

Before a Hearings Panel of the Canterbury Regional Council

Under Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of applications for Regional Council Resource Consents to take and use water in the Upper Waitaki River Catchments

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ROSS KENNETH IVEY

Part I Tourist Values

1. My full name is Ross Kenneth Ivey. I live at Glentanner Station. I have a Bachelor Degree in Agricultural Commerce. I am the 2nd generation to live at Glentanner and have been living and working here full time since 1978.
2. Glentanner is a true High Country gorge run located on the western shores of Lake Pukaki adjacent to the Aoraki Mount Cook National Park. Glentanner is well known because of its unique location on the highway into Aoraki and features on many tourist photos and postcards worldwide. Glentanner is farmed traditionally with Merino sheep, Hereford cattle and Red deer.
3. Glentanner Station is a family business which owns and operates Glentanner Park, a tourism business that operates in a complementary role to the Aoraki Mount Cook National Park. This business includes a Holiday Park with budget accommodation for up to 90 people, power and tent sites, and kitchen, ablution and barbeque facilities. Glentanner has over 1000m of bitumen sealed airfield, scenic flight operations with both fixed wing and helicopter with hangarage and fuel installations. The purpose built reservations/information centre contains a café and retailing. This tourism business has its own zoning in the district plan and directly employs approximately 30 people.
4. Glentanner pioneered tourism activity on high country runs along with Walter Peak and Cecil Peak stations at Wakatipu and the building of the Cardrona ski area by the Lee family. We have been operating a successful tourism business in the high country since 1975 starting with helicopter skiing before diversifying as before mentioned.
5. The success of ours and other tourism ventures is dependent on looking after our environment, both the immediate environment around our business and the wider high country environment in the Upper Waitaki.
6. I feel qualified to comment about this and the following because my business is dependent on meeting tourists' expectations for an enjoyable high country experience.
7. I consider there are 4 parts to the high country landscape that make up the magnificent vistas people enjoy. The sky, the mountains, the lakes and the

foreground. The first 3 parts are the dominant features we all enjoy about the Upper Waitaki-Mackenzie along with the sense of vastness. The 4th part, the foreground, is what is often debated about in terms of what is appropriate in the Mackenzie country.

8. The foreground in the basin varies immensely. In the farming sense, you have the wide open yellowish vegetated land with matagouri, scrub, and rugged looking greywacke boulders through all the farmed variables to irrigated farmland with centre pivots and dairy cows adjacent to the State Highway. The important thing is to get a balance. For every tourist that stops and takes a photo with the undeveloped natural foreground in their picture, or to just stop and enjoy the experience, there will be another who stops and photographs the centre pivot and intensive farming with the exceptional high country backdrop behind.
9. Tourists are interested in human activity. I live at Glentanner. The Glentanner homestead is one of the most photographed localities in New Zealand. The picture often has sheep, and always has sheds, green paddocks, exotic trees and of course Aoraki in the background. Take a look at the postcard racks in Auckland or Christchurch airports.
10. I appreciate that I am generalizing here, but tourists do not expect us as farmers to dig our head in the sand and avoid or ignore opportunities to diversify on farm. While we are the caretakers for this environment, I find that tourists are highly interested in our plans for our property and the overall viability of our properties. I am constantly asked to speak to many groups of people at Glentanner. These people include school children, North American university students, Probus groups, farmers from all over the world, valuers conferences, German nature tours, you name it. There is a common thread with them all. They want to know the real issues. How do we feed our stock in winter?, what competition is there for the water resource?, irrigation vs hydro?, what are the weeds and pests?, how secure are our leases?, how restrictive is our government bureaucracy?, how do we drought proof our farms?. An enjoyable high country experience is often much more than simply enjoying the view.
11. They are interested in our plans to develop our properties to curb the effects of the spread of pines and the development of irrigation to stabilize the harsh weather environment in which we chose to live. When viewed from the air they can appreciate the threats from wilding pines, and they can see the dust storms

that are encountered in the basin. Frankly many also express some surprise that there is little Government or Regional support for us to undertake on farm measures to control weed or pest control in a nationally important landscape.

12. I also hold the view that when viewed from a helicopter or fixed wing – the irrigation of the flats helps tourists to understand the year round farming activity. Without the, in relative terms, small area of irrigation tourists perceive the arid basin of the MacKenzie as an impossible farming environment – but areas of irrigation help the tourists to understand the balance between the summer grazing areas and the need to provide for stock during the harsher winter months.
13. I think many of us get hung up on what we personally enjoy about the high country and insist all the tourists should have the same view.
14. For example:
 - 14.1 Personally, I hate broom. It is a noxious weed and hard to control. There is a bad infestation below Burkes Pass near the Dobson ski area corner. When it is flowering it is a real spectacle on the hillside and a lot of tourists stop to enjoy it.
 - 14.2 Secondly, Russell Lupins on the roadside are disliked by the Department of Conservation for ruining riverbeds, once again enjoyed immensely by tourists.
 - 14.3 Thirdly wilding pines. We keep our property clear of wilding pines and consider them a weed. They are a massive problem in the high country. Our local tourism body, Destination Mt Cook Mackenzie, have a magnificent photo cover on their yearbook with Aoraki, the Southern Alps, Lake Pukaki, the highway, a homestead and some wilding pines in the foreground.
15. As I said previously, it is important to get a balance. Tourists enjoy the hydro scheme with the canals, the power stations, the salmon farms, the homesteads, the variety of farming activity and the natural surround. The agreement between MEL and MIC allows for 25,000 ha of new irrigation in a vast landscape between Burkes Pass and the Waitaki Dam. To get it into perspective, it is a small amount

in a large area. The majority of this will not be seen from State Highway or county roads.

