

-OUR FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES, OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR WATER,

IMPORTANT NOTE: There are parts included in the text that follows that were omitted during presentation due to time constraints (blue highlight), as well as supporting references (grey font) that were not intended to be spoken, but included as background material for the benefit of the presenter.

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/Morena. My name is Jason Barrier.

I am a sheep and beef farmer in the Waerenga sub-catchment in North Waikato. For my sins, I have been volunteered to represent a group of 49 neighbouring hill country farmers from the Waerenga, Matahuru, Mangapiko and Whangape sub-catchments called the Hill Country farmers group. Collectively we farm 21,400ha of land including 1265 waterways.

The HCFG was established 3 years ago to try give a “voice” in this process to our hill country families - because we felt at the time that nobody was listening to or at least understanding our unique issues with PC1. So today, finally, we will telling ‘our story’. We will be speaking with you about our financial capabilities, our communities and water and the threat that PC1 poses to those 3 things.

We fundamentally disagree with some of what has been put forward by the CSG and we seek changes to the proposal so that it becomes inclusive and practicable plan instead of being a divisive and dysfunctional one. We will identify some fundamental omissions and errors in both the science and the economic analysis and will suggest some better strategies that would allow us to contribute in meaningful ways to the the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River.

This is where we come from...our home our **tūrangawaewae** if you like. This is a shot of the Waipuna valley but it could be anywhere in the Hapuakohe ranges.



Look into this picture and you will see 3 hill country farms to the left and centre and one more intensive farm in the river valley to the right. Here you will find strong North Waikato hill country, Stable ash and clay based soils that lie beneath hills of up to 40 degrees where cattle and sheep have grazed for the past 100 years.

I'm showing this next picture because it is a picture a lot of people have imprinted on their minds when they

think about farming Cattle, are confined onto small areas and moved twice daily. It's highly productive system, suited to flat and rolling land, high input and high output, it's very important to our economy...its called intensive farming, and its nothing like what we do.



This is what we do— it's called extensive farming - where cattle and sheep are free to wander at low densities across wide expansive areas of hill country. They are moved on a weekly basis or sometimes left "set stocked" a few in each paddock for months at a time.

If I could magnify this photo by 100x I would. Because what you can't see in this photo are the myriad of micro environments which co-exist with our extensive farming practices.

The trees that cover a good part of our hill pastures



The Tall Raupo swamps that act as filters in the valley floor and provide nesting and food for our native water birds,

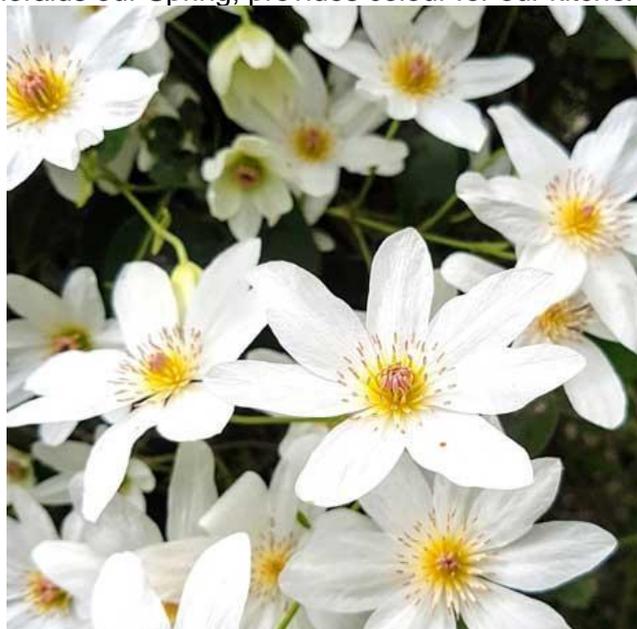


The many blocks of native bush that have been left standing and protected by our forefathers to provide shelter for Kaka, Kereru, Morepork, Tui, and many other birds. Across the Waikato region drystock farmers are the caretakers of 74,000ha of indigenous forest or 15% of our total land area.

The deer, goats, ducks, pheasants and wild pigs provide recreational hunting for our community and weekend visitors to our valleys.



The small things like this bush clematis, that are only found in the upper reaches of our valleys and that heralds our Spring, provides colour for our kitchens and decoration for our coffins ...



These are the things we treasure - they are our taonga.

We are also blessed - with a lot of water. The drystock sector has the largest share of Waikato's water. In our valley of 4 farms there are more than 100 little creeks feed into a main stream on the valley floor (pictured below).



In the smaller rocky bottomed tributaries you will still find Koura.



In the shady backwaters you can find native mudfish and in the lower reaches of the streams you will find deep pools with dozens of eels (longfin and shortfin) and eddies lined with watercress. This water provides fishing and swimming holes for our local children and Mahinga kai for our local Marae.

We have always been proud of our water. In policy speak – it already meets Objective K of the V&S and the values prescribed in the NPS-FM. In our words it's "good water". It would be naive to pretend these streams are perfect or even the same as they were 100 years ago but most of them are still good enough to drink from. They provide natural stock water to every paddock and sustain the wildlife throughout in our valley. We curse them when they flood, we cross them every day - we are more than just "stakeholders" - we are the custodians - we live with them – this water is part of our lives.

