

## **North Canterbury Community Conversation series meeting record**

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Hurunui Waiau Zone - 15 November 2021, Amuri Golf Club

Kaikōura Zone – 16 November 2021, Donegal House

Waimakariri Zone – 17 November 2021, Fernside Community Hall

### **Northern Community Conversation meeting record:**

The following topics were presented at all North Canterbury Community Conversation events and collated into one section. For area specific notes, please see subsequent sections.

1. Engaging with communities under stress
  - a. Environment Canterbury are aware of the multiple stressors on communities – rural especially – at the moment and a paper to council has indicated a number of things, including:
    - i. Environment Canterbury acknowledge that they have a role to ensure compliance is followed but aim to work on-on-one with people to support individual issues or challenges they face one at a time.
2. Catchment approach / re-Generation
  - a. An approach to align work with other agencies, community groups, landowners, community, and industry to provide big picture thinking
  - b. All about co-designing solutions
  - c. This approach is flexible and focuses on biodiversity and water quality improvement
  - d. Within this, there's broad groups and expertise working together to add value across the catchment, which results in an overarching framework (a catchment approach) to guide regional programmes
  - e. Relationships one of the most important components of this
3. Regional programmes
  - a. Braided River Revival - a programme that combines works to improve braided river values
  - b. Berm transition being looked at differently – how do we bring in more indigenous plants to flood protection work, as opposed to solely engineering activities
    - i. Funded by COVID-19 Shovel Ready fund
    - ii. One of six projects Environment Canterbury received funding for
    - iii. Question asking how many jobs were created with this funding – response noted contractors undertaking the work have a reporting process in place to record the additional job creation. In the Wilding Conifer project alone (which is funded through the same funding stream), around 200 jobs were created
  - c. Biodiversity and regeneration major part of this work – planting, regeneration, and enhancement
    - i. Noted weighting towards protecting existing biodiversity as opposed to creating new sites
    - ii. Enablement by supporting local nurseries to supply ecosourced plants
4. Annual Plan 2022-2023
  - a. Two things may be consulted on in March/April next year
    - i. Public Transport Fares
    - ii. Funding for flood recovery
      1. Total cost approximately \$20million
      2. Central government funding for a portion of this

3. Question regarding shingle removal from riverbeds – response noted shingle management is part of flood protection and a review of how this is carried out is currently underway. Further discussion around shingle build-up in rivers, not confining natural events, and land retirement on riverbeds.
5. Essential Freshwater updates
  - a. Wetland’s guidance and submission – Environment Canterbury have provided feedback on these draft proposals from central government. Noted wetlands are particularly challenging with requirements to map and exclude stock from wetlands, but the definition and details around what is a wetland is not confirmed. Noted desire to try and make these changes as workable for the community as possible, while still meeting central government requirements. Conversation around involving everyone during these changes and bottom-up support, with specific mention to the great work the Hurunui Waiau zone delivery team are doing in this space, Staff reiterated that our role isn’t only compliance, we can be a resource to share knowledge, understanding and advice in these changing spaces.
  - b. Stock exclusion – key dates noted (see slides for information).
  - c. Synthetic nitrogen cap – working with industry to identify how this will be implemented in practice. More straight forward than the other Essential Freshwater changes.
  - d. Freshwater Farm Plans – these are likely to apply to all farms in Canterbury, not only those currently in the Farm Environment Plan space. Will require a whole of industry approach, with most of the work being required in the beginning stages, as opposed to at the auditing stage (which is how the current Consent to Farm process operates). Will look to be phased in – ideally so that farmers aren’t having to complete the current Farm Environment Plan and Freshwater Farm Plans at the same time.
6. Plan Change 7 – decision on 17 November to accept recommendations of the Hearing panel
  - a. Recommendations included regional changes to protect more salmon spawning sites, mahinga kai, changes to commercial vegetable growing, fish passage, drinking water supply protection and indigenous rock art protection (and more).
  - b. Noted that in Dec 2024 Environment Canterbury is required to notify new freshwater plans.
  - c. Includes Waimakariri sub-regional plan provisions
    - i. Reviewed by independent hearing panel, who made recommendations
    - ii. The recommendations were taken into account in most of the consents issued since its notification in 2019
  - d. The changes help move towards regulations in Te Mana o Te Wai, which tightens requirements on regional councils
  - e. Ashley Estuary (Te Aka Aka) one of the larger changes
  - f. There may be needed further reviews regarding nitrate priority areas, to inform progress
  - g. *Note: the decision had not been made at the time of the Hurunui Waiau and Kaikōura Community Conversation events. The notes above are largely from the Waimakariri meeting when the decision by Council had been made.*
7. Three Waters – work led by local councils.

