

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

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RALPH HOWARD ADAMS
ON BEHALF OF JET BOATING NEW ZEALAND**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 My full name is Ralph Howard Adams.
- 1.2 I have been jet boating since the late 1970's and have spent many hundreds of hours at it. I have spent more time jet boating on the Waimakariri than any other river. My recreational interests also include fishing, hunting and increasingly just enjoying spending time in the backcountry.
- 1.3 I have also been a driver for a commercial jet boat tour operator "Jet Stream Tours" in the lower Waimakariri from 2000 to 2004. I did 1132 hours as a relief driver during that period. This part time role provided me with a different perspective of jet boating on the Waimakariri.
- 1.4 I have been a member of the Jet Boating New Zealand ("JBNZ") since the early 1990's and served on the Canterbury Branch Committee for 7 years from 1993 to 2000.

2. Involvement with Jet Boating New Zealand

- 2.1 My main contributions to JBNZ while on the committee were to organise family boating runs and family boating rallies or competition days, and to introduce new boaters to the skills of safe river boating.
- 2.2 The family boating runs involve taking club members for day trips on various rivers around Canterbury, and also on trips away to boat rivers near Wanaka or Haast.
- 2.3 The family rallies are competition days which are usually run on the lower Waimakariri. These are held four or five times every year and involve 6 to 8 events at different locations on the river to test boaters' skills in different situations. The rally days conclude with a prize giving, BBQ and socialising.
- 2.4 In addition to regular club events, the Canterbury Branch of JBNZ is also involved in running charity days, which involve taking several hundred sick or disadvantaged children for jet boat rides on the river. JBNZ members are also involved in supporting the Coast to Coast event by providing safety boats all through the Gorge to rescue kayakers who have problems.

2.5 One of my other key roles in JBNZ has been to introduce new boaters to the skills of safe river use including boating etiquette and consideration for all other river users such as fishermen, kayakers and swimmers. The rules of the river are always mentioned at the briefing for any club activity, for example always keep to the right when passing an approaching boat and give way to boats coming downstream.

3. **The jet boating experience and value of the Waimakariri River**

3.1 I have jet boated most of the boatable rivers in the South Island, and in my opinion the Waimakariri is by far the best river for recreational jet boating. The ever changing braided nature of the river as it crosses the Canterbury Plains provides jet boaters with an interesting and challenging playground as they pit their wits against the constantly dividing channels. The enjoyment of recreational jet boating arises from the challenge of driving a jet boat successfully through a braided section of the river and dealing with all the challenges the river provides as you seek a remote picnic or fishing spot. The enjoyment of jet boating as an activity in itself is at least as important as just travelling from A to B and using the boat as a means to get there.

3.2 It is generally accepted that the Waimakariri is by far the most heavily jet boated river in the country. I believe that this is because it is situated so close to the city, and because it is such a good river for jet boating. We, as jet boaters, value the river in its current state very highly. A very high proportion of the club activities take place in the lower Waimakariri.

3.3 The excellent jet boating provided by the Waimakariri is due to the constantly changing braided nature of the river. In its natural state the river flow is frequently changing as a result of rain and melting snow in its catchment area. This constantly changing flow causes the river to spread across the riverbed as it floods, and then form new channels as it recedes. Even quite small freshes can create new channels.

3.4 The ideal amount of water for boating in the lower Waimakariri is around 50 to 70 cumecs. It can be boated with 40 or even less by experienced boaters. In its natural state the river becomes discoloured after a fresh and gradually clears until the next one. The ideal water colour for jet boating is from clear to slightly discoloured. As the water becomes more discoloured it becomes increasingly difficult to judge the depth of the water. Sudden and unexpected groundings are increasingly probably in discoloured water. Usually if the river is very discoloured it is also in high flow. Jet

boaters usually avoid rivers in this state because it can be dangerous. The worst situation is if a river is in low flow but discoloured due to a slip or earthworks for instance.

4. Effects of the CPW Scheme

4.1 If the river pattern described above is modified by the proposed scheme there could be adverse effects on jet boating. I would be concerned with any effects of the scheme which led to changes in braiding patterns or the ever-changing nature of the river. I would also be concerned if the scheme reduced flows below the level required for safe jet boating.

4.2 The problem with low flows is that the few boatable channels that remain are likely to be narrow and shallow. This has the effect of concentrating the jet boaters and other river users, particularly kayakers, in close proximity to each other. Jet boats will normally stop in a pool if they see kayakers ahead and wait until the way is clear. However, because of the inter-weaving nature of the braids, it is not uncommon in low flow conditions for the jet boater to suddenly find his stream, which from a distance appeared to be clear, has converged with what appeared to be a different stream with a kayaker in it. The jet boat driver is faced with making an instant decision – whether to pass the kayaker at speed if there is enough room, or run the jet boat aground in what may well be a most unsuitable place. It certainly creates stress for the jet boat driver, and probably for the kayaker as well.

4.3 There are more people every year using the river for their chosen recreation, and if there is less water than there currently is it will have a negative impact on all river users. This is particularly so in the summer, when the river is in high demand for recreational use. This may lead to conflicts between users as they become concentrated in the remaining braids and safety will become more of an issue.

4.4 If the CPW Scheme created more turbidity in the river than is present in its natural state then this would be considered a negative impact by jet boaters. As previously stated, increased turbidity and low flows are an unpleasant combination for jet boaters.

5. Mitigation Factors

5.1 I have read the notes on mitigation in Mr Taylor's report. My comments are as follows:

- a. The proposed schedules for the release of water for recreational use at certain times are regarded with deep concern by jet boaters. Although most jet boating occurs during weekends, a significant number of boats use the river during the week, particularly in summer. Many social jet boating trips are not planned far ahead. A jet boater may see a good forecast, ring up a mate or two and organise a day out on the river the same day. If they look at the river report it would generally be to make sure the river is not in flood. The proposed water release schedules only serve to reinforce our deep concern that if the scheme goes ahead the Waimakariri as we know it now will be radically changed for the worse. The primary concern for jet boaters is to ensure that the river is left with enough water at all times to allow safe passage of jet boats.
- b. During the period from September to November the river is frequently running high and is discoloured due to the snow melt and the frequent north-west rain in the headwaters. I believe that abstraction of water during this period would create minimal inconvenience to jet boaters.
- c. During the period from January to February the river is most heavily used for recreation, and is often running at very low flows. I do not see how any water could be taken for the scheme during this period without detriment to the users.
- d. The lake created by the scheme holds no attraction to jet boaters. Although some jet boaters may use the lake for water skiing, lake boating is an entirely different form of boating recreation from river boating. The provision of a lake to boat on is not mitigation for the potential loss of a river to jet boat on.
- e. If the scheme proceeds further it is essential that the mitigation factors are debated and agreed to by the affected parties, and the resulting rules given 'teeth' through minimum requirements in the conditions of consent. All river recreationalists will be at a severe disadvantage if the rules are debated afterwards.

R Adams

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