We have farmed beside these creeks for a very long time - in some cases three generations. In most cases the intensity of our farming (SU/ha) is not dissimilar to the way our parents farmed. We have used technology and genetics to improve our efficiency and profitability rather than simply piling more animals onto the same area. This is backed up by B&LNZ expert, Andrew Burt, evidence showing overall stocking rate declines for our industry as efficiency gains were made. **So the Intensification of Agriculture, may well have been shadowed by the spectre of water degradation in many parts of New Zealand– but it has not come down from our valleys.**

Financial returns for extensive farmers like us are strong right now. But like all industries we have had tough years where money was short and losses were common. Many of us farmed through the 80's when the policy makers of the day called us a "sunset industry". Most of us farmed through the 90's and early 2000's when bankers promoted land use change by throwing money at dairy conversions. Many of us could have profited by jumping upon this land use change bandwagon by selling pieces of our land to dairy farmers or to corporate forestry - but most of us chose not to. We made this choice not because any council "land use change" regulation nor because of any financial projections but because hill country farming is not just WHAT we do - it is WHO we are.

So given this background.. perhaps you might appreciate why we are more than a little sensitive to some of the mischievous policy whisperings of late, that seek to portray our land as being 'unprofitable' or 'marginal' and the fatuous media opinions that suggest we should somehow be regulated toward 'better uses', to "offset" those more intensive farmers downstream from us. Not only are such fantasies incredibly offensive to us as a community – but they are also ignorant of the facts. Hill country farming is in very good heart as a legitimate, sustainable and profitable use of our land. We are justifiably proud of our landscape, our stock, our community and also our waterways. And whilst we may not have the financial muscle of the dairy industry in the Waikato..., we believe we add value in many other ways that are just as important - aesthetics, recreational, biodiversity and community to name a few.

Notwithstanding all of this.. we do acknowledge we are part of a larger Waikato community and just like the dairy farmers, the dams, the Koi carp and the cities... we too have an environmental footprint. So as the custodians of the largest share of Waikato's freshwater we were initially very supportive of and fully engaged with the CSG process which we hoped would bring about change for the better..

This was the CSG's mandate, which we were in total agreement with:

Slide: CSG focus statement:

*To come up with limits, timelines and **practical options for managing contaminants** and discharges into the Waikato and Waipa catchments to ensure our rivers and lakes are safe to swim in and take food from, support healthy biodiversity and provide for **social, economic** and cultural wellbeing.*

Regrettably the outcome of the CSG process has been hugely disappointing to us. we strongly assert that without significant changes to several aspects of this proposal - PC1, will achieve NONE the things the CSG was tasked with achieving – at least not for our hill country communities and certainly not for our headwater ecology.

Our concerns which are supported by our pre-circulated submission evidence relate to 3 key areas which we will outline today:

Firstly Richmond Beetham will explain the extremely concerning and poorly understood financial implications of the proposed policies for many of our families.

Then Kirstie Hill will explore how those financial consequences will 'trickle down' and lead to a 'hollowing out' of our communities.

And finally Kelly Deihl and myself will show how our headwater catchments have been understudied. How this dearth of relevant water information when combined with a the lack of practical experience of hill country environments has given rise to a set of rules some of which are at once, both impracticable and unenforceable. Rules that if taken at 'face value' will cause more harm than good.

So we saw the 'writing on the wall' a long time ago - we knew that what was being proposed was completely and utterly unaffordable. Our problem was convincing others that we weren't just making it up.

So what we decided the best thing to do was bring in someone from outside our region to give an independent viewpoint, on all this. So we chose Baker Ag as a reputable drystock farm consultancy from outside the area, that had not been involved in the CSG process at all. We had 5 members volunteer their farms as 'guinea pigs', we gave Richmond Beetham a copy of PC1, the phone number for the WRC implementation team and told him - go to it. Spend the time, map the farms and tell us what this thing will really cost. With that I will call on Richmond to share his findings with you.

BAKER REPORT - Richmond 1hr

Slide 14

My name is Kirstie Hill. I live in the Waipuna Valley with my husband and our 3 sons, where we farm sheep & beef on hill country.

I moved to NZ from Canada 22 years ago, appreciating the grounded Kiwi can-do attitude and down-to-earth culture. My formal education is in Human Movement Science, with a Bachelors degree in Kinesiology and a minor in Biology. I work part-time off-farm in the field of Movement Coaching – guiding people to improve their movement mechanics and efficiency, and educating toward sustainable movement choices. I feel privileged to offer this service within my own local district and as a relative newcomer to the area it has been an excellent way to meet local people and integrate into the community. Many of my movement clients and farming neighbours have a long history in the district over generations and I am proud to place myself among them.

We have been in the district for 8 years. My husband grew up in a nearby district on a sheep & beef farm. He trained and worked many years as a fitter-welder before coming back to his roots in farming. We purchased our farm which had been in the same family for over 70 years, with the blessing of the previous owners. That's a legacy we don't take lightly and are humbled by their faith that the farm is now in capable hands.

