

Introducing some chatty community members:

The following few paragraphs introduce you to 10 characters based on real people we have talked with (Please note: We have not used their real names), to illustrate some of the issues that people around Canterbury are dealing with in relation to water.



Jim farms sheep, beef cattle and deer on his South Canterbury hill country property. He and his family enjoy the rural lifestyle and a close-knit local community similar to the one he grew up in.

When Jim bought the property, it had some irrigation piped from the local river, but not enough for a dairying operation. He wants to be able to do the farm work himself, rather than employing staff, so he has resisted converting to dairy farming so far. Like most farmers, Jim is always looking out for ways to make the most of his farm – to have the best possible financial return with the best possible physical condition of the land and water resources. He takes great pride in keeping his property and his business in good condition.

Jim changes the ratio of his different stock based on how prices for meat, wool and velvet go. Because he farms three different animals, he can change how much he produces of any one of them when sale price for that product increases. However, he still needs to work hard to produce profits and this means grazing as many animals on the property as possible without damaging the resources he depends on.

Deer love to wallow in water, so Jim has fenced off the stream and wetter areas of his lower paddocks. The springs that feed the stream rise in several places on the slopes and flow intermittently, so it is not feasible to keep his stock off those areas all the time. As a result, Jim's stock contribute some nutrient pollution and sedimentation to the stream. He has planted a wide riparian strip along the stream and voluntarily monitors water quality entering and exiting his property. With help from Environment Canterbury, he is working to ensure that water leaving the property is as free from farming effects as possible.



Jo lives in the city and works in an office in town. She isn't very interested in water and doesn't feel that water management in Canterbury is anything to do with her. She hasn't really had time to join in the discussions about water that she has heard in her workplace and noticed in the newspaper. Her family and her work take up all of her time and energy.

Despite this, Jo and her family rely on water. Like other people in Christchurch City, they each use on average 450 litres of water per day for drinking, cleaning, showering, cooking washing clothes and watering the garden. The food that they buy from the supermarket also took a lot of water to produce, and the sewer that runs from their house uses water for transporting waste. When they were little, the children loved playing with the hose in the back garden on hot days and Jo's husband, Sam, was out just yesterday using his water-blaster to clean up the outside of the house before he starts painting it.

Jo and her family need water more than they think to keep their household functioning well. They take it for granted that water will always run from their taps. But recently they found out what it was like when that doesn't happen. The Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 damaged water pipes and water wells, so they had to get water from a tanker on the street for several weeks. It was a big relief when they got their water back on again. It was even better when they were told that they did not have to boil it before they could drink it. They would not be pleased if their water were to deteriorate in quality and affect their health, or if they had to use less of it for a very long time.



Huia and Jono purchased a North Canterbury property and moved onto it with their young family a few years ago. They both wanted a farming lifestyle and had both built up their own dairy herds through share-milking.

They both affiliate to their Māori tribal roots and, although not Ngāi Tahu, take a low-key interest in local Māori affairs. Their aim is to farm in a way that respects the Māori cultural values of the land and waterways.

While Huia and Jono would prefer to farm mixed sheep, beef or crops, the price of land in Canterbury is pushed up by the income dairy farmers get for milk, so purchasing property for lower income businesses is not financially viable. They have opted in to dairy farming because it is the only affordable way to cover the mortgage and earn a good income. Besides, it allows them to take on some staff so that they can spend a bit more time with their children.

The cost of buying their land and setting up the dairy and irrigation systems has left Huia and Jono with high debt that they must be able to pay off. They must look for efficient ways to work while getting the best possible returns. Their livelihood and that of their staff depends directly on growing grass for cows to eat, and grass growth depends on water.



Trevor is concerned about the environment. His concern springs from the time he has spent in the outdoors. His mum and dad took him on many trips when he was a child and now he enjoys tramping and kayaking with his friends. He lives in town and has a part share in an organic market garden. Trevor derives his main income from working for an environmental organisation.

With his knowledge of environmental issues, Trevor feels he should live lightly on the Earth and try to convince other people to do the same. He uses energy and water very carefully: instead of driving, he bikes or walks whenever he can; he uses the most efficient irrigation system available on his garden; and takes short showers. He thinks about what might happen as oil becomes more expensive and he is interested in how to prepare for climate change. Trevor is also worried about what happens if Canterbury loses its native species (plants and wildlife, birds and insects) and he is worried that future generations will not have healthy environments to live in. He is concerned that life will become more difficult for everyone if our water resources deteriorate. Trevor sees conserving the environment as essential to the future well-being of humans and other species.