## **Hurunui Waiau Community Conversation record:**

The following topics and discussions were covered at the Hurunui Waiau meeting only.

## 1. Catchment approach

- a. Waipara River – a number of projects including wetland protection, spring-head protection, weed control
  - i. Willow removal – staff are engaging with landowners to understand the relationship between willow removal and their property
  - ii. Will be looking at recreational river users and how to manage competing priorities for the river and surrounding
- b. Jed River funding to allow willow removal, staff are working with stakeholders to confirm details. Work will begin once this is completed
- c. Fonterra sustainable catchments – funding was received, with one major project identified.
- d. Waiau Uwha – started as a bridge-to-bridge plan looking at what projects were in operation there already
  - i. Overall approach has been scoped and engagement on these plans will follow
  - ii. Fonterra Sustainable Catchments Funding supports this project
  - iii. Waiau township river berm transition and stop bank works almost complete. This project is one of the six shovel ready funded projects.
  - iv. Work will span three to five years
- e. Question asking if there's a native plant that could replace willow as a bank protection species – response noted no direct alternative but there's work ongoing to look at planting natives in the understory of willows to grow both in unison. Environment Canterbury use both willows and poplars but there may be opportunities where the river can be allowed to open up with full willow removal
- f. Question regarding land reversion – response noted there's opportunity in this catchment for around 200-300 hectares of unproductive land to be reverted to support catchment recovery and flood protection work. Ownership would remain with the landowner, but it would be allowed to revert back to native bush. Discussion around landowner appetite for this. Acknowledgement that there's many different things to consider in land reversion and it's something that would be worked through on a case-by-case basis.

## 2. Regional Programmes

- a. Me Uru Rakau funding - \$5.4million over three years has been set aside for native bush reversion. Work is underway to identify current sites that may be eligible for covenanting and noted that it's better to protect existing sites than create new ones. Covenanting land opens up possibilities for further funding or management support at these sites.
- b. Wilding Conifer project – funded through Ministry for Primary Industries COVID-19 recovery funding
  - i. The Waiau portion of this project is set to be started next financial year
  - ii. \$13million was received (\$3million allocated to Waiau portion), ongoing maintenance work required
  - iii. Comment regarding timing for this project – it was noted that there's a larger group operating in this space (different agencies and government departments involved) to advocate for the long-term approach to make sure work remains at controlling the wilding pines

## 3. Chilean Needle Grass

- a. Reminder to check, clean, dry equipment and vehicles; hold stock in a paddock before moving onto farm
- b. Cost of keeping it out is significantly lower than trying to eradicate it once it's prolific

4. Conversation around thinking creatively about things like willow removal/management in rivers. What is being done now, may not work best for some rural communities.

### **Kaikōura Community Conversation meeting record:**

The following topics and discussion were covered at the Kaikōura meeting only.

