



Results of community consultation

Environment Canterbury Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-19

Over **600 individuals** and organisations made submissions on our Long Term Council Community Plan. Submitters also had the opportunity to present their material at hearings in Christchurch and Timaru.

A total of **69 submitters** chose to present their material at hearings in Christchurch and Timaru.

Feedback from the Canterbury community concentrated on ten **What do you think?** topics identified in the draft plan. The decisions in relation to each of these topics are explained here.



① Clean Heat project

The draft plan proposed:

- To reduce the overall cost of the Clean Heat Project in Christchurch from \$62.2M to \$55M over the next 10 years.
- To change eligibility for the Clean Heat full assistance programme so that it can only be accessed by homeowners who qualify for a rates rebate.
- To reduce the level of subsidy under the landlord programme from 40% to 33%.

Air Quality Submissions overview

Submissions were received both supporting and opposing the proposed changes. Some were in favour of reducing the burden on ratepayers, stating that targeted rates should be reduced, too many people with Community Services Cards did not actually need full assistance, and that the proposed system would still help those people who needed financial assistance.

Other submitters felt that reducing eligibility for the full assistance programme and the landlord subsidy would disadvantage lower income households. These submitters felt that improving air quality was so important that as many people as possible should be eligible. There was concern that uptake of the programme would be reduced and that this would not improve the health of low income people living in cold damp houses.

As a result of the submissions it was clear the Council needed to consider the social and economic costs of any decision to amend the Clean Heat Project criteria for Christchurch.

From a rates perspective it was noted that a target rate increase of almost 33% would have been required to retain the Clean Heat programmes in their original form. The proposed changes had the effect of a 17% reduction in Clean Heat targeted rate from 2008-09.

Council decision

The overall cost of the Clean Heat targeted rate in Christchurch will be reduced from \$62.2M to \$55M over the next 10 years.

Eligibility and subsidy levels for the Clean Heat Project have been reviewed in the light of the Central Government budget of 28 May 2009. The full assistance programme will be available 100% to homeowners who qualify for a rates rebate, and those homeowners with a Community Service Card will pay a homeowner contribution towards the cost of insulation and a Clean Heat appliance (up to a maximum of \$1000).



② Uniform Annual General Charge

The draft plan proposed:

- That a Uniform Annual General Charge is used to fund councillor representation and provision of public information (current annual cost \$2M).

Submissions overview

There were 85 submissions received regarding the proposed introduction of a Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC). Of those submissions 64 were in favour and 21 against the proposal.

Some submitters were concerned that lower income ratepayers would pay a proportionately higher share of their income to meet a UAGC than higher income ratepayers. This is a valid point. However, in absolute terms the maximum incremental cost to any individual ratepayer is of the order of \$8 per annum and is more typically \$5 or less.

Concern was expressed that the introduction of this charge was “the thin end of the wedge” and would lead to further similar charges. However, Environment Canterbury’s rating policy sets out clearly the principles for funding work programmes and any future change would be subject to a further consultation process.

Of those that supported the proposal, only four expressed a willingness to see wider use of a UAGC to fund even more activities than those included in the proposal.

Council decision

The proposal to adopt a Uniform Annual General Charge to fund councillor representation and provision of public information was adopted in full.



3 Household energy efficiency incentives in Christchurch

The draft plan proposed:

- That Christchurch homeowners wishing to make their homes more energy efficient should be able to apply for an interest-free loan repayable over 10 years via a targeted rate to be paid by the homeowner. Alternatively, homeowners could obtain a subsidy towards the cost of the work, with the homeowner paying the balance.

Energy

Submissions overview

Generally submitters supported the introduction of a household energy incentive programme in Christchurch City and agreed homeowners should be encouraged to make their houses more energy efficient.

Implementation of the project is dependent on the extent of Government funding via the EnergyWise energy efficiency incentives programme.

Council decision

This proposal was adopted in full.

4 Resource Management Act charges

The draft plan proposed:

- A fixed charge for administration, monitoring and supervision of resource consents.

Fees and charges

Submissions overview

The majority of submissions were in support of the proposed changes to the revised Resource Management Act charging regime. Of 55 submissions, 50 supported the proposed charges and retaining the concept of 'user pays'; five submitters did not support any form of consent monitoring charges.