Our group represents 49 farmers today who are part of our Hill Country Farming Group. Some are close neighbours and others widespread across the Lower Waikato. The examples in the presentation to follow are based around information from my local district. I speak of my firsthand observations, and do so with an intention to be truthful and effort to be objective. These scenarios are typical of Hill Country farming and rural communities in general, and have widespread applicability in relation to the decisions in front of this hearings panel on the Waikato Regional Councils Plan Change 1 and Variation 1 (PC1).

Summary Point 13

Introduction

Jason & Richmond have provided a picture about who we are and taken a deep dive into our farming systems ensuring ongoing productivity is well matched to the natural characteristics of our diverse and unique hill country conditions.

My role today is simple, to highlight the inextricable connection of farming to rural communities. To identify what is at risk and explore the unintended consequences of PC1 or other such policy that does not consider vibrant rural communities as a part of the whole, or fails to ensure that environmental management frameworks are effects based and equitable. We can get immersed in the main focus and details of PC1 – our water, but I'd like to tell the story of our people.

Summary Point 14

Using a whole systems approach identifies all the features and intrinsic resources of an ecosystem. The people living within an ecosystem cannot be held apart from that system, and interactions, influences and interdependence must be considered. In this way, the economic and social health of our community is inseparable from environmental wellbeing. It is the position of the Hill Country Farming Group that PC1 has failed to take an integrated and sustainable approach to addressing the health of our waterways, by failing to consider the people inhabiting the ecosystem.

Summary Point 15

Richmond has shown, not through modelling, but with application to real farms, how the rules and methods of PC1 will impose significant economic burden on individual hill country farming families – those with the most extensive pastoral farming systems and lightest environmental footprint. Is this fair and equitable planning?

Summary Point 16

The risk to industry, economy and the livelihoods, culture, and wellbeing of many families hinges on the proposition that PC1 will be successful and the assumption that there is no other way to achieve clean water. Yet the plan itself acknowledges the current form will not achieve its environmental outcomes, that further plan changes will be required and that significant reversion into forestry is likely in the future. Is this effects-based planning?

Summary Point 17

Common sense tells us that with a narrow economic buffer, these unjustified costs are unsustainable. They will eventually put our farms out of business, and we must consider what will also be lost in that scenario. The very character of hill country culture is intimately linked with our farms and families and we have an interdependence and synergy with our local communities. It's a logical projection that hill country communities, which are closely tied to farming life, will also decline. We imagine how poorly understood this must have been by those developing this plan change.

Summary Point 18

Hill Country Farmers have the experience and knowledge to have offered practical insight, if only we'd been asked and then also listened to. The hill country community has felt marginalized by the lack of consultation on this proposed plan change.

Summary Point 19

And yet, lack of consultation has not been for a lack of trying on our part – we have not had our heads in the sand wishing this issue away.

After our sector was essentially ignored through the CSG process we tried to become involved at a local level to support an environmental management approach we believed had merit. I spent the better part of a year representing a large mandate of local farmers & landowners on the Leadership Group for the Lake Waikere and Whangamarino Wetland Catchment Management Plan. This is the WRC's non-regulatory work-stream which dove-tails with PC1 to address a wide range of environmental issues and ecosystem health. This approach has the potential to consider the unique features of each catchment, identifying and addressing priority issues and threats and most importantly provide focus and synergy for Farm Environment Planning. We see Catchment Planning as an opportunity to get everyone pulling in the same direction. Through the process, the Leadership Group discovered many shared values among stakeholders: discussion with IWI, DOC, Fish & Game and representatives from various agricultural sectors revealed most were after very similar outcomes. However, the path to those outcomes was confused and confounded by a 'psychology of previous investment'. In my mind, positive progress was obstructed by those who couldn't wrap their heads around fresh thinking. Those who couldn't let go of long-held assumptions and beliefs to prioritise real problems to be solved and then redirect resources more strategically & effectively. As a 'Leadership Group', we ended up with very little input to the actual CMP. WRC staff & consultants felt it necessary to include commentary and 'explanation' to accompany our carefully crafted objectives which significantly distorted our original agreed intent.

The frustration was that by completing the exercise of discussion, WRC will proclaim they have satisfied their obligation to consult. They have declined further involvement by our group to assist with the implementation of the CMP and left farmers hanging, with no co-ordinated and cohesive direction for Farm Environment Planning. The reality is that, like with the CSG, those who must roll up their sleeves and actually do the work were basically disregarded yet again.

Summary Point 20

"Rural researchers have concern about the constant valorisation of partnerships in the rural governance discourse, believing that it screens important issues associated with power relations and accountability. These partnerships have provided not local empowerment, but limited empowerment to selected local actors and clearly not partnerships of equals since the balance of power is weighted towards local agencies."

Over the course of CMP discussions, the destructive capacity of Koi carp was identified as a significant insult to our waterways. An analysis report of WRCs own data by AgKnowledge indicates koi carp are perhaps the most pressing issue affecting sediment in the waterways that they populate. Experts may suggest that water quality was degraded prior to the presence of Koi Carp but isn't that irrelevant? Where their population continues to grow, they now represent the most significant threat for continued deterioration. Any other efforts toward improvement will fail in their presence. Cleaning them up first, provides a window of opportunity for other approaches to gain traction in a positive direction, toward an outcome that sticks.

