

**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 Waipā River Catchments and Variation 1
to Plan Change 1

AND

IN THE MATTER of submissions under clause 6 First Schedule

BY **BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND LIMITED**
Submitter

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RICHARD PARKES
12 August 2019

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BACKGROUND

1. My full name is Richard Parkes.
2. My area of expertise is in Sustainable Agriculture, Farm Systems, Extension and Education. I have over 20 years' experience specialising in agriculture systems and soil conservation and nutrient management.
3. In addition, I am currently member of the Good Farming Practice Governance Group (GFP GG). The GFP GG developed the Good Farming Practice Action Plan for Water Quality 2018.
4. I gave evidence for Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd (B+LNZ) as part of its case on the hearing stream 1 (HS1) topics. In my HS1 evidence, dated 15 February 2019, I set out my qualifications, current employment and employment history and professional affiliations. I confirm those details remain current. I have provided a brief of evidence for HS2 dated 3 May 2019.
5. I reconfirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court's 2014 Practice Note and agree to continue to comply with it.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. I have been asked by B+LNZ to prepare evidence in relation to the sheep and beef sector generally and the implications of Plan Change 1 and Variation 1 (PC1) to the sector in the Waikato.
7. I am aware of the directions of the Hearing Panel to allocate blocks of time for particular topics. This brief of evidence relates primarily to hearing stream 3 (HS 3) and builds on from the evidence provided for HS1 and HS2. Specifically, this brief of evidence focuses on the sub catchment/ community collective approach for sustainably managing land and water resources, and builds on my evidence presented in HS 1 and HS 2 on tailored Land/Farm Environment Plans.
8. I consider methods that, in my opinion, are more likely to achieve freshwater ecological health while sustaining communities. Those methods have the following characteristics in common:
 - a) They are tailored to the farm and its natural resources;

- b) Enable flexibility, adaptation and innovation by the farmer and the sector;
 - c) They seek to engage farmers and provide a sense of ownership of the solutions, including understanding the issues and linking practice change to outcomes; and
 - d) Are spatially appropriate to allow for local solutions (on-farm and sub-catchment) to regional problems.
9. I describe sub – catchment planning and how it supports both farm and catchment planning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

10. To support community ownership of issues and their solutions catchment planning needs to occur at all scales, farm, sub-catchment, and Freshwater Management Unit, and needs to involve all those affected by the plan as active participants in the process. Such planning enables individuals to see their actions within the context of the larger picture and to appreciate their contribution to the combined impacts at the catchment scale.
11. Sub-catchment planning provides a platform for councils and communities, including tangata whenua, to get together to discuss the values of the freshwater bodies in their rohe, impacts on those values, and empowers and supports tailored intervention. It provides the opportunity to both consider and recognise Te Mana o te Wai, as well as climate change, protection and restoration of biodiversity, enhancing community wellbeing, and cultural connection, recreational, and economic values.
12. As detailed in my HS1 evidence, the majority (e.g. 80%) of P surface runoff losses occur from areas that occupy a minority (e.g. 20%) of the catchment (Gburek et al 1998). Sub-catchment planning enables the identification of these areas of risk and supports the efficient and effective targeting of resources. Targeting risk closer to source is far more cost-efficient and environmentally effective than targeting the bottom of catchments.
13. I support the officers' preliminary view that focusing on the sub-catchment would have real benefits in terms of implementing local solutions and community commitment (para 143, page 28). Sub-catchment approaches empower communities to understand local and broader spatial-scale issues that relate to environmental health. It enables communities to find solutions

that are spatially explicit, and efficient and effective at achieving freshwater objectives.

14. Land Environment or Farm Environment Plans (I use this term interchangeably) offer a tailored approach to understanding and categorising a farm's natural capital assets (geology, topography, soils, climate, biodiversity, and water resources), and identifying and managing environmental risks. Such plans are also critical in ensuring that decisions are prioritised in line with business, family, social and cultural goals. In my experience, if developed by the farmer and when sitting within a catchment context, these plans can result in "issue and solution" ownership and ultimately optimal use of natural resources on that property to deliver cumulative environmental benefits.
15. I support the PC1 approach of adopting tailored farm environment planning as a key tool within its management framework, but these plans should integrate with sub-catchment planning.
16. The Good Farming Practice (GFP) Action plan is a voluntary commitment and like the 21 GFPs it contains. GFP are a set of high-level principals that are intended to support an evolving suit of practical measures. B+LNZ's LEP programme is both setting and driving the implementation of the GFP Action Plan for the sheep and beef sector i.e. the LEP identifies and drives GFP as opposed GFP guiding the LEP/FEP. As such I do not agree with the s42A Officers recommendation *"identifying that the more widely recognised 'good farming practice' (GFP) framework is an important foundation for FEP's, in terms of guiding their development, providing more outcomes focussed approach, and checking on implementation."* And propose instead that Farmers be audited against the actions identified in their LEP.
17. Farmers learn from people they trust, each other and seeing theory implemented and working on the ground. Farmers have low trust in the environmental information coming out of regional councils hence plan monitoring and evaluation involving the community will serve to build both trust in the science and support the knowledge connections required to drive behavioural change.
18. Sub catchment plans will need to be supported by a plan for monitoring, evaluation and reporting. I support the Officers recommendation in the s42A

report (para 164 page 30) that additional wording in PC1 needs to be included to clarify the need for sub catchment monitoring.

19. Connecting farm planning with sub catchment planning provides farmers with a trusted support network amongst their peers. Sub-catchment planning with farmers and community as active participants provides, in my opinion, is an effective tool to deliver on the outcomes sought by PC1.

Dated 12 August 2019

Richard Parkes