

IN THE MATTER

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

AND

IN THE MATTER

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

Statement of Evidence of the Coalgate Township Committee

1. My Name is Colin J Morris and I live at 20 Lower High St. Coalgate. I have lived in Coalgate for 19 years and became a member of the Coalgate Township Committee (the committee) in 2000. I was delegated to prepare and present this submission on behalf of the committee. All committee members have read and had the opportunity to contribute to this submission. The contents were agreed upon and carried by motion at the monthly committee meeting June 17th 2008.
2. Coalgate is a township of about 100 houses and a population of 280. It is situated 12 kms west of Darfield in Canterbury. There is a tavern, a garage, a bowling club, a Masonic hall and an indoor cricket venue. Local industry includes a ski lift construction company, a Bentonite processing plant and several Bed and Breakfast businesses. Glentunnel, 2 kms away, has a general store, post office /library and a primary school.

Role of The Township Committee

3. The township committee acts as a liaison between the Coalgate residents and the Selwyn District Council. There are approximately 10 members including a chairperson and secretary. We meet once a month on every third Tuesday. The meetings are open for the community to express views and discuss various projects in or around the township. Recommendations are made to the council and, if accepted, are put in order of priority. The committee meets with the councillors and council staff on the annual township 'walk around' so they can see first-hand what our wishes are. The council then, we hope, put the project/s into their budget wish list for completion when funds become available. Examples are: specific street lighting, speed thresholds, road sealing and footpath paving.
4. The committee also has discretionary funds to use for smaller projects and beautification around the township. We have regular working bees to plant shrubs and trees on the roadside berms.

5. Examples of the larger community projects funded by the council are: the children's playground, and a shelter constructed for children waiting for the school bus.
6. To celebrate the new millennium, the council granted the township \$2000 to spend on a project of our own choice. After much debate, research and negotiation, we decided to build a walkway on the south side of the Selwyn River. I was responsible for building the walkway and for subsequent improvements and maintenance.

Community Survey

7. The Central Plains Water Irrigation Scheme was discussed a number of times at the monthly meetings, particularly after the site of the proposed reservoir was moved from the Wairiri Valley to the Waianiwaniwa Valley. Opinions varied about what the committee could or should do in response to this significant proposal. It was agreed that there would be a major impact on the township and that some response was appropriate. It was agreed that the committee's mandate was to represent the township as a whole, rather than the subjective, individual opinions of the committee members. In 2005 it was therefore decided to survey all of the township's residents to gain a clearer picture of their attitude towards the scheme.
8. Mr Bruce Johnston, a teacher at the Darfield High School, agreed to help with the survey with the idea of utilising it as a high school project. The questionnaire was carefully compiled to give an accurate picture of how residents felt about the scheme without being too long-winded. It allowed respondents to freely comment on the various issues while remaining anonymous. We wanted the survey to be impartial, giving opportunity to comment on benefits as well as concerns, as well as suggesting ideas for appropriate compensation. See attached form for list of questions (appendix 1).
9. The questionnaire was sent out to every household in the Coalgate Township in July 2005. We received a 37% return rate. See attached report for summary of the survey results (appendix 2).
10. 37% to some may not seem like a response appropriate for such a huge issue. The committee can speculate various reasons; general apathy, people are busy with little spare time, it is too big an issue and people are in denial, people consider the outcome to be a fait accompli. Compared with other occasions when input has been requested of the community, e.g. general meetings, 37% is actually a very good response.
11. Respondents ranged from long term residents to those who had lived in the township fewer than five years. All except one were permanent residents.
12. By far the greatest concern of Coalgate residents is the possibility of dam failure or overflow. On this basis the committee feels it is unacceptable to expect people to live with the stress of this risk, particularly when there is no direct benefit to them. Despite assurances from the applicant that the dam will be built to the highest safety standards, will be constantly monitored and will exceed

internationally accepted guidelines, nevertheless a risk does exist. The CPW Dam Safety report quotes various estimated probabilities of failure. Who can say for sure what effect a major earthquake in the region would have on this proposed structure. We don't need this uncertainty. The committee believe that no level of risk is acceptable to the Coalgate community. (Refer to Nick Taylor's evidence paragraphs 69 and 70).

