



SUBMISSION FORM – Proposed Plan Change 7(Water Permits) to the Regional Plan: Water for Otago

Form 5, Clause 6 of Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

Office use only

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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: [Signature] Date: 29/4/20
(Or person authorised to sign on behalf of person making submission.
Signature not required if you make your submission by electronic means)

Please note that all submissions are made available for public inspection.

State what your submission relates to and if you support, oppose, or want it amended:
(e.g. support rule 'x', or amend policy 'y')

See Attached doc.

ORC Plan Change 7 Submission

1. Term of 6 years

We object strongly to the arbitrary restriction of a term of 6 years and recommend the ORC reverts to the term applied to those who have already replaced consents and permits in the Upper and Strath Taieri catchments.

We have lodged an application to renew existing consents which includes efficiency of use calculations, proof of use for rate and volume and other environmental conditions which we believe meets the current ORC and RMA requirements.

We also have plans to upgrade existing infrastructure to further improve the efficiency of water use which involves significant capital investment (excess of \$800k) replacing K-Line's with Centre Pivot irrigators and upgrading existing pivots to variable rate irrigation. As well as more efficient water use, it will reduce the likelihood of a negative impacts of less efficient irrigation on water quality.

These are long term infrastructure investments so if we only received a 6 year term we would most likely not make this investment as we could not guarantee that the return would be worth it over a short period and the initiative would not be looked favourably by banks or other investors.

Putting together an application for renewal of permits/consents takes a long time and costs a lot of money as well as a lot of other hidden costs to the business. To think that in 4 – 5 years from being granted a consent we had to turn around and re-apply is disconcerting, inefficient and a waste of our time and money. So far for the application we have lodged has cost us \$20,000 in environmental and planning assessments, application drafting and Section 92 for further information to the ORC.

By restricting the term to 6 years the ORC is signalling that it cannot give confidence that the region is a safe place to invest or even maintain existing businesses in.

2. Irrigated area restrictions

We object to restricting the area irrigated to that of 2017-18

The ORC has to allow for technology and land use changes that allow for more efficient use of water over a wider area. By reducing water intensity and spreading that over a wider area allows for better environmental outcomes.

Also restricting to the 2017-18 year is an unfair due to development that has occurred since then and possible operational issues that may have occurred in that year. The ORC have been actively encouraging irrigators to be more efficient with water use. There is no evidence in the Plan Change material just why this particular year or any year in fact was chosen.

3. Method used for restricting volumes based on average volumes from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2017

Averaging disregards some basic fundamentals. Annual volumes are maximums and in all but a few situations are unlikely to be reached due to seasonal restrictions of use or operational constraints that vary from year to year. The proposed averaging includes times when restrictions are in force.

Restrictions happen irrespective of annual volumes, so restricted volumes should not unduly influence setting annual volumes.

Average use over that period also removes consideration of:

- The introduction of meters being compulsory while coming at the beginning of that period did have dispensations for lack of supply and service providers being able to install them. It therefore understates the earlier volumes used.
- Meters, especially in earlier times were not reliable and data is therefore incomplete for some annual volumes.
- Damage to infrastructure has a big impact on some years volumes. In our case we had a pivot out for nearly all the peak irrigation season.

Contrary to some assertions Deemed permit that have already been replaced have not simply been “rolled over”. Volumes have been reduced significantly from the paper allocations and, have undergone a process that on balance across all stakeholders, would say was fair based on history of use. In our case deemed permits that have already been converted into resource consents have seen a 50% drop in annual volumes. Applying the proposed rules of averaging over this water use would drop that a further 50%. An example of the volume changes on one of our deemed permits that was replaced in 2017:

Previous Deemed permit annual volume:	1,344,000m ³
Actual new consented volume:	672,000m ³ (as records of use could substantiate)
PC7 methodology allocation:	352,172m ³

It is clear that if the PC7 logic was applied to this consented volume it would have catastrophic consequences to the financial viability given our investment (approx. \$2.3m since 2012 infrastructure and land improvement). We would have lost nearly half the volume we were actually abstracting.

4. Minimum and residual flow

Our application lodged last month, as well as previous ones considered under existing rules, requires extensive research into hydrology, biodiversity, cultural and other factors at considerable expense. An outcome of this is waterways are left with appropriate flows in to meet stream health requirements and the needs of other users.

Under the PC7 proposal this work would be disregarded which while being a waste of money, more importantly neglects the environmental factors that Council and all stakeholders wish to be more respectful of. Short term permits are a poor concept for the irrigators and the environment.

Outcome sought

The Taieri water permits are 80% processed using the existing plan rules and policies. They include minimum flows, established water user groups and a coordinated approach to use of water.

It is recommended to the Council or the Environment Court to process all Strath Taieri permits through the existing plan rules and policies and refuse all aspects of PC7.