Mary and her family live on a lifestyle property near Christchurch. They made a deliberate choice to live off their land as much as they can. On their 4-hectare farmlet they keep pigs, hens, sheep and sometimes a few cattle. They have a large and productive vegetable garden, and a woodlot producing fuel for winter heating. The family is largely self-sufficient in food. Mary and her partner each do casual work in the local area to bring in sufficient income for their other needs.

Mary and her family are very conscious of their water use because they depend on bore water for household use and for watering the veggie gardens during summer. They feel fortunate to have a deep bore producing good volumes of high quality water on their property. Some of their neighbours are not so lucky. A spring-fed stream runs along their boundary and from it they draw stock water (manually, by bucket) if there is not enough rain. Pasture growth relies on rainfall. In droughts and in late summer, Mary sells off stock rather than drawing more water to keep them in feed. Mary is concerned about how the local springs may be affected by increases in dairy farming upstream of their property. These new farms have applied to take a lot of water out of the aquifers up stream of their property which might mean they have less water available in their bore and boundary stream.

Mary is actively engaged in community sustainability groups in her area.



Kiri-Anne grew up in a small town but has lived in the city since she started studying at university. She studied physics and chemistry before deciding to specialise in hydrology. She is now working as a hydrologist in a small business where she provides advice on water and water flows commercially. She wants to continue to develop her understanding of water quantity and quality (including how pollutants move through surface and ground water systems) so that her business keeps growing. She relies on local councils, farmers, environmental groups and government agencies that need the information hydrology can provide. They are her main clients.

Kiri-Anne is aware of her Ngāi Tahu ancestry (her whānau are from Southland) but she does not spend a lot of time with other Ngāi Tahu people. Her partner is pākehā and their children haven't shown much interest in their Māori side, although recently their youngest son has become active in the kapahaka group at his school.



Peter farmed alongside his father before taking over the mixed arable farm from his parents, keeping it in the family for a fourth generation. He and wife Sue hope that their daughter and son-in-law will take the farm over from them when they retire. Sue works for the local council. Her salary supplements the family income and is particularly important for keeping the cropping business going through difficult periods. Their small flock of merino sheep provides another source of income from high-quality wool.

Peter's highest priority is to leave the farm in good condition for his daughter to take over. It is a point of honour in his family to have the property in good physical and financial condition. It is also important for Peter and Sue to save enough money over the next few years to have a comfortable retirement.

All Peter's crops are presold in the form of a contract to grain or seed merchants. To get a contract Peter must show that he is able to supply the amount of grain stipulated in the contract each season and, to be sure of this, he has to have irrigated land. The water he uses comes from deep bores on the property.

Water conservation has been a talking point in the family for many years and, over time, Peter has learned how the farm ecology works. He has stopped ploughing his paddocks and adopted no-till seed sowing methods so that he doesn't lose soil moisture in autumn. He has also retained the exotic trees planted on the property by his forebears. These trees help to retain the soil during hot nor-west winds and provide shelter for the sheep during hot summers and cold, wet weather. If he cut down the trees, Peter could install expensive, but much more efficient, centre-pivot irrigators. He'd save himself a lot of time and work: keeping the trees means he has to spend several hours each day in the summer moving irrigation pipes from one paddock to another to water his crops. But he still thinks it's his best option. Peter and Sue have won an environmental award in recognition of their commitment to sustainable farming.



Piri is a commercial fishing and hunting guide. He has enjoyed fishing all his life, first with his father, then with mates, and now with his own young children. He used to work in a government department but he left that job to live in a small town near pristine fishing rivers and lakes. For his own recreation, Piri enjoys white-water kayaking with mates he's known since university. He and his family have lakeside camping holidays each year at Christmas.

Piri is well-connected to his marae and continues to live within the takiwā (area) in which his marae has an interest. He is concerned about the traditional knowledge that Ngāi Tahu has lost and he is interested in helping people to relearn or recover this knowledge and pass it on because he feels that it is still valuable in today's world. He is down-to-earth and understands that people need to be able to make a living and to grow food. He is well aware that some of the traditions of the past may need to be adapted, but the idea of using resources in a sustainable way is a principle he strives to live by in his personal life and his work. He is actively engaged in water management issues.

Piri wants to earn his livelihood and build a business based on his recreational interest (fishing). To produce good tourist fishing experiences, Piri needs high quality natural environments that provide both good habitat for trout, and the kinds of places that his clients come to New Zealand to see.

