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**I wish / ~~do not wish~~** (circle preference) to be heard in support of my further submission.

If others made a similar submission, **I will** consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing.

*(Delete if you would not consider presenting a joint case)*

**Trade competitor's declaration** (if applicable)

~~I could~~ / **could not** (circle one) gain an advantage in trade competition from this submission

**I am / ~~am not~~** (circle one) directly affected by an effect of the plan change that

- (a) Adversely affects the environment; and
- (b) Does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

Signature of submitter: ..... Date:  
.....

*(Or person authorised to sign on behalf of person making submission.)*

*Signature not required if you make your submission by electronic means)*

**State what your submission relates to *and* if you support, oppose, or want**

We oppose plan change 7 in its entirety and want it removed completely.

As Irrigators in the Manuherikia catchment we have invested heavily both financially and through information gathering, via equipment for accurate record keeping on our farms, and commissioned scientific research over the last few years as we gear up to replace our water permits in a sound robust environmentally friendly way.

To date we have spent \$25,000.00 on compliance and accurate ORC approved measuring systems to retain our water permits. We spent this money in good faith on the understanding from ORC that we would

- A) Gain robust scientific data over a sustained period giving both ourselves and ORC a clear picture of water flow and usage over multiple seasons showing variation and giving all interested parties a robust average over time.
- B) That as our water permits changed to the new ORC system they would be of sufficient duration to be viable, stable components of our farming operation going forward so that we could confidently approach our banks with certainty about our viability, much of which revolves around a steady guaranteed water permit.

In 2011 we spent \$150,000.00 installing a spray irrigation system on our property as part of the ongoing drive towards maximum efficiency from our precious limited water resource to help us comply with ORC water use efficiency policies. ORC has been actively directing farmers to show that they are upgrading to get the most efficient result out of their water knowing full well that for most farmers this would require debt acquisition, offset at the bank by the value of the water farmers had surety over for the viability of their farms. ORC knows that by implementing plan change 7 shortening water permits to just 5 years they remove farmers ability to put any kind of guaranteed viable proposal to banks for improvement, and in some cases trap those that have already borrowed in good faith are now in a no man's land of debt and uncertainty.

ORC cannot claim that farmers have caused problems leading to ORCs attempt to stall permit long term replacement with Plan change 7, all the farmers in the Manuherikia, including ourselves, have been preparing for permit replacement for 3 years now. We can see no logic in the idea that we should be punished because ORC is unorganised and has failed to complete the necessary work it knew it was required to do , that argument would never be acceptable on a farmer's late application for a water permit, why should it be acceptable for ORC to fail to do the job they are paid to do?

ORC have been unable or unwilling to do the work required of them by law, and to solve their problems they suddenly propose short term permits that penalise irrigators by removing any certainty of the future viability of their farming operations which rely on irrigation for their productivity and viability.

The ORC have wasted water users and stakeholders time for the last 4 years as they tried to work out how to do a minimum flow plan change. They have not shown a clear case or robust scientific reasoning for their stated minimum flow values, instead ORC have spent the last 3 years presenting irrigators with incorrect or faulty data about minimum flow requirements, and have no clear documented understanding of how the catchment hydrology works. This floundering has been an expensive waste of time for all the irrigators.

During one of the minimum flow meetings the ORC admitted that the data from 2012 to 2014 was too inaccurate to be used for the minimum flow plan change process. Both Peter Ravenscroft (ORC

representative) and Roddy Henderson (NIWA hydrologist) separately stated, at an ORC public meeting at the Matakau Rugby club rooms Omakau in July 2018 that *“there is insufficient data, and poor records, for the years 2012 to 2015 meaning all ORC proposals are defined by just one season only, that being 2017/18, and this was a particularly dry year”*. Despite these admissions, Plan Change 7 stipulates the data from 2012 to 2017 is to be used to calculate the allocation.

The Allocation method for a replacement permit is further described in Schedule 10A.4 in PC7 as an average maximum rate of take, and average maximum volume, this doesn't allow for technical or climate variations, especially over a 5 year period where it has been established as stated above the data is acknowledged to be insufficient and unreliable. If implemented this regime will leave 436ha of paddocks currently irrigated stranded dry in the Lauder catchment alone. It will have a direct impact on the viability of all farms involved.

Lately ORC has made it practically impossible for anyone to speak, write or lobby against their stance. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 Chairwoman Marian Hobbs announced that councillors were not allowed to ask questions of presenters at a council meeting, instead stating that councillors could attend to clarifying issues raised later. Several councillors are on record as being unhappy with the removal of their ability to ask questions for clarity and understanding including, Cr Kevin Malcolm who is quoted in the ODT as having questioned Chairwoman Hobbs about *“ how he would do his job properly if he was not able to ask questions”*. The ODT states When his preface *“with respect”* was interjected with *“there's no respect”* by Ms Hobbs, some audience members gasped. Also, in January Chairwoman Hobbs barred 2 of the ORC democratically elected councillors from speaking or voting because they have farming interests using water permits but would not consider any suggested conflict of interest in any other councillors.

We feel that ORCs determination to impose unproven conditions and unreasonably short permit times on farmers sets a dangerous precedent. We also consider it unfair that we must bear the cost to challenge and correct something ORC admits is wrong but wants to implement anyway. The cost of challenging these erroneous positions is very expensive but irrigators have no choice, as we would lose both our livelihoods and our homes if this plan change is accepted unchallenged. According to the Skelton report there will be 450 consents that will need to be renewed. On average consent renewal costs used to be around \$10,000. They are closer to \$16000 + now with all the questions and follow up required. Therefore, an estimated \$7-9,000,000 will have to be spent by the applicants in addition to money spent by the council processing all these consents which could also easily run into the millions of dollars.

There is a simple answer to all of this, ORC could process our water permit applications under the existing plan including the ability to secure 35 year terms and when the ORC finally updated their plan in a sound scientific and robust way they could use the review clause to add the minimum flow. And this is what we would like to see happen. Saving both ORC and the farming community at large time and money, as well ORC would be showing good faith and respect to the community they are meant to be working with, yet given how this has all occurred, and the stance ORC are taking, both seem to be sadly lacking.

Tony & Karen Glassford

