

**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 Limited associated with the construction and operation of the Central Plains Water Scheme

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RICK VAN DER ZWET ON BEHALF OF  
THE NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Rick van der Zwet. I have been a very regular Chinook Salmon fisherman for the more than 35 years on both the Rakaia and Waimakariri Rivers and have caught many Salmon within this time at both rivers. My first Salmon was caught in the Waimakariri River at 12 years of age. I am a founding member of the Canterbury Lure Fishing Association and also an Honorary Fish and Game Ranger.

1.2 I have been asked by Fish and Game to comment specifically on my experiences angling for Chinook Salmon on the Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers.

## 2. ANGLING FOR CHINOOK SALMON

2.1 The Waimakariri and Rakaia Chinook Salmon fisheries are very important to both myself and many other fresh water fishers. These rivers and their fisheries require constantly changing and variable flows of water to sustain the seasonal salmon run and their harvest by recreational licence holders.

2.2 I travel most weekends to these rivers for pleasure sports and recreation, including swimming, fishing, hunting for waterfowl and game, jet boating and generally to take in the scenery.

2.3 I tend to pursue my interests in the lower and middle reaches for salmon fishing and waterfowl hunting. The upper reaches of these rivers are better for trout fishing and big game hunting, as they give the best results for my interests and are quite accessible to the public by road and by jet boat.

2.4 The best times for fishing these rivers are in the run off after a flood or fresh produced from snow melt or rain in the high country at a time when the river is clearing. An ideal river flow temperature and colour are all essential for both the migration of the salmon upstream and for the improved chances of fisherman to catch a salmon.

2.5 If the rivers become too low, warm or clear, my chances of catching these salmon become very reduced. Salmon will slow their run up the river. I have spent many

years watching and studying river flows and weather to aid in my success in catching salmon and predicting when are my best times to go out and fish.

- 2.6 Based on my personal experiences, I have identified the best times, in terms of flow rates and colour, which help me to decide when I should be fishing in these rivers. For example, water clarity is best when you can see between about 500mm - 1 metre. In other words, if you can just see your boot when you are standing knee deep to hip deep in the water. My preferred flow rates are different in both of these rivers. In the Rakaia River they tend to be between 115-180 cumecs and in the Waimakariri River they tend to be between 65-100 cumecs. I have found that flows above and below these flow rates are not very productive for fishing for salmon.

### 3. EFFECTS OF ABSTRACTION

- 3.1 I am concerned that the values that I associate with these two rivers are now becoming more and more threatened all the time by water abstraction and the changes they introduce to the rivers.
- 3.2 I consider that if the river remains in a low flow state for extended amounts of time the temperature may rise high enough to stress or kill the salmon and reduce their run. The lack of decent flow may reduce the removal of silt from the rivers and their ability to clear the river bed of restrictive vegetation trees and plants that may clog up the river. This also may affect accessibility of the river bed to the public for boating, fishing recreation and other sporting activities.
- 3.3 I have already in my short lifetime seen some of these changes and the effects they have had on these and other rivers in the Canterbury region. In my opinion further reductions or changes to the flow rates of these rivers will greatly affect my and my families' recreation as well as the salmon run on these rivers.

**R van der Zwet**  
**May 2008**