

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991
("the Act")

AND

IN THE MATTER

of applications by the Central Plains
Water Trust (CPWT), Central Plains
Water Ltd (CPWL) and the Ashburton
Community Water Trust (ACWT)

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ELIZABETH JEAN DEANS

Introduction

1. My name is Liz Deans and I am married to Brian. We live on our farm Tara, which is situated in the Waianiwaniwa Valley. This has been my home for 35 years and the place where Brian and I raised our three adult children over the last 30 years. Johnny, our eldest son, has returned home from travelling overseas and working on farms and stations in NZ to farm with us. This submission also represents our son Robert and daughter Julia, who are both overseas.
2. Farming despite its ups and downs has been a wonderful family lifestyle. The Deans family has been farming in the Malvern Hills for over 157 years and we are proud to carry on that tradition. We have been through some difficult times over the years with snow and floods but we never envisaged having to face anything like the situation we are currently facing now, with CPW planning to build a reservoir in our valley. Unlike a snowstorm or a flood where we could put our heads down and get on with the task ahead, we now find that we have no control over our future on the farm, because decisions about our

farm are in the hands of strangers. The Deans family's long history of farming in the Malvern Hills is under threat and we are finding it difficult to protect what our ancestors have worked so hard to achieve. What right does a private company have to take land from private individuals? This is so totally undemocratic and morally wrong.

3. At Tara we try to farm sustainably. We know our environment and know what the weather can bring. Over the years we have prepared ourselves for the inevitable snowstorms by improving farm tracks and purchasing machinery, (grader, bulldozer, snow-plough) to clear tracks to be able to transport feed to the stock. As part of our sustainable farming practices, we have two years supplementary feed on hand at all times. I feel aggrieved that we are being asked to sacrifice years of good farming practices so that farmers on the drought prone plains can irrigate dry and less productive land.

History

4. I feel very sad to be in the situation we are now in, as I think of all the years of hard work that has been put in to Tara to make it the successful farm it is today. My father-in-law, the late Hugh Deans, was the youngest in a family of six, five of whom served in the forces during WW2. John, his eldest brother was a flying instructor for the Royal NZ Air force and was killed in an air accident in 1943. His older brother Patric was captured as a prisoner of war and was imprisoned at Stalag VIIIB and Stalag VIII. Even though fighting for one's country was seen as a duty, Hugh was brought back from the war, as the family desperately needed him there on the farm. This family has already given abundantly for the 'common good'.

5. After the war, Hugh took up the Tara block and some of the Kirkstyle flat land, which he farmed with my mother-in law, Pam. Hugh and Pam raised their three children while breaking in the land. Hugh had a huge task ahead of him because much of the Tara hills were covered in gorse. Over the years, Hugh and his two sons Rory and Brian worked hard to develop the land into pasture and the uneconomic blocks were planted with trees. The productive farm that Tara is today is a credit to them. The Deans family planted attractive trees to not only beautify the farm but to provide shade trees for stock; shelter blocks were also planted. Many of the older trees are well over 100 years old and are a proud testament to the foresight of our ancestors. We continue this planting tradition and we now reap the benefits of a park like setting on our farm. We feel that the family is the caretaker of the farm for future generations to toil and enjoy.

Tara Farm - not just a farm, a home ...

6. A home is more than just bricks and mortar, gardens, trees and location. Tara has been the most perfect place for bringing up our children and the memories of their childhood are precious to me. Our three children had a wonderful childhood in this peaceful, tranquil paradise with their ponies and pets. The children enjoyed the freedom of the outdoors, the fresh air and vast open spaces for their playground. They loved to catch tadpoles and frogs in our pond and spent many hours exploring the margins for wildlife. They also built forts on the island and kayaked around the pond. Many hours were spent playing with their matchbox toys on the sandy banks. Sometimes they would find seashells, remnants from earlier times. I

want to ensure that my grandchildren can enjoy the same pleasures that Tara provided for my children.

7. I love the animals and birds on the farm. We are fortunate to have a variety of birds including a peacock, Guinea fowl, fantails, pigeons, Chinese silky bantams and Golden pheasants. Wild ducks come up to the house from the pond for their daily snack of wheat and bread. We used to be visited annually by a White heron. We also enjoy the wild birdlife on our pond: black swans, pukeko, black teal, brown teal, Canada geese, Mallard, Paradise ducks and the Australian coot.
8. Ice-skating is a popular activity during the winter months. A large fire is lit and a box of skates put out for anyone who might turn up. This is a real community event with everyone sharing and having fun. Duck shooting is also another popular family event that we enjoy during the winter.
9. Our farm is not only enjoyed by our family but by other members of the community. In a shingle pit on our farm we have agates and many rock hounds from far and wide enjoy visiting the pit to look for agates. Christchurch Hunt Club members enjoy using Tara for hunting on our undulating hills.
10. What I have found extremely difficult is the intrusion on our private life and home and the division with some of our friends that has resulted because of this scheme. Brian and I have chosen to lead this life and I must say I have not enjoyed the publicity we have had to endure to let people know of our plight. We appreciate the support we have received from so many people, a lot of whom we have never

met. They all say the same thing ‘How can this happen? Surely it must be illegal?’

11. Because of the intrusion on our lives, I have become suspicious of people who arrive at our home or farm uninvited and of people who telephone. For instance, a gentleman in waders arrived at our front door one day and announced that he wanted to take water samples. After questioning him about who he was and whom he was working for, I was told he worked for CPW. Consequently, I certainly did not give him permission to take the water-samples because no prior arrangements had been made to do this.

Consultation

12. My first encounter with CPW occurred as I was driving up our driveway one day and was met by two cars carrying several men. Recognising one of them, I stopped my car and spoke to him and was then introduced to the others. I was told that they were considering damming the Valley - this was the first time I had ever heard of this. I thought they must have been joking.
13. The lack of consultation has been appalling and completely unsatisfactory. At the beginning of this whole nightmare, we the affected people in the Valley, asked to meet with the Trustees of CPW at the Coalgate Hotel. At the meeting, they were unable to answer many of our questions as they said they needed to consult with various people. We are still waiting for some of those answers.
14. Brian and I are deeply disappointed by the fact that we have only ever had one meeting at Tara. Only Doug Catherwood and Pat Morrison

attended, along with most of the Valley residents. I believe this meeting took place after they secured Requiring Authority Status, which gave us no opportunity to have our say. There was certainly no 'due regard shown' to this affected party.

The Dam at Coalgate

15. I cannot understand how our Valley has been chosen for this reservoir with the township of Coalgate directly beneath the dam wall. I feel extremely sorry for the residents who would be looking directly at a huge dam wall and living with the threat of it failing. Several years ago a dump was proposed for the Valley but an earthquake fault line was found within the valley so it was deemed unsuitable. Surely building a reservoir in this unstable valley would be ludicrous.

Conclusion

16. I hope this submission will give you some understanding of the effects of the CPW scheme on our family. I find it extremely hard to convey my feelings for Tara in words and to express how devastated I would be to see our home, our livelihood and our family history destroyed for this private scheme.

17. I ask the commissioners to withdraw this crippling Notice of Requirement and to decline all consents.

Liz Deans

20 July 2008

