

**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 RONALD STUART ON BEHALF OF THE NEW ZEALAND  
SALMON ANGLERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 My full name is Ronald Murray Stuart.
- 1.2 I am the current President of the New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association Incorporated, (“the Association”) having being elected to that position in 2007. I have been a member of the Association for 8 years
- 1.3 My experience as a salmon angler extends over 30 years and includes angling in the Rangitata, Rakaia, Waimakariri and Hurinui Rivers.
- 1.4 My evidence provides an introduction to the Association, as well as a brief reference to the significance of the affected fisheries. I will also describe in general terms the submissions made by the Association on applications by Central Plains Water.
- 1.5 The concerns of the Association about this proposal will be presented by two other witnesses. They are:
  - a. Neville (Tim) Ellis is the immediate past-President of the Association. Mr Ellis has a long standing involvement with the Rakaia River, and has presented evidence to many previous hearings of resource consents affecting that river, and other rivers throughout the South Island. His evidence focuses on the Rakaia River.
  - b. Peter Robinson is a member of the Association, and an elected Councillor for the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council. Mr Robinson has fished for Salmon on the Waimakariri River for many years, and has been involved with previous hearings affecting that river including those relating to discharges to the lower river. His evidence focuses on the Waimakariri River.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW ZEALAND SALMON ANGLERS ASSOCIATION (INC)**

- 2.1 This year our Association celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> AGM. Association membership has remained constant at approximately 400 over the last 5 years. Numbers have been higher in the past when salmon were generally more abundant than they are today.
- 2.2 The purpose and aims of this Association are to:
  - a. Ensure continuation of our Salmon Fishery
  - b. Protect our water resources
  - c. Ensure appropriate licensing regulations
  - d. Assist breeding programs
- 2.3 The Association expends the majority of its funds and volunteer efforts on enhancing the numbers of salmon available to salmon anglers. Particularly over the last 20 years we have witnessed a decline in annual salmon returns, and we have been required to get smarter and increase the intensity of these enhancement efforts.
- 2.4 Enhancement activities undertaken by the Association include improving natural spawning conditions (e.g. removing obstacles to fish passage, and loosening gravels), and ‘assisted breeding’.

- 2.5 The assisted breeding programme involves the trapping of returning salmon and stripping the hens for eggs and jacks for sperm, then fertilising eggs and hatching them in controlled conditions. The resultant 'eyed ova' are then used in one of two ways. Either they are placed in special breeding boxes which are then carefully laid in river gravels, or they are hatchery raised for later release as fry.
- 2.6 These programs increase egg survival from less than 10% in the wild to 95% - 99% in controlled conditions.
- 2.7 You will hear more from Mr Robinson regarding salmon enhancement activities in the Kowai River area.

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE SALMON FISHERIES OF NEW ZEALAND

- 3.1 Mr Ellis and Mr Robinson will go into some detail about the salmon fisheries of the Rakaia and Waimakariri. I wish to merely reinforce the fact that, in terms of significance, the Rakaia and Waimakariri rate in the order of highest priority. This is demonstrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Salmon runs of rivers that support salmon fisheries in New Zealand<sup>1</sup>**

River	Estimated salmon Population Range 2001-2005	Est. maximum historical run
Wairau	100-300	300
Clarence	100-500	500
Waiau (NC)	200-500	3000
Hurunui	100-1000	5000
Ashley	20-100	250
<b>Waimakariri</b>	<b>2000-5000</b>	<b>15000</b>
<b>Rakaia</b>	<b>1500-5000</b>	<b>23000</b>
Ashburton	20-100	5000
Rangitata	900-2000	13000
Orari	20-200	1000
Opihi	350-2000	4500
Waitaki	1500-2200	36000
Moeraki	50-200	200
Mapourika	125-400	400
Paringa	150-350	700
Taramakau	50-300	300
Hokitika	50-300	300
Haast	50-300	300
Taieri	50-500	500
Clutha	50-1000	5000
Mataura	20-100	100
Oreti	50-250	250
Waiau(Sth)	100-400	400
Hollyford/Pyke	50-400	400

<sup>1</sup> Figures sourced from Fish & Game's Draft Salmon Management Plan.

3.2 Table 1 shows that the Waimakariri and Rakaia River salmon runs are 'stand outs' in terms of their size. This is no doubt a key reason why they are so heavily used, in combination with other important factors such as their high natural character, ease of access, and relatively close proximity to Christchurch.

#### **4.0 CONCERNS REGARDING CENTRAL PLAINS WATER SCHEME**

4.1 The Association lodged submissions in opposition to:

- The applications lodged with Environment Canterbury by CPW Trust and jointly CPW Trust and Ashburton Community Water Trust (10 August 2006)
- The applications lodged with Selwyn District Council by CPW Trust for land use consent (29 January 2007)
- The Notice of Requirement to Selwyn District Council by CPW Limited for designation of land for the Scheme (29 January 2007).
- The resource consent applications lodged with Environment Canterbury by CPW Trust including the revised tunnel proposal (1 June 2007)
- The Notice of Requirement to Selwyn District Council by CPW Trust for designation of land for the long tunnel proposal (1 June 2007).
- The applications lodged with Selwyn District Council by CPW Trust for land use consents for the wetlands and structures associated with bywash and emergency discharges (1 June 2007).
- The applications to Environment Canterbury by Ashburton Community Water Trust for resource consent for the Rakaia Hydro Scheme (1 August 2007).

4.2 The Association included a wide range of topics in its written submissions. These Included:

- Water quantity
- Water quality
- Public access,
- Safety issues
- Potential destruction of the spawning run.
- Use and management of fish in our rivers

4.3 As noted earlier, Mr Ellis and Mr Robinson will present to you their considered opinions regarding the scheme and its effects. Both Mr Ellis and Mr Robinson have attempted to digest all relevant evidence which you have already heard. Both have also attempted to present their evidence in a way which assists you, principally by minimising repetition of previous evidence. While neither man is a qualified expert in the technical sense, both have an intimate knowledge of the river based on many years of angling experience, which is why the Association considers them very qualified to speak on its behalf.

**Ronald Stuart**  
**President, New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association (Inc)**