Summary Point 21

However, in modelling outcomes for PC1 the TLG Integrated Assessment Two states:

“This scenario will have minimal impact on pest weed and fish populations. Pest fish such as carp, catfish, gambusia and rudd are very resilient to a range of water quality characteristics. This scenario is not expected to see reductions in their number.”

- Integrated Assessment Two: Achieving water quality for swimming, taking food and healthy biodiversity. - TLG (2016)

Summary Point 23

PC1 completely disregards the threat presented by koi carp which we have observed to grow exponentially as population density and distribution continue to increase unchecked. Koi Carp are gaining territory into upstream areas that were pest free when we moved into the area 8 years ago and I've heard many landowners offering similar dramatic testimonials. And yet PC1 takes no measures toward control or eradication.

Summary Point 22

Some of our members initiated a trial project on koi carp, to test the possibilities of intervention within a contained drainage area. This was to be a collaboration between farmers, WRC and DOC with expectation of support from WRA. Farmers obtained a donation in excess of \$30000 and mobilized key personnel to develop the feasibility and scope of the project. This proof-of-concept trial, however, has been stonewalled by WRC. Acceptable costs of consent are currently under debate and unbelievably, WRC suggest this project will not benefit their water quality priorities.

It is not in our nature to waste money and at present this project, with huge potential benefits for our Lower Waikato waterways, has been shelved. This type of adversarial approach where WRC are seemingly unable or unwilling to endorse what they have not initiated is not only demoralizing – it's shameful. We hope and trust that new ideas and recommendations for change that arise through this Hearings process will be treated with good will and good faith.

Summary Point 24

Today, I hope to share the formidable threat PC1 is presenting to our rural communities. Social Vibrancy is more than the policy and infrastructure that ensures everyone has housing and a job. Rural communities also possess a rich and tenured culture. Culture in this sense referring to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society – how we relate to each other, our rituals and traditions, our values and our food – food is so commonly interwoven with and facilitates many other social interactions. For hill country communities, our culture, regardless of race, ethnicity, or diverse background, is our common way of life.

Summary Point 25

PC1 is, in fact, already having a tangible effect. There is an atmosphere of uncertainty created by this bureaucracy, which appears to be over-concerned with procedure at the expense of efficiency or common sense. The process has consumed countless hours of time, re-tasked valuable resources and increased

personal stress-load, impacting social engagement, community participation, and ultimately, our personal wellbeing. You can't pour from an empty cup and so our Social Vibrancy is already showing some wear.

Summary Point 26

Calculations included in the BakerAg Report reveal unsustainable costs that will no doubt undermine our businesses and force rural restructuring. If, for the sake of discussion we accept this supposition, we can project that the associated erosion of social capital will inevitably disrupt the very fabric of our communities.

Summary Point 27

Slide 14



"Regional vitality is closely aligned with economic opportunities"

– Rebooting the Regions, Prof. Paul Spoonley, Massey University

Considering community

Community is mentioned several times within the Vision & Strategy and PC1.

The WRA Vision "where a healthy river sustains abundant life and prospering communities."

PC1 Objective 2 "Waikato & Waipa communities and their economy benefit from the restoration & protection restoration and protection of water quality...enabling the people and communities to continue to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing."

The CSG was given a clear directive to balance social, economic and environmental aspirations to ensure all are equally considered and preserved through PC1.

Summary Point 28

I'm no expert on the intricacies of modelling but I can see that the Integrated Assessment Two report by the TLG predicts outcomes that are clearly at odds with this directive.

This high-level summary suggests the direction and degree of change for social and economic indicators will be overwhelmingly negative versus smaller magnitude improvements predicted for environmental and Maori cultural indicators. Proceeding with PC1 as is, places meagre environmental outcomes ahead of dramatic social and economic shortcomings and shows an obvious bias toward pursuing aspirational outcomes based on mahinga kai and swimmability over the reality that this plan poses undue burden of economic cost and social disruption. Furthermore, we suggest the social impact of PC1 in its first 10 years has been grossly underestimated, and in relation to its 80-year outcomes has been all but ignored.

Summary Point 29

The modelling and analysis seem heavily weighted on social indicators over cultural ones. The commentary provided on Vibrant Resilient Communities is solely concerned with job losses and adaptability to imposed land use and industry change – and shows little consideration of the impact on, well, our way of life. Although there is positive outlook for Mātauranga Māori as related to water quality attributes, there is gradual but dramatic decline in ‘economic benefit directly from water’. We respect, and it is right to recognize, the welfare and security of tangata whenua. However, it is concerning there appears a complete lack of acknowledgement of the wider scope and richness of ‘hill country’ culture.

The different ways in which voluntary activity, giving and sharing are understood in Maori and non-Maori society highlights the fact that there are culturally distinct differences in how community participation is practised and understood. This can cause difficulties when initiatives and legislation are developed out of one cultural perspective, which is then laid over all cultures within the land. This is relevant to the current discussion because it makes the point that it is crucial to know how people understand and practise social capital.

Policy initiatives that embrace the norms inherent in social capital itself, such as trust, reciprocity and mutuality, will be advantaged in their capacity to "bring along community".