1. Catchment approach / re-Generation
  - a. Aim is to focus on non-regulatory support that Environment Canterbury can offer
  - b. Waiau Toa Clarence and Kaikōura Flats the two main focus catchments at the moment
  - c. Waiau Toa Clarence
    - i. One of the few rivers of its type in the southern hemisphere that has no structural/infrastructure that changes its natural state. Aim of work in the catchment is to keep its naturalness
    - ii. Weed control and protection of fauna key aims for this catchment work
    - iii. Weed control project – it was first recognised by the Kaikōura Water Zone Committee around five years ago and over time, more agencies and landowners, funding, and active involvement in protecting the river have come on board
      1. Land Information NZ actively involved in managing and funding much of this work
      2. Environment Canterbury has allocated \$70,000 this year, with a large portion of this going to LINZ for their management assistance
      3. Identified that weed control was only one necessary undertaking to be carried out in the catchment which led to the development of other projects
    - iv. Waiau Toa Hapua Protection project
      1. Trapping project at the mouth of the Waiau Toa Clarence River
      2. Being led/managed by Kaikōura biodiversity advisor
    - v. Ongoing maintenance noted as necessary to maintain and expand efforts to date. Taking a catchment approach helps ensure those with connection or involvement in these projects have a way forward in continuing with this
    - vi. Conversation about sediment load data gathering/investigations and shingle extraction in the Waiau Toa Clarence River. Noted that any new work can be raised by the Clarence catchment group (i.e., landowners and community in the area) to be looked into and that the regionwide gravel management strategy is being reviewed and looking at ki uta ki tai (mountains to the sea) planning will provide a better way forward for managing larger rivers like this one.
  - d. Kaikōura Flats – project on the flats focusing on water quality of Lyell Creek Waikōau and its tributaries and drains
    - i. Nationwide rules are changing so need to focus on what's required
    - ii. Middle Creek one of the waterways being investigated this year.
2. Regional Programmes
  - a. Kaikōura berm transition work – Oaro River included in this programme of works
3. Essential Freshwater updates
  - a. Freshwater Farm Plans – conversation around how the new system puts larger emphasis on what's happening at the catchment level. Question about how someone would know whether there's issues in their catchment – response noted Zone Implementation Plans have good source information, alongside other reports

and investigations from Environment Canterbury, other agencies, and community/catchment groups.

4. Conversation around water quality data and information sharing. Noted some of the data wasn't up to date and difficult to interpret, especially in a post-quake environment where sediment loads are still in local rivers – response noted this is something that needs to be looked into and will plan some further community information sharing days where staff can expand on water quality testing and understanding the data.
5. Keeping in touch – a full time Resource Management Officer based locally will soon be employed.

### **Waimakariri Community Conversation record:**

The following topics and discussions were covered at the Waimakariri meeting only.

1. Catchment approach / re-Generation
  - a. Ashley Rakahuri - number of projects ongoing in this catchment
    - i. Lees Valley significant natural environment with remnant wetland and rare species, funding was provided by Environment Canterbury for fencing
  - b. Joint wetland project with Waimakariri District Council – weed control and fencing
  - c. Willow control over a 21km stretch of river – removal from the middle of the braids
  - d. Fonterra Sustainable Catchments funding – projects across four different dairy farms focusing on weed control and stock exclusion
  - e. Ashley Rakahuri Rivercare Group – pest control/trapping
  - f. Retirement of land being investigated in some areas
  - g. Three to five years of work planned for the catchment
2. Regional Programmes
  - a. Me Uru Rakau / plant my patch – native protection and planting project, ecosourcing major component
  - b. River flood protection – Waimakariri river rocks work at McIntosh's Bend
    - i. Community consultation
    - ii. Project focused on how the river was used and its values, as opposed to a sole engineering approach
3. Question about recreational use at the lower reaches of the Ashley and wanting to understand how Environment Canterbury is addressing the competing uses of the river (recreation, biodiversity, flood protection etc.) – response noted that a master plan of the river would help address the competing priorities, perhaps separate areas for different activities, infrastructure development to help steer people in the right place for their activity. Acknowledgment that there's challenges with balancing biodiversity and vehicle recreation in the Ashley and a need to enable different groups to coexist in the space.
4. Question whether the three waters fall onto places with their own well. Noted there's a threshold for how many households are supplied from the water source. If the well meets that threshold, then it comes under the new regulations/standards.