

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 George Timothy Deans

Introduction

1. My name is George Timothy Deans, and with my wife Gillie, we own Auchenflower Farm on SH 72, through which CPW plan to erect a headrace. We farmed the property for 25 years, but for the last 10 years we have leased the farm out, to enable us to carry out other business, while continuing to live in this particularly beautiful part of Canterbury.
2. I was on the Board of Homebush School for a number of years, several as Chairman, likewise the Malvern Vet Club.
3. We have always tried within our often limited means to maintain the attractiveness of the area, and travellers often stop to admire the area from the State Highway.

Central Plains Water Scheme

4. Despite having originally been a supporter of the scheme, from the viewpoint that it was an opportunity to enhance the capability of the land to grow a variety of crops and animals in the dry summer conditions often encountered on the plains, I have come to the belief that this scheme is not the right way to achieve that laudable desire.
5. The impacts on the local people from many perspectives are too great, particularly those directly affected already, and those especially in Coalgate who will live with great concern about the dam, and probably have difficulty achieving a decent price if they wish to move.

6. I believe that the overall costs associated with the scheme will force anyone who buys into it, to utilize the land for a limited number of purposes in a desperate attempt to cover the servicing cost.
7. It is important that land use should never be monocultural, as this increases risk in many ways:
 - Financial risk in that one form of production can suffer failure of pricing.
 - Financial risk of production loss due to disease.
 - Environmental danger from the likes of excess runoff of nitrogen.
 - Emotional risk, in that those young farmers who are expected to take on this risk and their families will suffer from a huge pressure to just maintain the status quo financially.
8. It would seem that the scheme is driven by proponents of dairying. I would not object to part of the area being used for that purpose, but I believe that it should not become the sole form of production.
9. I think that the scheme was proposed originally to be a public scheme, and in that form I believed that there would be adequate controls. However it seems to have morphed into a purely private concern, where water rights can be traded with whoever, and the Requiring Authority does not seem to be validly associated with a public good any more.

Consultation

10. Consultation – to ‘consult’ is defined in my New Oxford Dictionary as *“have discussions or confer with someone typically before undertaking a course of action.”*
11. This type of consultation does not seem to have occurred to those planning this scheme, or if it has, they have deliberately ignored the process. At no point were we ever asked in an active way by the applicants how this scheme might affect us, or if we had better ideas about its delivery. For quite some time, we were not even receiving mailouts from CPW of information relating to the scheme. We have never received a personalized letter in regard to consultation re the scheme.

12. Public meetings that CPW have claimed to have had, must have been badly advertised at the time, because very few people seem to have been aware of them.
13. I gather that meetings that we initiated with the engineers have been described as consultation which to my mind does not follow the definition above.
14. On consultation, I have read the supplementary evidence of Richard Budd (July 9) and would like to rebut (or Rebudd?) aspects of it. He mentioned in para 3 that “*updated info and maps could have been sourced*” Well why did he not produce them at those meetings? My recall is that most questions at the meetings were received with a reply that information was not available at that point, and would be produced later.
15. In para 6, I presume someone such as us were “highest status” but we had:
- No personal visits apart from being informed that a surveyor was coming round to carry out surveying.
 - Perhaps one short phone call, at a time when little information was available to base questions on.
 - One or 2 generic letters - “Dear Landowner” **not** inviting “highest status” affected people for personal discussions.
 - Often very poorly notified public meetings.
16. In para 11, I have absolutely no recall of being invited to any headrace canal meetings, in fact we set up a group - the “Farmers Group – Southern Headrace” in response to the fact that there had been very little consultation to that point. Who were the landowners invited, and where were these meetings held?
17. In para 15, again I have no recall of invitations to woolshed meetings – who issued our invitation, and to which woolshed?
18. The dollar cost of true consultation is not very great, perhaps a couple of people spending a week with those directly affected? We and many others have received perhaps one brief phone call, and no visits, except those of surveyors or that have been initiated by us or The Malvern Hills Protection Society.

