach is required for the administration of the proposal.
- 5 A major concern for the company is that the Waitaki River is not like other Canterbury rivers used for irrigation where river flows can be plotted and management plans be put in place for any restrictions. The Waitaki is reliant on water which is used for power generation.
- 6 The success of the MGI scheme has been the 100% reliability of water for irrigation and this has contributed substantially to the economy of the Waimate district.
- 7 MGI wish to acknowledge the good working relations it has with Meridian and other river users.

Robin Murphy  
22 August 2008