Piri is concerned about water quantity and quality; he is concerned about losing good fishing rivers, losing mahinga kai, and losing rivers suitable for kayaking. Already some of the rivers that he used to use for kayaking and fishing now have less water in them and their water quality is decreasing so much that he can't use them anymore. Piri wants to continue kayaking and to pass on his knowledge to others, including his own children. More than anything else, he wants to see that Canterbury water resources are passed on to his grandchildren in a better condition than they are in today.



Finn has been interested in energy ever since he started learning about physics in primary school. He has worked for regional and national electricity corporations for 20 years and now manages the hydro-generation portfolio for the company that employs him. His work makes him very aware that New Zealand needs more electricity as each year goes by. In Canterbury, the economy has grown a lot over recent years, and is likely to keep growing as dairy farm conversions bring money into local towns and cities. Dairy farming uses a lot of electricity. Finn knows that increasing electricity usage means hydro-generation companies will continue to make profits from the water in Canterbury's rivers.

Finn is driven by a professional ethic of doing his best to promote the interests of his company. Being successful in his work rewards him with promotion and more pay.

Finn knows that demand for electricity will only increase in the foreseeable future. He hears the concerns of environmental lobby groups and has some sympathy for their views, but knows that if his company does not win the rights to generate power, another company will. Finn keeps up-to-date with the latest thinking on low-impact electricity generation and makes sure his staff do the same. He sometimes feels frustrated when discussing electricity issues with people who do not understand how the electricity system works. It is more complicated than many people realise.



Rob wears many hats. He and his family farm in Canterbury, and he is known around the province for his leadership roles. He sits on a number of boards around the region. He often finds himself travelling to Christchurch where he has been appointed to a committee that has a strong focus on water in Canterbury. With his farming and business background, Rob is enthusiastic about the benefits of water storage and what it can bring to Canterbury. His view is that it has the capacity to provide increased irrigation and to leave more water in the rivers at dry times. He believes it is also one of the keys to unlocking the potential for an increase in the protection of significant biodiversity, mahinga kai and recreational benefits.

Water quality- what are the issues?



Mary



The stream on our boundary still has freshwater crays, bullies, spawning herring and sometimes flounder, but there is more weed growth in it now so we see fewer of them all. Ten years ago we used to fish in that creek but I wouldn't eat anything from it any more. And we used to swim down at the bridge but we don't go there now because there is too much cow poo in the water. We have planted flax and other native shrubs along our side of the creek to help provide shade and shelter for fish. We've done the same with the wetland area on our property that's connected to the stream. The council clears out the creek several times a year because of the weed growth. But I'm still worried about the deteriorating water quality in the stream. I'd like to see more of our neighbours, who have bigger farms, do more to clean up the stream.



Kiri-Anne



I can understand why Mary is concerned. Effluent is the biggest problem, though low flows contribute to its negative effects. It is hard to restore water quality once it is degraded in any system – hardest in lakes and then rivers and then in marine environments. I'm really concerned about groundwater, though. We can't see it but it also can get degraded and it's connected to surface waterways. It may be an even bigger problem – and we don't yet understand how it works, let alone how we might 'fix' it.



Huia



I've fished from my local streams all my life, too, so I can understand why Mary is worried. And I see what Kiri-Anne is saying. But here's the thing: farming is totally important to the local and national economy so we can't just say let's stop farming so we can save the streams and rivers. We have to find better ways to farm and better ways to manage water. We're working on that at my place. We put in a storage lake to capture the water running off our place and then run it through a reed bed, so the nutrients are taken up by the reeds before the water goes back into the stream. We paid for it all ourselves, because we want a clean stream our kids can swim in. But who's to say what's clean enough? No nutrients at all? Probably not because streams can have natural levels of nutrients so how much should we put up with? There's a limit to what farmers like us can afford to pay to clean up the water.



Trevor



Hmmm, I've always thought that no pollution at all was the goal to aim for. I'd like to know more about how much pollution all the different waterway species – including humans – can cope with. Do we have to assume that our economic future rests with intensive agriculture?



Piri



Me, too. My clients want to see clean, clear water (preferably with big fish in it!). My business depends on that. Lots of recreation and tourism businesses do. But if there's a good story around environmental limits, I think we'd be able to work with that.



Drinking water- what are the issues?



Kiri-Anne



Christchurch has some of the purest drinking water in the world and we should value that really highly. But water is also a vital resource for many industries that support our high quality of life. We may have to make some hard decisions on water uses in the region.