- Rural families, industry change and social capital: some considerations for policy K Sampson, C Goodrich, R McManus (2011)

Summary Point 30

Slide 15 - Rural Community

“We all live somewhere, and local roots and identities crafted through place are still part of most people’s everyday life.” - Ashton and Thorns (2007)

Community is the intersection of place, lifestyle, interests, values, and relationships. A community develops over time, shares history and experience, develops trust, reciprocity, and mutual support and exudes a distinct culture.

Summary Point 31

Hill Country Farming communities are distinct. They are filled with interesting characters who farm with conviction and dedication. No two properties are alike, with no formula provided and innovation is often key to success. Many farms, like our own, are a ‘one-man’ show, with the obvious support of a good woman to provide complimentary skills, keep up homelife and juggle ongoing demands. There are jobs to be done every day, with daily routines, projects and maintenance all rolling into a continuous workflow. My husband has put in more hours and more days since we started farming, but he’ll tell you he hasn’t ‘worked’ a day since he changed careers.

Episodes of Country Calendar that feature Hill Country farming are entertaining for many but provide inspiration for us. We share values around care of the land and our livestock. We appreciate our working dogs and horses. We prioritise family, good friends and food – there is always exceptional food. We appreciate simple pleasures and can commiserate over similar adversities.

Hill Country farming is a place where income is dictated by weather and influenced by many other external factors such as local and global markets. We exist on inconsistent margins - one good year offsetting many challenging ones. Such a variable income cannot sustain unjustified costs. Yet we are wealthy in other measures.

Summary Point 32

A thriving community may be difficult to quantify and measure, but we know one when we see it. It is certainly correlated with such social measures as low health costs, diverse local businesses and low unemployment rates. And it’s obvious that sustainable local services and thriving school enrolment are sensitive to minimum population thresholds. But our culture is found in the diversity of our backgrounds, our attitudes of tolerance, kindness and compassion, our connectedness to this place and each other, the

importance of family and personal wellbeing, high participation in enriching social gatherings, the presence of common values, appreciation of local food, and celebration of academic, music, art and sporting achievements. These are the elements of our rural community that reflect the rich tapestry of hill country culture.

Summary Point 33

Following are some of the characteristics that show the strength of our community and culture:

- 1. We have connection to the land and relish our role as caretakers of our ecosystem.**

Slide 16



Economic Contribution

In our care and stewardship, we nurture a place which ‘provides’ in a very real sense. The most basic equation - a healthy farm produces thriving stock, yielding better returns with less intervention. This provides us the financial means to interact with wider society – supporting local businesses and service industries. In fact, sheep, wool and beef sales in 2017/18 generated a total of \$7.5 billion which represents a significant contribution to the NZ and Waikato’s economy.

Summary Point 34.1

Nutritional Contribution

Hill Country farmers provide nutrient-dense protein which directly contributes to the basic nutrition requirements of a huge population – both locally and globally. This was among the many reasons we shifted into this industry 8 years ago. Not to create some new disposable gadget that requires a clever marketing concept to convince consumers they can’t live without it... we have consciously crafted our business and lifestyle to earn an honest living with integrity to our values by producing a high-quality product which meets the real and basic needs of people. Sadly, I no longer have to wonder the direction the disconnect between urban populations and food production will take us. We can’t all live in the city and shop at the supermarket... someone needs to be ‘the grower’, ‘the maker’, ‘the supplier’, or ‘the producer’.

Summary Point 34.2

Slide 17

“Rural researchers across the world have closely examined the way in which this broad process of change – often called “rural restructuring” – has transformed the countryside from areas of agricultural production into arenas of *both* production and consumption.”

- The Study of Rural Change from a Social Scientific Perspective, M Mackay, H Perkins and S Espiner, Lincoln University (2009)

If not here, where will our food come from? PC1 insinuates a 'not in my backyard' attitude which is deleterious to our food industries. Protecting local food security for the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders surely must be given importance.

Slide 18 Family Enrichment

On a personal level, our farm provides an enriching home for our family. It is a veritable playground for our 3 teenage boys – eeling, hunting for koura, controlling the rabbits and feral goats, enjoying our dogs, trapping possums, exploring the native bush. We only regret not making the move earlier in their formative years.

Summary Point 34.3



Slide 19 - Homegrown Nutrition

We have a significant family garden and orchard which pays dividends on many hours of work at time of harvest. We have the privilege to feed ourselves with fresh, local, seasonal produce, swapping or sharing any surplus with others when we can.

Summary Point 34.3



Slide 20 - Clean & Abundant Water Resource

We are mindful of our precious water supply, which particularly in Summer requires constant monitoring that all systems are operating without failure. Our home relies on the same supply as our stock water system.



Slide 21 - Mahinga Kai & Swimmability

Our farm has many tributaries which converge into the Waerenga River, which support eels, kura, watercress, and native birds. The river is generally clean and inviting and we swim in it regularly. Our nearby swimming hole is popular for locals and others from further around the district.

Summary Point 34.4



2. We have many examples of how we share our landscape, diverse terrain, knowledge and time, more than we have time for today, but I will run through a few...

Summary Point 35

Slide 22 - Pony Club



Thank-you to Sara Barrier for assistance with this information.