13. Other concerns are: *windblown dust when the reservoir is empty*. It seems logical that the level of the reservoir will fluctuate. The AEE states 'wind speed and direction could be important...for generation of nuisance dust during periods of low water level' (page 6-29). We received mixed messages from CPW about this and are still not convinced that this effect can be mitigated. At very least there will be issues with mud banks, rotting vegetation, associated stench, mosquitoes and midges. The committee feels that any suggestion that this reservoir could be used for recreation is a fallacy. (Refer to Nick Taylor evidence paragraphs 64 through 66)
14. *Negative effect on the Canterbury Environment*. Looking beyond the township, the residents are concerned about the effect the scheme will have on the environment in general, with several commenting about downstream pollution seeping into the rivers and aquifers.
15. *Lower local real estate values*. The community feels this is a real possibility, especially during the construction phase when life in Coalgate will be intolerable. After this, property prices will likely remain below average, as the number of people wanting to move in under a dam would be limited.
16. *Construction noise*. The construction phase will likely take at least three years of 24/7 activity. It will be a very stressful time for Coalgate residents. Apart from the noise, there will be significant vibration, heavy truck movement, blasting, dust and general disruption from the dam site, which is only 100 metres from the edge of the township. All these activities fall outside of the SDC district plan. There also is the 235m level headrace canal, which will involve similar construction activity. This canal will run very close to the township on the southern and eastern sides. The committee feels it is unacceptable to expect the residents to tolerate this inconvenience on three sides of the township, again with no direct benefit. (Refer to Nick Taylor's evidence paragraphs 39 through 52 which clearly backs up these claims)
17. *Recreation noise*. This issue makes the assumption that CPW will provide a recreational lake on the outskirts of Coalgate. Apparently, the hole left from extracting the material required to construct the dam (the borrow pit) will be filled with water to provide a recreational lake. 63.4% of respondents were opposed to such a lake. 75.4% indicated that if the recreational lake did go ahead, they would like it to be a 'no motors' lake. The committee has definite concerns about such a lake. Who would be responsible for supervising this concept? Who would pay for upkeep and maintenance? We feel that this is a significant issue in its own right and requires careful consideration.
18. It is interesting to note that CPW seemed to view this recreational lake as a potential asset to the Coalgate people and assumed that it would go some way in

compensating for their losses. As far as the committee is aware, we were never once approached to see if such a lake would be wanted or even acceptable. During the hearing evidence it was revealed that the borrow pit would be within the Waianiwaniwa valley and that a separate recreational lake is no longer planned. The committee has never been informed of this change.

19. When asked about benefits of the scheme, respondents gave highest score to 'benefit to the local economy' and 'employment'. With intentions to bus construction workers out from Christchurch, it would follow that benefits to the local economy during the construction phase would be minimal. The committee can see no direct economic benefits to Coalgate after the scheme is up and running. 'Recreational value' scored behind 'real estate values' and the 'Canterbury economy'. Many respondents scored all the suggested benefits with a zero. The survey also asked residents to suggest other benefits of the scheme. One or two respondents suggested that the scheme would ease pressure on the aquifers. Virtually all the others could see no benefits whatsoever, particularly to Coalgate.
20. Some respondents referred to the level headrace canal. The proposed route of the headrace will follow the 235m contour line, which in theory would place it right through the Coalgate Township. In practice it will deviate around the east side of the township. In order to keep the headrace level, it will need to be raised up on embankments. In the AEE it states that these embankments may be up to 5m high. The committee is concerned that these gravel embankments will be another eyesore to our township. There is a ten-year plan for the Coalgate Reserve to undergo progressive refurbishment and beautification. It is felt that the canal embankment would greatly mar the outlook from this nearby reserve.

Safety Issues in Coalgate

21. The canal could also pose a threat to the safety of residents in the eastern part of the township if there were a breach of the canal wall. With embankments and a dam surrounding three sides of the township, even a minor breach of the dam or the canal embankment could cause serious flooding to Coalgate.
22. The committee has concerns about the safety of the children in the township. This canal will have a water surface width of up to 25m and a depth of up to 4.5 m., far greater than the water bodies that already exist. Children are often attracted to water, especially in the summer months and as far as we are aware the canal/s will not be fenced off. There is also an issue with the proposed siphon where the canal crosses the Selwyn River. It is unclear if this will pose a threat or what visual impact it will have on the riverbed. (Refer to Nick Taylor's evidence paragraph 72).
23. The committee has concerns about the increased number of milk tankers passing through Coalgate. These numbers have already increased significantly in recent years with expansion of dairy farming in Central Canterbury. This detracts from the peaceful lifestyle residents enjoy and increases potential risks for pedestrians, particularly children, and pets. (Refer to Nick Taylor's evidence paragraph 80)