Trevor



Without good quality drinking water we are all worse off because we'll have to pay through rates for more water treatment and possibly more water bores and pipes. Some people can't afford higher rates. For everyone's sake, we need to take a second look at how intensively we allow urban development and farming to occur.



Jo



I worry that my kids will not have access to clean, safe drinking water if things keep going as they are. We all need to be able to drink to live, and our health is pretty important too - illness is expensive in all sorts of ways both for individuals and for New Zealand as a whole. In future, I'd like to see a range of measures to minimise the runoff from farms, so our water both above and below ground is not polluted.



Huia



Intensive farming makes farming financially viable. Without a strong farming base, Canterbury doesn't have much of an economy. Keeping the waterways clean costs us a lot of time and money so perhaps there should be wider community contributions to help farmers do the things that protect drinking water.



Jim



Hmmm, it's a tricky problem. Farming does have to be financially viable, otherwise no one would farm and that would cause huge problems for the economy and society. But I think everyone should have good drinking water, too. Maybe it's not so much a problem of farming intensity, but of where we're farming intensively. We might need more of those water protection zones, funded by everyone.



Using water- what are the issues?



Kiri-Anne



The waterways in most of our urban centres are in poor condition. In fact the worst polluted rivers in Canterbury are the urban waterways in Christchurch. I think we each have a responsibility to help put that right. That includes me, too. I used to wash my car on the driveway but now I take it to a car-wash. It costs me more but I don't feel guilty about it anymore and I know that oil, grease and other harmful contaminants from my car aren't going into the streams nearby when it rains.



Finn



Yes I've started washing my car on my lawn so that the detergent is filtered by the grass and doesn't get into the waterways. But another issue is the number of ducks on the rivers. Aren't their droppings one of the main reasons why the city rivers aren't safe to swim in?



Jo



Well, my kids love feeding the ducks in the parks and along the river bank near where we live. There are seagulls and other birds, too, sometimes hundreds of them. People who have dogs should pick up the dog's doings so it doesn't get into the water, but the water is where birds live so we should let them be. I wouldn't want the birds to be chased away. I think we have to put up with their effect on the water because they are neat to have around.



Finn



I use water on my veggie gardens and lawns. They are my pride and joy! By February I'm pretty keen to keep the vegies growing and the lawn in good shape so I do use a bit of water then. I could find alternatives, like rainwater, but I haven't convinced my partner yet that water tanks would add to the landscaping and they can be expensive to install. And the water is running past anyway, just underground, so all we're doing is using it for a little while during its run to the sea. Growing food is really important. And green lawns make the city landscape attractive. We should all be allowed to use water for that because it is fundamental.



Trevor



I'm with you on vegies, Finn. But I reckon the more demand we put on the water infrastructure, the more the cost goes up. By putting in a rainwater tank, and changing how I view Canterbury's landscape, I've found I can still enjoy my place. We can still be the 'Garden City', but maybe the garden should be more in tune with our natural environment and natural water resources. We don't need to use our high quality water to feed lawns or wash clothes or cars for that matter. I reckon we should reserve that for drinking and keep the cost of accessing and using it really low so everyone gets what they need.



**Mary**

We need to have better price signals for water use, I think. I don't have a problem with farmers using water from rivers and bores, but I think that any user – rural or urban – should only have access to a certain amount for drinking, cooking and washing and then above that they have to pay. Dairy farmers pay a lot for their irrigation systems and they pay a lot to prepare for consents to take water, but they don't pay by volume used. That doesn't seem right. Consumers have to pay twice – in taxes and rates for water infrastructure and then again in high prices for food. There is also the "cost" of losing access to recreational opportunities as water quality and quantity deteriorate.

**Huia & Jono**

If we had to pay for the volume of water we take, our costs would go up and it would be harder to pay off our huge mortgages. That makes dairying less attractive but if we have fewer dairy farms, there's less money coming in to the country and local communities. The economy would take a hit – and that's not good for any of us. Farming supports communities, not just farmers themselves. Shouldn't the community have to pay for it through taxes, because farming is so important to our economy?

**Piri**

Well, my industry relies on water, too. Why should I have to pay for water for your industry? Agriculture is important in our economy – overall, the agricultural sector earned about \$14b nationally in 2010 and of that \$14b, the dairy industry itself earned nearly \$9b. But other industries contribute a lot to our economy, too. I think we need to keep things in perspective. Tourism attracted \$9.5b in export earnings in 2010 (18.2 per cent of all export earnings) so that is important too. How much assistance should any one industry get? If other industries got public support, could they contribute as much to the economy in the future as agriculture does now, perhaps with less environmental cost?