Waerenga Pony Club has a proud history and has produced many riders who have gone on to complete nationally and internationally. It is run by volunteers, has up to 30 members at any one time and provides low cost training to the surrounding community. Pony Club is held on a local property who generously allow the club to use their land and facilities free of charge. The Pony Club is held on a mixture of hill country and flat land allowing the riders to learn how to ride on all terrains. Pony Clubs from around the area come and hold their camps at the grounds and over the past 10 years Waerenga Pony Club has hosted numerous events (including Horse Trials, Dressage Championships, Showjumping and District competitions) catering for up to 200 riders. The club is in good heart and is a valuable asset to local children both with and without ponies.

Slide 23 & 24 - Calf Club Day



Waerenga School Calf Club is one of the highlights of the school year. Lambs are often provided 'on-loan' from hill country farms which initiates a sense of belonging to the farming community. Rearing an animal teaches children empathy and compassion. They must gain specific knowledge and show commitment and responsibility in the care of their new friend. Strong bonds are formed, and as with all livestock, illness or death sometimes teaches the harder lessons about the cycles of life.

Summary Point 35

Slide 26, 27, 28 - Camp Hill



'Camp Hill' began on our farm when we moved to the Waipuna Valley. It was a way to share our rural landscape and lifestyle with urban friends - an annual weekend of camping, riding horses and motorbikes, sliding and swimming, and catching up with old friends. And food – I've already mentioned exceptional food. Unfortunately, increased farm workload has disrupted this event for the last few years but our urban friends continue to ask when we will bring it back.

Summary Point 35

Slide 28 & 29 - Dog Trials



Thank-you to Kim Robinson for providing this example:

13 dog trials are held across the Waikato Region between February and April each year.

These events are held on private farm land: farmers give their farms up for up to five days so that the trials can be run. The whole community gets behind the organising, preparing and running of the event which, in turn, becomes a farm discussion group.

Competitors are passionate farmers who love working dogs and stock as well as others who train dogs to run at trial for enjoyment. They come from all over the North Island to compete and earn points which enable them to qualify for the National Championship in May.

Slide 30 & 31 - Horse Trek



Thank-you to Julie Treweeke for contributing this item:

“On Auckland anniversary weekend the Maramarua Hunt Club held a 3 day horse trek using our place as the base camp. This is the club’s annual major fund raiser and the riders came from all over the North Island. There were at least 70 horses and the riders either slept in their trucks or floats or pitched a tent. The shearers quarters were used for food preparation and a few people used the accommodation. The trek was a huge success and the Hunt Club are very keen to come back again next year.”

Slide 32 – Community Trail Ride



Thanks to Stu Jefferis for providing this background information:

February 24th this year, the Huntly motorcycle club ran the annual Waerenga Community Trail bike ride. This event was set up across 4 hill country farms. The main loop track was around 25kms long, the intermediate track was around 5kms and there was also a peewee track set up in a 1.5ha paddock.

There were 160 registered riders and this event raised \$3600. The Waerenga Hall Committee, Waerenga Church Committee and the Recreational Centre provided a core group of 16 volunteer stewards, sign-on people plus other helpers to assist on the day and the profit from this will be split three ways. For many years this event has been the primary school's major fundraiser, raising an average of \$12000/year over the last 10 years or so. Without the generosity of the landowners in the district none of these activities could happen.

Slide 33



Summary Point 35

Slide 34 - TK College School Camp



Thanks to Karl Schwartz (teacher):

TK College has a long history of school camps that are welcomed onto hill country farms in the Waipuna Valley.

This years' camp in February had about 100 students attend. In addition to the usual school camp experiences and the general atmosphere of the hill country landscape, organised activities included Tramping, Art, and Capture the Flag. A particularly relevant learning objective was a River Study with a science approach, identifying species in the ecosystem and testing water acidity. These are some native freshwater fish and aquatic invertebrates that one of the students found in their water sample.

It is hill country landowners that make this learning environment outside of the classroom accessible.

Summary Point 35

Slide 35

3. We have strong intergeneration relationships.



Farming life gets the whole family involved. There are appropriate roles for everyone to learn and contribute. There is flexibility in planning workload around family commitments and family time can be opportunistic and spontaneous rather than organised and locked into schedules. There are obvious efficiencies and synergies in living in our workplace and working where we live. But it's more than work, it's a way of life. Farm kids appreciate the connection to the land, understand the cycles of life and where their food comes from and they develop work ethic. As we've found with our boys as they've recently entered into trade apprenticeships, farm kids are sought-after by employers as having a base of practical skills and experience, show initiative with problem-solving and understanding outcome-based process.

Summary Point 36.1

Slide 36 - Waerenga School



A strong local culture of engagement has supported an excellent primary school. Students, staff, PTA and BOT stem from the local district and its history of achievement reflects the culture of local families. It has become a sought-after school for out-of-zone enrolments, when other schools in the area, such as Waiterimu, have been closed due to low enrolment numbers.

Summary Point 36.2

Slide 37



Living a distance from urban commercial centres either means regular driving to access services, activities and recreation for our families, or working together to make it available locally. Opportunities for our young people to gain experience and growth through school and sport, often requires creating them ourselves, modelling and encouraging an early sense of contribution and belonging.

Slide 38



Summary Point 36.3

Slide 39

“Social capital is generated and accumulated within families and correlated with improved long-term social welfare of children as a consequence of growing up in "social capital rich" families.”

