

Appendix b

REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

“High country landscapes

“Some of Canterbury’s high country landscape could probably be classed as internationally outstanding. The high country is characterised by its vast and open landforms, including a wide range of outstanding glacial, fluvial and aeolian derived natural features and a relative lack of modification. It includes significant native plant and animal communities and habitats - tussock grasslands and shrublands, glacial rivers, forests, lakes and wetlands, and alpine areas. The dominant land use is pastoral farming, and the predominant land tenure is leasehold.

Land degradation is a significant issue in parts of the high country. Vegetation depletion, and the spread of weeds such as hieracium, broom, gorse and wilding trees is impacting on landscape values. Other impacts arise from poorly designed earthworks (including tracking), structures, tree planting, and the clearance of indigenous vegetation.

The wide range of demands on high country areas for nature conservation, recreation, catchment management, amenity, and production must be considered against their diversity and comparative lack of resilience. Without sufficient protection of high country resources there could eventually be no income-earning potential for people who have a recognised commitment to living and working there.”

The RPS Ch.8 states:

(h) Landscape and ecosystem restoration

“In order to improve the health of many of the ecosystems (and the landscapes to which they contribute), there needs to be an active programme of restoration and management. Protection of a declining system is not always enough. There are some

examples of restoration within the region at the moment, ... examples of restoration (as opposed to revegetation or creation)."

(i) Geological features

"The region's geological and geomorphological features include its braided rivers and a number of sites and areas that are important. The wider natural, amenity, scientific, and historical values of geological resources need to be understood and carefully considered."

(k) Amenity values

Amenity values are "those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes" (section 2, RM Act). They are the things that make a place attractive to be in or visit. The region has landscapes that can be considered outstanding on a national, regional or local scale, and amenity value is one of the things that can give them that standing.

The amenity values of a particular area are not easy to describe or quantify, so that effects on them can also be difficult to determine. Effects are usually specific to a particular place and a particular change - replacing 200 hectares of tussock with pine trees would have different effects on amenity values from developing a ski-field. Amenity might be reduced by loss of the open character of Christchurch's Port Hills, obtrusive building in a natural landscape, the spread of wilding trees across open grassland, pollution of water by animal wastes, or change of character of rural townships through decline in rural communities. Changes may be subtle (spread of undesirable plants) or more dramatic (building on a ridgeline). Mitigation is possible by the use of sensitive design, construction, and management.

(l) Heritage sites

"Canterbury's various cultures each have sites and areas, both natural and modified, including areas within past and present settlements that have particular heritage value. These include wahi tapu, wahi taonga, historic routes" such as the Lindis Pass, as well as the Danseys Pass and Pig Root in the Otago area of the District.

Subsequently, amendment to the RMA introduced “historic heritage” as a matter of national importance. I would anticipate that, whilst the PDP may not have addressed this resource, a Variation developed subsequent to the amendment would need to address the historic heritage resource.

The RPS identifies issue resolution through *“the adverse effects of the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources on the integrity, distinctive characteristics, and contribution to a regional sense of identity of:*

(a) wetlands, including their overall area and functioning.

(b) the natural character of wetlands, lakes, rivers, and their margins.

(c) natural features and landscapes including their cultural, amenity and recreational values.

(d) indigenous vegetation, habitats of indigenous fauna and ecosystems.

(e) the historical and cultural heritage of Canterbury including its amenity and recreational values.

(f) the relationship of Tangata Whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wahi tapu, and other taonga.” (my emphasis)

Policies and methods variously address these dimensions. Policy 1(a) notes “The particular sensitivity of wetlands to the effects of land use activities should be reflected in the provisions of regional and district plans.”

Objective

Protection or enhancement of the natural features and landscapes that contribute to Canterbury’s distinctive character and sense of identity, including their associated ecological, cultural, recreational and amenity values.

Objective 4 is the *“Protection or enhancement of the historical and cultural heritage sites, buildings, places and areas, including their cultural, recreational and amenity values, that contribute to Canterbury’s distinctive character and sense of identity.”*

Principal Reasons *“To retain or increase the value to the Canterbury region of its historic sites, buildings, places and areas.”*

Environmental Results Anticipated

(1) Protection or enhancement of distinctive characteristics of the Canterbury region, including:

- (a) natural values within wetland areas identified in Policy 1(a);
- (b) landscape values within areas identified in Objective 2;
- (c) biological values within areas identified in Objective 3;
- (d) heritage values within historic places or areas identified in Objective 4;

1. *This does not therefore address only outstanding natural features and landscapes, but landscape values in general that contribute to Canterbury's distinctiveness. Nor does it only significant indigenous vegetation.*
2. *Cross territorial boundary issues also need to be addressed (s.75(h)).*