**Peter & Sue**

All the same, community support for irrigation is really important because access to water opens up all sorts of choices for a community. Everyone benefits. Irrigation makes dairying possible and things like crop farming and horticulture more profitable and therefore more attractive. We do need a range of farm types and products, otherwise as a nation or even a region we're not resilient and can be subject to the effects of floods in Australia (for example) where much of our wheat comes from. It's not sensible to have so many dairy farms when we also need other products including meat, wool, grains, potatoes, seeds and vegetables, particularly when many of these can be produced using a lot less water.



Irrigation, tourism and the economy – what are the issues?



Rob



Irrigation is vital for the development of Canterbury's economy. We have lots of good farmland that is limited only by water availability. I totally agree that we need to ensure that there is enough water in our rivers to support biodiversity during dry times and we must look after our aquifers. The obvious answer to this is to put in water storage so that we can collect water over the wetter months or at times of high river flow. Farmers can draw on stored water over the dry months. But equally importantly we can have higher flows left in the rivers and reduce abstraction for our aquifers.



Trevor



Put like that, putting in storage is a good idea, but I bet the farmers whose land would be used might not like it. Likewise, local Māori might not be happy when water is moved from one catchment to another as happens when canals are put in. Also more intensive farming from all this irrigation and the likely increased run off from farm properties is going to have a major impact on the rivers and streams downstream. I suppose it helps that soon, under the CWMS, environmental protection will be legally required as a condition of any activity that might affect freshwater quality or ecosystems. So, no matter how much irrigation there is, all farmers will have to protect environmental values. Maybe the cost to all of us is worth that?



Peter & Sue



Profitable farms can afford to invest more in environmental mitigation and enhancement – unprofitable farms can't do that. Farmers want to have 'clean green' environments and many of us have been 'greenies' for many years. I don't think we'll find good solutions to water problems if farmers are left to foot the bill alone. We need to work together and invest in water management together as a community.





Trevor



The electricity sector is motivated to keep producing more electricity and to encourage increasing demand. We need to have a re-think about how we're using electricity, thinking of it as a treasure rather than a right. It should be possible to reduce demand and therefore eliminate the need to build so many new generation plants all the time. I'd like to think that building a new power station is something we do only once in a generation and even then only after long and careful thought and consideration of other possibilities.



Finn



Well, one hydro project per generation might work if each one is big enough! People don't want high dams, though, and they do want all the latest electrical gadgets and the economic benefits of strong industries like dairy and mining so there's a problem there. Add to that our growing population. More people wanting more gadgets equals more dams – or other similar impacts. Most people don't want to go without electricity – we know that from our experiences with big storms and earthquakes. You've got a good point about energy efficiency. Another way we can make better use of our existing hydro generation is spreading the demand for electricity more smoothly throughout the day and throughout the year. We really need to work together to figure out how best to use our water for energy.



Rob



Of course energy is also really important for irrigation. Currently it takes a lot of power to pump water for spray irrigation. We pay thousands of dollars a year just to do this. That's why it's important to think about how irrigation development can also be used to generate electricity or reduce energy usage. The new water management strategy is big on the idea of increasing irrigation without increasing the need for electricity to drive it as much. This is one of the reasons why having storage lakes in the foothills is so important. Firstly, generators can be installed in the dam structures to generate electricity from the water that is released for irrigation and the desired environmental outcomes for consumers. Secondly, by piping the water from the main distribution canals to farm we can use gravity to deliver the water under enough pressure so that no on-farm pumps or electricity use is required to irrigate the land.



Piri



I'm with Trevor on wanting the rivers to stay free from dams and other structures. Perfect for kayaking and fishing. I'm thinking do we really need to have all our rivers dammed? I can see what Finn's saying, too, about the gadgets and all that. I want to be able to use all the latest gizmos because they make life easier. Cell phones and computers are just essential for work these days. And they'll stay that way so we need electricity for all those things.



Water for energy – what are the issues?



Trevor



We need to focus on energy efficiency and conservation. Continuing to demand more will ultimately damage all our waterways. The whole Waitaki catchment is captured for electricity production now. Do we want the same for the other braided rivers? Or can we limit new schemes to small ones so that our remaining 'wild' rivers stay that way?