- Rural families, industry change and social capital: some considerations for policy. K Sampson, C Goodrich, R McManus (2011)

Summary Point 36.4

Multi-generational Farming

What other vocation provides an immersive apprenticeship direct from the cradle? Kids grow up learning farm systems by osmosis. Many of our young people go on to tertiary agricultural study and then on to work in related fields or come back to the land when it is their time. Multi-generational arrangements support emergent farm management and enables a transition of workload that gradually passes on both farming responsibilities and farming knowledge.

Summary Point 36.5

Hill Country farmers love their land, their role and their lifestyle and many are reluctant to ‘retire’ in the conventional sense at the standard age of 65. Being able to stay on the farm provides a continued sense of identity and purpose for our older family members as well as companionship and assistance for continued independent living when that becomes appropriate. Underpinning this situation must be a robust business that can continue to support such a multi-generational arrangement.

Summary Point 36.6

Farm Succession

Farm succession is a complicated and often stressful process. No two succession plans are alike. There must be children with the interest, skills and drive to carry on. There must be agreement among siblings over acceptable values on inheritance. Most importantly, there must be an asset to pass on, not a liability.

Summary Point 36.7

Slide 40

3. Interdependence & Reciprocity - we both care for and rely on each other

We engage with the wider community, leaning in to solve a problem or face adversity or filling a need to create and maintain opportunities and as I’ve mentioned our sports clubs depend on volunteer coaches, officials and committees.



Slide 41

Working bees are common where everyone pitches in time and tools to maintain community assets.



Summary Point 37.1

Tennis club

An excellent example of the reliance on community contribution, the Waerenga Tennis Club is currently inactive. The Club has a long history in the community, based at the Recreational Centre in the heart of the district. Throughout the years, events have included Club, Interclub and Regional tournaments, Coaching and Social events. At its most recent peak in 2016 there were 95 members playing each week for 8 months. As with most things, a small nucleus of capable and generous individuals is needed to keep the club running. The previous committee has shifted focus, following the needs and directions of their own families and new leadership is yet to emerge and re-activate the club.

Slide 42



Good neighbours are valued and we help each other - lending specialty tools and extra manpower when a job requires or simply caring for animals over a weekend to allow a much-needed break off-farm.

Social gatherings provide good company and great food – have I mentioned the exceptional food? as well as a stress-relief valve that is a crucial offset to the persistent demands of farm life.

Summary Point 37.3

Examples of regular local social events for our community, by our community:

Waipuna Road Xmas Party

Rugby at the Puna Mancave

Club Sausage

Waerenga Hall Trivia Nights

Beerfest

Lawson Cup – Dessert Competition

Cricket Day at Rolawn

Wild Food Festival – over the river

Taniwha Social Club

4. We provide employment for others and support related services and economy.

Slide 43

“Where farming is the primary economic activity, the entire rural economy, including services such as health care, education and basic infrastructure, may depend on the profitability of the sector.”

– European Commission paper on Agriculture’s Contribution to Rural Development (2000)

Slide 44, 45, 46



Slide 47



This unique interdependence and synergy of work, family and community is what makes our lifestyle appealing and satisfying. It provides a fund of social capital that is an asset that we both contribute to as well as draw on.

Summary Point 40

Slide 48 - Social Capital

I've referred to 'social capital' a couple of times and it may be helpful to clarify its meaning and context.

The term "social capital" originated, in part, in an attempt to understand how "those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions". In general, a rural setting tends to intensify the need for and prevalence of social capital. Social capital becomes the "social glue" that holds communities together, so that families, as the building blocks of community, can function in optimum social health.

- Rural families, industry change and social capital: some considerations for policy. K Sampson, C Goodrich, R McManus (2011)

Summary Point 41

Slide 49, 50, 51 - HCFG Members Survey

To illustrate the integral roles that Hill Country Farmers play in the wider community we asked our members to offer up some examples of how they invest in social capital. I won't read the whole list for you, but as you can see these roles are diverse and they are many.

17 respondents	91 unique community involvements
Sport	3 netball coaches
	4 netball administrators
	6 rugby coaches
	4 rugby administrators
	4 pony club administrators
	5 tennis club administrators
	1 hockey coach
	1 golf club President
	4 make land available for pony clubs
	5 grow calves for rugby club charity
School	5 BOT members
	8 PTA members
	7 provide land for Waerenga Trail ride
	2 provide land for TK school camp
	1 volunteer movement coach
	4 'calf club/lamb day' Judges
	2 Flower show judges
Volunteer	1 Fire Brigade Chief
	2 House of Treasures helpers
	1 'Disc' youth centre supporter
	1 rural support worker
	4 local hall committee members
	2 Recreational Centre committee members
	1 Playgroup committee member
	1 Breed Society President
	1 Plunket committee member
	1 Aparangi volunteer
	1 community yoga leader
	1 church committee member
	1 boys rally leader
1 Vicar	

Please keep in mind that these are not just numbers on a page. They are real people, members of the Hill Country Farming Group, undertaking multiple roles and crafting our vibrant community to meet the needs of their families. This demonstrates an intricate web of community connections and social interactions that is ultimately dependent on the diverse demographic and overall population that it serves. PC1 threatens much more than our businesses - our communities will end up collateral damage to the imminent restructuring that is signaled.