Among submitters who supported the proposed changes, there was a desire for transparency to ensure that the changed structure did not allow for over-collecting of revenue, including overcharging of monitoring visits. There were a number of pro forma submissions from the farming sector in support, stating the change would result in a more equitable sharing of costs and that removing charging for short phone calls or discussions would reduce frustration for consent holders.

Council decision

To adopt a fixed charge for administration, monitoring and supervision of resource consents.



5 Waimakariri Flood Protection Project

The draft plan proposed:

- That the Waimakariri Flood Protection Project loan payback period is spread over 25 years (loan repayments will include an adjustment for inflation).
- That the project is funded via a new three class targeted rating district, along with a works and services rate and a general rate contribution.

Hazards

Submissions overview

Submissions were generally in support of the Waimakariri Flood Protection Project and the rating proposal. Submitters said they supported the plan to increase the level of flood protection and the associated targeted rating district.

Some submitters sought removal of the Class B rating district, where property owners receiving indirect benefit pay a lower targeted rate, and suggested collection of this funding from general rates. This suggestion was not supported by Council.

Council decision

This proposal was adopted in full.



6 Ashley/Rakahuri Regional Park and Tekapo Regional Park

The draft plan proposed:

- That the Ashley/Rakahuri Regional Park is established in 2010/11, with contributions from a targeted rate levied over Waimakariri and Christchurch City ratepayers (less Banks Peninsula) and a regional general rate.
- That the Lake Tekapo Regional Park be funded from a mix of fixed targeted rate over the Mackenzie and Timaru districts (40%) and regional general rates (60%).

Land Submissions overview

Ashley/Rakahuri Regional Park:

The majority of submissions were in support of the establishment of this park and the funding policy. Submissions supported protecting natural values and providing a diverse range of recreational opportunities. They also emphasised the importance of the protection of river birds and other biodiversity and provision of opportunities for horse riding and less mobile visitors. Other submissions called for funding a Port Hills regional park or creation of regional parks elsewhere.

Tekapo Regional Park:

There was general support for this park. The draft funding policy drew submissions for and against. Some submitted it was fair and equitable and others that it was not. Both Timaru and Waimate District Council submitted in opposition to the rating policy, suggesting the benefits of the park were limited to those communities within the Mackenzie District. The Waimate District Council also proposed the protection of regional and nationally significant biodiversity being funded nationally.

No submissions were received for or against the level of proposed general rate.

Council decision

The Ashley/Rakahuri Regional Park proposal was adopted in full, with the intention to promote management of the Ashley Estuary in ways that are compatible with the objectives of the regional park.

The Tekapo Regional Park proposal was adopted in full, with the fixed targeted rate applying to the Mackenzie, Timaru, Waimate and Ashburton districts.



7 Rating for Bovine Tb control

The draft plan proposed:

- That the contribution by Environment Canterbury targeted ratepayers for the local share of the national bovine Tb control programme is reduced by 50%, by approximately \$250,000. Note the central Government share would therefore also reduce by the same amount.
- Over time, shifting the targeted rate funding from a contribution to the Animal Health Board (AHB), and replacing this with a regional pest operation, would maintain the gains from the national programme and ensure benefits to biodiversity are not lost.

Submissions overview

Seventy four submissions opposed a reduction in the annual targeted rate contribution for control of vectors of bovine Tb, with many saying that cutting back the programme at this stage would result in a loss of gains made in recent years. They said it was critical that the work continued in order to eradicate the disease in cattle and protect exports.

These submitters indicated a willingness to reinstate the rate to the 2008/09 level (approximately \$500,000) and to direct the contributions to the Animal Health Board. Eighteen submissions supported the proposal.

The Council also took into account that the National Pest Management Strategy for bovine Tb is currently being reviewed, with results due in 2009.

Council decision

Funding for the bovine Tb control programme in Canterbury will be reinstated for the next two years (to a maximum of \$650,000 in 2009/10). This will allow time to review the National Pest Management Strategy, due in 2009.