Effects of the headrace canal on Auchenflower

19. The proposed Headrace passes completely through the middle of our property, bisecting it in two separate areas. We are very concerned about provisions for farming while this is being built, but also for stock access from one side to the other if it should be in place. There has been described as being provision for a number of bridges which would amount to perhaps one bridge per property affected, however on Auchenflower should there be just one on the public road that the canal crosses, then we could be left with a one kilometer drive to get stock from one paddock to another.
20. Because of an apparent shortage of funds CPW seems not to be able to supply full plans in areas such as this, and how can we trust that we will have any influence on their thinking, after the consents have been granted? As evidenced from previous submitters, they have not earned trust from anyone directly affected to this point.
21. Another effect that is concerning is that of water flows under the canal. It is imperative that we be consulted about this matter too, because on our property, flood water can arrive at a number of points along the proposed canal and where the canal might go will require very careful design to minimize nuisance, as well as the canal quite possibly interrupting natural flows of the groundwater off the hills.
22. Also for our situation we are very concerned that in the creation of the Headrace, with the usual principle of minimizing cut and fill, the batter above the canal running along the hill facing Deans Road could be very steep, and leave exposed clay, in fact it would be an eyesore in that very area which many tourists enjoy at the moment. I gather that there are no plans to reseed those sorts of areas, which would require soil to successfully re-establish grass.

Compensation

23. In the supplementary evidence (July 9) on compensation, "Proposals for Compensation/Mitigation" CPW are committing themselves to a 25% payment over valuation for land taken for the scheme. Does this mean any land identified under the Requiring Authority? Does the requiring Authority continue to apply to the full 100 or 200 metres designated, in perpetuity?

24. This 25% can hardly be seen as generous, when in our case I believe it would amount to about \$8000 which would only be equivalent to the expected increase in the value of the equivalent land under irrigation.

25. We will suffer losses in relation to:

- Greatly increased difficulty in farm management during the construction phase – removal of fences, stock disturbance, human disturbance- noise, vibration and dust – something that we will have to manage somehow with our tenant farmer.
- Greatly increased difficulty in farm management long term – access problems with stock, vehicles etc due to the farm being bisected.
- Reduction in value of the farm for the above factors – the farm may increase in value due to irrigation, but only by a figure equivalent to or less than the capital cost of the exercise.

26. We would prefer in regard to para 13, that in the case of isolated parcels of land, rather than being in the position of only having one buyer (CPW) for that land, that CPW should work with the Selwyn DC to allow titles to be created for the benefit of the existing owner and access to be allowed along the canal road to any isolated titles, to enable the owner to gain some greater benefit for his or her sacrifice elsewhere.

27. I believe that should the scheme go ahead any compensation needs to be generous for those whose livelihoods are already, and will be significantly affected. This is not just because we may be involved. For many people actual dollar costs are already mounting, because of the restrictions of the Requiring Authority and it would seem that the possibility of compensation is far distant into the future, particularly if the process is drawn out over a number of years.

28. Why should those people suffer for something that is not remotely of their doing? Has there been any mention of this from the applicants?

29. I believe that should the scheme go ahead, a **completely independent body** should be set up to arbitrate any points of disagreement between persons affected and CPW, and also for matters of compensation, because once CPW has achieved their

consents, they will have no incentive to negotiate with anyone affected.

Costings

30. Here I would like to endorse the submission of S. Dennis. This submission has not been delivered yet, but I have been given access to it. I agree particularly with the point that the cost of the scheme is much more likely to be the figure of around \$13,650 per hectare for farmers taking up the Scheme than the applicant's estimate of \$6,830, because of the very low likelihood that banks would support farmers with existing groundwater taking up scheme water for very little overall benefit, when you take into account the extra cost of servicing the capital cost of the scheme water. That figure of \$13,650 would I suggest, be uneconomic for almost all forms of farming, even dairying at peak prices.

Investigation of Alternatives

31. I believe that the alternative of using Lake Coleridge has never seriously been considered. During a discussion with a significant figure involved in the creation of the Conservation Order, he mentioned that he did not believe that the Order was a significant impediment to utilizing extra water diverted into Coleridge, perhaps passed through the power station and then extracted again downstream in the Rakaia.

Conclusion

32. In summary, we believe that while irrigation is very important to Canterbury, this is the wrong scheme. The costs are excessive, the existing and expected environmental and social costs are too high, and the organization appears to have taken a least consultation path. This is not viable in these times, as for the success of any scheme now, a great majority of people affected have to be taken along in an inclusive way.
33. I therefore ask that the CPW applications for Resource Consents be declined, and the Notice of Requirement be withdrawn forthwith.

**Tim Deans,
Auchenflower,
Darfield.**

23 July 2008