Finn



Energy companies want efficiency, too. It is in the companies' interests to use water really efficiently. That means running as much water as possible within our consents past our turbines and not 'spilling' any water. We only build new dams, canals, and generating plants when there is clear evidence that the investment of many millions of dollars in construction will pay off through the electricity market. So it's up to consumers, really. If industrial, commercial and residential consumers don't demand more electricity, there will be no incentive to build new generation plants.



Huia



It's hard to see how we're going to get on in the future with the same amount of electricity we have now. There'll be more of us, for a start. But we could try to make better use of the waterways we've already got – like the North Bank project – and get more value out of it through irrigation as well as electricity. I don't know what Ngāi Tahu think but it might stop another river being dammed.





Piri



For my work and play, wild rivers are essential. My clients are tourists. Their recreation is my business. They prefer to visit unmodified, scenic rivers and will pay top dollar to do that. If we dam all of our rivers, we can still have guided fishing but we won't command the highest prices – those clients will have less fishing success here and may decide to go somewhere else in the world. Our rūnanga is discussing these issues too. We want to be financially independent, so we need to find opportunities for development – but they need to be feasible and fit with our values. We need to keep some rivers in a natural state. That's important for kayaking, too.



Kiri-Anne



I really enjoy tramping and water is a big part of that. My favourite tramping trips are the ones when I get to swim in a clear running stream or river at the end of a long, hot day. Then dry off on a warm rock. Being with my whānau and having my son tell me stories about the place and why it is important to Ngāi Tahu is something I love. That's when I feel closest to our natural environment, most relaxed and refreshed and most at peace with the world. I want everyone to be able to do that, so I'm keen for our rivers and streams to be really healthy.



Finn



In backcountry areas you will find great places to fish and swim because electricity production doesn't impact those areas. Hydro developments do provide even more places for fishing and swimming and kayaking and canoeing and jet-boating and waterskiing and more ... the lakes behind dams are really important for recreation. Many more people can get to water for recreation after a dam is completed.

Recreation and water – what are the issues?



Jo



We really love to go summer camping near Lake Ruataniwha near Twizel with the kids and do lots of swimming and messing around in the water. It's a great place to hang out and relax in the sunshine.



Mary



This is all good, but what about the irrigation that's being developed along with new hydro schemes? That irrigation often enables dairy conversions and some dairy farming contributes to water pollution in streams and rivers. We used to swim in the streams near our place but don't now because it isn't safe to any more.



Jono



Yes, dairy farms can contribute to water pollution but quite a lot can be done by managing it carefully. And because we can't get away for long family holidays in the summer, we really appreciate being able to take the kids swimming and fishing or boating in our local rivers. We have spent lots of time and money developing catching ponds at the bottom of our place so that the poo and the nutrients don't run off into the local waterways and ruin them for everyone, including ourselves and our kids.



Governance – what are the issues?



Jim



I'm on the Zone Committee for water management in my area. I have to say it's a complicated business and it took a while for me to work that out. But I can see that if people are willing to listen to one another and learn from one another, it might be possible to come up with a good solution.



Finn



In my work I'm involved with consent processes, so I get to see how other people view water issues. What we do is go and talk to all the different user groups before we put in a consent application, so we can work with them to iron out problems and work on solutions before the paperwork goes in. We are effectively collaborating, and have been for a long time, and it works. We see it as an investment up front that pays off because we're more often working with the community rather than against them.



Jo



I really don't know much about all these different plans and policies and processes. It's all so mind-boggling! I can't see how I could ever be involved in water management. I don't have much spare time and reading complicated reports is not a lot of fun. But my neighbour down the road said something the other day about the local stream, so perhaps if I joined a group in my area, I could learn more and make a small contribution. I might even meet some new friends.



Piri



I've learned that it's really important to be involved. So I encourage you, Jo, to join that group! At our hui, we have lots of people come along. They don't all talk a lot or have a lot of information, but sometimes someone says just one thing that brings the issue into perspective and helps us make a good decision. Collaboration with other water users isn't always easy, though. It can take a lot of time and isn't always comfortable. We've had to learn how to disagree, respectfully, and how to find joint solutions that people can live with while not compromising fundamental principles.



Kiri-Anne



I've been an expert witness in Environment Court hearings many times. I like Finn's approach. It is much more pragmatic and less expensive to collaborate than compete, as long as there is sound knowledge going in to the decision-making process, and everyone is open to change and learning including those leading the consultation.