8 Rating for public transport in Lyttelton and Diamond Harbour/Selwyn District

The draft plan proposed:

- That Lyttelton and Diamond Harbour join the Christchurch rating area for public transport. This will reduce the rating burden for Lyttelton and Diamond Harbour residents, while having a minimal impact on Christchurch public transport rates.
- That the rating area for public transport around Diamond Harbour is expanded to include Purau, Church Bay and Charteris Bay, to reflect areas of new development and nearby bays which can access the ferry service.
- That a 90:10 urban:rural rating split should be introduced for public transport rates in the Selwyn District.
- That urban and rural rating boundaries be established.

Public passenger transport

Submissions overview

In relation to the rating of public transport in Lyttelton and Diamond Harbour, there were only two submission points out of twelve that were not in favour of the proposals. One was not in favour of reducing rates in Lyttelton and Diamond Harbour, and the other was not in favour of any associated rise in Christchurch rates.

In relation to the rating of public transport in Selwyn District, there was an even balance of submission points in favour of and against the proposed changes. Ten entities in total submitted on the proposed changes.

The key point of contention was around the use of a rating methodology based on capital value, as opposed to the targeted fixed rate. However, the Council considered that using capital value was fairest. This was because it reflected the benefits obtained by all users of the road network serviced by passenger transport through reduced congestion, as well as the relative contribution to road use of businesses and households of varying sizes. Tools are in place to accommodate hardship, including rates rebates and remissions.

Council decision

These proposals were adopted in full.



9 Funding for water management cost recovery

The draft plan proposed:

- Basic water resource management costs for monitoring and investigations are funded 100% from general rates (\$4.9M).
- Additional costs for monitoring and investigations are funded 100% from consent holders (\$2.2M).

For 2009/10 approximately 70% of these costs (\$4.9M) would be funded by general rates and 30% (\$2.2M) from consent holders.

The proposed split recognises that most of the benefits accrue to the wider regional community, but that a portion of the costs should be funded by resource users in recognition that they are driving additional work requirements.

Submissions overview

Council raised the proposal to recover part of its water management costs from holders of consents in the 2006-2016 LTCCP, and it was subsequently discussed in the annual plans for 2007-08 and 2008-09. This year's long term plan proposed that 30% of the costs for investigating and monitoring the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater systems was recovered from consent holders.

At least eleven stakeholder meetings were held to specifically explain the proposed approach, and it was also discussed at a number of other stakeholder meetings.

A total of 360 submissions were received on the topic of Water Management Cost Recovery, with 320 supporting retaining the Funding Option 1 (retaining the status quo of 100% general rate) and 40 supporting Funding Option 2 (a mix of general rates and cost recovery charges).

Funding for water management cost recovery submissions overview continued...

Submitters in opposition comprised five main groups:

- Irrigation companies
- Hydro-electricity generators
- Federated Farmers
- Three district councils (Ashburton, Mackenzie, Waitaki)
- Individuals from the farming sector

Most submitters in support of Funding Option 2 (a mix of general rates and charges) were individuals from urban areas, although two district councils, Waimate and Waimakariri, were generally supportive.

While the majority of submitters expressed opposition to the change in funding, a number of those who

presented at the long term plan hearings indicated that they were not necessarily opposed to consent holders being charged a portion of the Council's resource investigation and monitoring costs. Their opposition arose in part because they said there was insufficient information in the draft plan to understand the proposal, and they expressed concern about the lack of transparency as to how Council had arrived at the charges, and what principles and criteria had been used. They urged the Council to take more time and work with industry representatives, and said they were willing to be involved.

Additional issues raised by submitters will be considered further during the additional stakeholder consultation process.

Council decision

The council adopted the funding policy for recovering water management costs from consent holders via Section 36 Resource Management Act charges, but agreed to defer implementation of charges for water management cost recovery for 12 months to allow time to consult further with stakeholders and consent holders.



Waste, hazardous substances and contaminated sites

10 Waste exchanges

The draft plan proposed:

- To reduce waste exchange annual funding to \$67,000.

Submissions overview

In total 12 submissions opposed the reduction in funding for waste exchanges. Waimakariri, Ashburton and Waimate District councils all opposed the reduction in funding, together with Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch, the Sustainable Business Network and Wastebusters Trust Canterbury.

Comments included that communities and businesses needed support to encourage reuse of waste.

There were two submissions in favour of the proposal.

Council decision

It was decided to reinstate waste exchange annual funding at previous levels for the next three years.



For more detailed information on individual submission points visit: www.ecan.govt.nz/submissions

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