16. I take the view that farmers, where practicably possible, will respect differing opinions on irrigation in the high country landscape and set irrigation back from roads, walkways, rivers etc as much as is practicably possible within the constraints of their property.
17. Much of the Upper Waitaki is already green, i.e. much of the dry land is already green. Some farmers in the Upper Basin have left a setback of tussock grassland beside the highway, with green developed pasture beyond. Other farmers because of physical constraints have had to develop land adjacent to the highway.
18. I sincerely believe the proposed irrigation in the Upper Waitaki will not upset the balance between natural values and human activity. The tourism/conservation values of the basin are not being put at risk as long as farmers act responsibly with the location and operation of their irrigation. This is a vast landscape and there is room for everyone. Irrigation is necessary for the financial sustainability of farming in the Upper Waitaki.

Part 2 Erosion and Environmental effects

19. Glentanner farms Catherine Fields, a 435ha farm off the south end of Lake Pukaki, as a run-off.
20. Catherine Fields became part of the Glentanner pastoral lease in 1983 after a soil and water conservation plan (Run Plan 52) was entered into with the Waitaki Catchment Commission. At present both properties are under 1 title.
21. The Run Plan was to provide for the grazing of 2400 stock units displaced from high altitude lands. It was instituted to retire from grazing some 8870 ha (two thirds) of the Glentanner pastoral lease.
22. During the development process at Katherine Fields, the Run Plan portion of which was subsidised, Glentanner also carried out significant development from its own resources. There is still a deficit of some 1550 stock units of grazing yet

to be provided to fully implement the plan and completely destock the high country at Glentanner.

23. The biggest problem with Glentanner's use of Catherine Fields as a runoff is the climate.

23.1 The rainfall is only 550mm rainfall p.a.

23.2 This rainfall is too variable.

24. The Waitaki Catchment Commission and Glentanner jointly spent a lot of money to make this dry land runoff farm work. Glentanner still is investing large amounts of money into Catherine Fields but is constantly being hamstrung by dry seasons, whether they are spring, summer or autumn droughts, or a combination of all three.

25. The previous is a brief summary of my own evidence yet to be presented, but the purpose is to illustrate the point that

“by irrigating in the basin there will be protection of the viability of more erosion prone upper slopes, i.e. class VII and VIII land as farming will be less extensive, than what would be needed without irrigation”

26. We have invested heavily in grassing and fertility, fencing, yards and buildings, stock water, tracking, rock removal and cultivation to be faced with continual disappointments from a lack of rainfall. Rainfall is the limiting factor. It is not economically sustainable to farm Catherine Fields under the present basis from Glentanner. We feel we are past the point of no return in terms of investment in Catherine Fields and see irrigation as the logical solution to providing a dependable supply of pasture and crop production for sheep and beef farming in the future.

27. Soil and water run plans and freeholding of pastoral leases often result in a loss of flexibility in the farming operation.

28. You cannot replace extensive high rainfall gorge country grazing with intensives dryland farming in an unreliable rainfall area. Irrigation is a logical solution to this problem.

Part 3 Climatic conditions of the Mackenzie Basin

29. The upper inter montane basins such as the Mackenzie are notorious for hot dry summer months and cold and frosty winters. The Mackenzie basin has 100 days of winter with little or no growth. Our own property Catherine Fields has only 550mm of rainfall per annum.
30. The timing of this rainfall is critical. If it rains in late autumn there is little benefit at the end of the growing season. Alternatively if it rains in Oct-Nov-Dec, this is marvellous and sets the dryland up for the season.
31. To exacerbate the hot dry summer we have the prevailing nor'west winds which come down the river valleys, continually sucking out moisture in the summer months. Many of the high country soils are shallow and "recent" soils with low water holding capacity anyway.
32. In our experience at Catherine Fields there are dry periods every year and droughts most years. This constantly hamstring our farming business. Generally we have poor establishment of young grass/clover pastures. We have a well documented fertilizer and lime application history to verify we have given these young pastures every opportunity to grow. The limiting factor is simply water. The costs of land preparation, sowing, seed and fertilizer are similar on irrigated land, heavy soils, in a reliable climate or dryland in the Mackenzie. If winter supplement crops fail because of drought, as they often do, we have to pay twice. Once for the failed establishment, and again to buy in supplement from outside the district at exorbitant prices with large freight costs.
33. It is economically unsustainable for us and anyone else to farm in this manner.