

**BEFORE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED**

**BY THE WAIKATO REGIONAL  
COUNCIL IN THE MATTER**

of the Resource Management Act  
1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

of the First Schedule to the Act

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

of Waikato Regional Plan  
Change 1- Waikato and Waipa  
River Catchments and Variation  
1 to Plan Change 1

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

of submissions under clause 6  
First Schedule

**BY**

**David Ronaldson**

**Submitter**

**David Ronaldson**

**HEARING STATEMENT OF David Norman Ronaldson**

**21 May 2019**

My Parents and I farm on 430 hectares in the Mangaotaki Valley just out of Piopio. (about hour and a half south of here. I do not believe I am a polluter.

We run 2000 sheep plus 500 hogget's and 300 head of cattle.

Our stocking rate is 8.8 stock units to the hectare. We don't usually do cropping but this year we have 7ha of winter crop. We fly on fertiliser each year (usually a mix of lime and superphosphate) In the last year we put just ONE tonne of urea on by tractor.

We have a reticulated water system and have troughs in 95 percent in paddocks, we have a goal of 100 percent.

In the last year we have done over 1.5 kms of fencing off waterways. This includes the Mangaotaki River and some wetlands. I am about to start planting 2000 native trees in these areas. My neighbour next to me has planted over 1200 trees in the last two years, the next neighbour down has done over 3km of fencing off waterways. This theme continues down our valley. So, farmers are doing this without regulation, we want to do right by the environment.

We plan to fence and plant trees every year. I want to give my daughter a future.

Every so often we have fisherman coming to ask if they can go through our land and go fishing on the river. Of course, I let them, from these people we have comments to say how beautiful our valley and river is and they always catch and release plenty of trout.

We are part of the Waitanguru community. This is where we have our hall and we like to get together a few times a year to keep our community spirit alive by having a good catch up with all the neighbours who are also mostly sheep and beef farmers.

Some of the conditions of the proposed plan change 1 will have a dramatic effect on our small community, this is the reason I decided to do a submission.

## **Nitrogen Reference Point**

The reference point of 2014 to 2016. The reference period is based on what the farmer and what the farm has produced in that particular year. So that farm will only be worth as much as its produced in that particular year and not its potential therefore dictating land values. If a farm is sold after the reference point, the new owners are restricted what they can do on that farm forever.

A low intensity farm next to a high intensity farm will be worth less because of historical NRP. The owners of the low intensity farm will be punished more. The polluters keep on polluting, surely to clean up our rivers we need to look at the polluters!!!

When markets change in ANY business you have to adapt otherwise, we face financial ruin. There is no difference in farming. For example, if sheep prices decline, we would tend to go up in cattle numbers but under the NRP rule, this would be restricted so making it hard for us to make money and keep our families and communities going.

The NRP is very unfair mainly to the people who are environmentally friendly. It will have a negative effect on land prices and restrict any future improvement on farms.

The NRP needs to be scrapped.

## **Stock exclusion.**

I agree that MAJOR water bodies should be excluded from all stock. And the word MAJOR needs to be defined.

ALL WATERBODIES is too broad. The cost to us to fence of all waterbodies will be too great to handle. Putting us off the land. And who will then buy that land with such a huge legislative cost?

On hill country where there are lower stocking rates, the impact of cattle (in our case) in streams and swamps will be less than if there were stock on flat land near a river.

Installing fences on hill country requires earthworks from bulldozers and diggers to put the fence line in. When doing this, it will create extra erosion and more deposit going into the water which is completely the opposite of what PC1 is trying to achieve.

The council may accept this and therefore the answer will be to put the fence up on a high ridge above the valley. If this happens, there is NO compensation for the loss of profit due to the loss of land and who's responsibility is it to take care of that land in terms of erosion control and weeds.

Water reticulation needs to be ENCOURAGED by the council. Livestock will go to a trough over a swamp or stream. This is also a benefit to the farmer as the stock may put more weight on from drinking clean water.

Improvement to water quality by fencing off waterways in hill country has not been proven. The main pathways for E coli (as an example) are rain which flushes faeces into the water.

So, the more efficient and effective way to address this is to identify CRITICAL SOURCE AREAS. This is where there is a high concentration of pollution (animal Faeces). This can be done through tailored farm environment plans which will include changes in stock management and targeted riparian planting.

## **Farm Environment Plan**

When doing my original submission, I was against farm environment plans. After learning more about it, I have changed my mind. I believe it is fair because they farm specific. We are in the process of doing ours now.

It will identify those critical source areas and help me decide what really needs to be done in terms of riparian planting and fencing.