Consultation

24. Although the township survey did not cover consultation, comments such as *'consultation between CPW and the local residents has been pathetic'* were returned. Results from the survey were discussed at the committee meeting held on 16 August and quote from the minutes: *'it was clear that some people lacked information or had the wrong information'*.
25. The committee is very disappointed with the lack of consultation and felt marginalised during the entire scheme development. It takes issue with the evidence put forward by Erin Jamieson. We feel that given the scale of this scheme and the potential effects on our community, the consultation has been grossly inadequate. Reading through the minutes of the committee meetings and correspondence over the last few years, it becomes clear that the members have grave concerns that the residents are confused and ill informed about the scheme. As far as the committee is concerned, consultation with the community has been totally inadequate, token and often misleading. (See appendix 3, extracts from minutes).
26. As far as members can recall, over the past five years, the committee have never seen a CPW Trustee, Director or any representative at any of our monthly meetings.
27. There have been a few informal and unsanctioned meetings with some individual committee members. Richard Budd, a PR consultant employed by CPW, twice visited former Committee chairperson, Bob Mugford at his home on two Sunday mornings; he was uninvited and the visits were not pre-arranged. Bob describes these as courtesy calls only, with very little useful information received. Daryl Smith and Barry Mathers met with Richard Budd and Walter Lewthwaite without prior approval of the committee. We do not consider that these informal meetings can be described as formal consultation with the committee.
28. Coalgate is one of the major 'stakeholders' and as such we feel it would have been more appropriate for a senior and knowledgeable representative/s from CPW to keep the committee updated at six monthly intervals at a minimum. They also should have provided up to date, easily understood documentation to help the committee keep its residents well informed. This is especially true during the planning stage. Instead, we had a situation of confusion, uncertainty, frustration and deepening resentment.
29. In November 2005, the committee sent a list of questions to CPW on 12 issues that directly affect Coalgate. A reply arrived in February 2006 with answers that didn't match the questions we had sent, they possibly from a different group. Answers to the original questions didn't arrive until the end of March 2006. The committee was greatly disappointed and frustrated that a knowledgeable representative from CPW did not have the courtesy to front up and attend a committee meeting to answer our questions face to face. Despite several invitations, no CPW representative ever attended our monthly meetings. (See appendix 4, list of questions and answers).
30. The maps available for viewing were inadequate for most people. The average layperson cannot be expected to grasp the scale and complexity of such a large

project from two-dimensional maps. Commonly it is the accepted practice for a scheme of this magnitude to display a three dimensional scale model of the proposal. This, we feel, would have been a far better way to convey the size and extent of the scheme. This never happened and we are convinced there are still people in the district who have no accurate concept of what is being proposed.

31. It should be noted that many of the maps that appeared in the media showing the dam and reservoir, failed to include Coalgate on them. Comments describing Coalgate as '*a location of low natural character*' in the AEE didn't go down too well with the locals either. (*The settlement of Colgate [sic] which will be in close proximity to the reservoir and lake structures is obviously a location of low natural character* AEE Page 8-41)
32. With reference to Ms Jamieson's evidence on consultation, Point 27, it is apparent that an enormous amount of time and energy was spent on keeping shareholders informed. The same is not true of the Coalgate residents.
33. The committee is disappointed with the lack of support and help received from the SDC. Initially our own council refused us the right to make a submission to the regional council. This decision was reversed only as a result of the township survey. We were, however denied the opportunity to make submissions to the SDC. Apparently this is illegal because of the 'standing orders.'
34. Considering the amount of financial support the SDC has given CPW, it is disappointing that a proportional degree of aid was not given to help Coalgate and other affected parties. Recently (February 2008) the committee asked that SDC fund an independent study to determine the effects of the scheme on Coalgate residents. The SDC has thus far not responded to the request (June 16).
35. Not once has there been any suggestion of monetary compensation for Coalgate residents. From recent CPW evidence, none is being offered.
36. In conclusion, the Coalgate Township Committee considers that this proposed scheme will impose a whole range of disadvantages upon the residents of Coalgate before, during and after construction. The proposed CPW scheme has already had a huge negative impact on our community. People's attitudes have changed and the atmosphere within the township is different. Fear, uncertainty, resentment, frustration, anger, disappointment and division are all words that spring to mind when describing what people are feeling. The benefits of the scheme to the majority of residents will be minimal, if any. Nevertheless they are expected to tolerate all the associated disruption, stress, potential ill health and risk. Nick Taylor refers to '*social equity*' in his evidence (see paragraphs 90 and 91). This spells out exactly what Coalgate residents are feeling.
37. The Coalgate Township Committee asks the commissioners to decline all applications associated with this scheme.

On behalf of The Coalgate Township Committee:

Colin J Morris

Final Draft Dated: June 17, 2008