Summary Point 42

The disturbing reality is that many Hill Country farms may not survive PC1, unless changes are made. If farms can't support their families, those families cease to support our vibrant community.

Our communities and our culture may be destroyed by PC1 but they won't be replaced.

Slide 53 Alternative Future for Waipuna Valley?

The modelling analysis by the TLG as well as the WRA Restoration Strategy indicates significant dependence on conversion to forestry as a viable alternative to hill country farming. This, of course, is predicated on the assumption that hill country water actually needs significant intervention, for which there is little to no supporting water quality data, as you will hear from Kelly shortly.

Summary Point 43

Let's flesh out this possibility:

The Waipuna Valley is approximately 2200ha. It is the headwaters of the Waerenga Stream with over 100 small tributaries.

Land use includes 4 typical hill country farms – 1750ha approx.

Along with scattered lifestyle blocks and smaller sections

And 1 commercial forestry block – 400ha approx.

Residents – have personal investment and connection to their homes and businesses, provide students to local schools, participate in local organisations, enable multiple community events, support fundraising, provide local employment, support nearby businesses and services



Forestry block – Corporate ownership with no personal connection to this landscape. Over the life of the trees, imported labour crews come from out-of-district for occasional pruning and thinning every few years. Their net contribution and interaction with our local community and local economy is zero. Harvest of the trees will mean 3-4 years of noise and inconvenience on our quiet roads as trucks remove the logs plus

enormous sediment output during harvest. On top of that as we have seen in Tasman and East Cape, there is an increased risk of fire as well as devastating damage in the event of flooding.

New Zealand's forestry communities are often not bound together in the way farming communities bond as their focus has been on meeting the needs of industry, not the needs of people and families.

- Rural Community Resilience and Climate Change: BACKGROUND PAPERS (2011)

Slide 54



If planting our beautiful, productive valleys into forestry is considered an appropriate alternative for hill country farmers then we suggest that environmental and social impacts have not been given reasonable consideration. Any exit of the farming families from the Waipuna would immediately precipitate a complete break-down in the vibrancy of this small sub-community. Multiply that by every small hamlet and valley in the Waikato and we will see a region wide hollowing out of rural communities - precisely the opposite of what the V&S intended.

Summary Point 44

I'd like to read an excerpt from a recent conversation with a neighbor who lives on a small lifestyle block. I found her perspective valuable and requested she write down her thoughts on our community.

"I LOVE where we live - the clean air, the peace and tranquility we are able to enjoy. The wide-open spaces give one a feeling of wellbeing, calmness and perspective. We have minimal traffic, silence, native trees and birdlife and an idyllic swimming hole across the road.

We have great neighbours and real sense of community amongst residents: capable, friendly people always ready with a willing ear, advice, and to lend a hand to each other. In a sometimes-cut-throat world, it is highly valued by us to be able to live in such a kind and supportive community.

When we moved here, I announced that I'm never leaving, they'll have to take me out in a box. But if the valley was going to be planted in pine trees I wouldn't want to stay. I've seen what thick layers of pine pollen look like and it plays havoc with my sinuses. Heavy logging truck traffic will be most unwelcome. It would be very sad for the families in our area to have to move on if hill country farming was no longer viable. What would happen to our local school?"

Natural amenity resources have the capacity to attract new residents and tourists to rural regions, but cultural amenities of rural areas may act in the same way. Other motives such as differentiated culture, personal safety and the pursuit of a "simpler existence" draw people to rural places.

- Rural families, industry change and social capital: some considerations for policy. K Sampson, C Goodrich, R McManus (2011)

Conclusion

Our hill country community has felt marginalized by the lack of consultation on this proposed plan change. The reality is farmers are not sitting back 'doing nothing' - a perception expressed by some. We are proactively seeking ways to improve what we do, how we do it and to present a legitimate voice in the wider discussion about issues we all face together.

The Vision & Strategy for the Waikato Catchment envisages the sustenance of "prosperous communities" in addition to and arising from PC1 regulation. The CSG was given a clear mandate to balance social, economic and environmental aspirations to ensure all are equally considered and preserved through PC1. Richmond has shown how the current proposal would impose grievous and unsustainable costs on many individual families within our community. Such erosion of economic opportunities is inextricably linked with our community vitality and social capital - and therefore we contend that the social cost of PC1 has been grossly underestimated, that the CSG has failed to deliver a balanced approach and that PC1 does not give effect to the Vision and Strategy.

Thank-you for this opportunity to share our views on this important matter.

Summary Point 45

WATER REPORT - Kelly 15 mins

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kelly Deihl, I am a qualified scientist with thirteen years experience working both in council and as a consultant, primarily in contaminated land, but in the last four years, I have had a lot of involvement with groups in relation to the provisions proposed in PC1. I think my past experience working within Council and with MfE in policy development and NES and guideline revisions has assisted me in this capacity, however, I do not come here today as an expert. I was asked by the Hill Country Farmers Group who I have worked closely with over the past two and a half years to have a look at some of the data available in relation to water quality for their sub-catchments, being the Waerenga, Whangamarino at Jefferies Road Bridge, Matahuru and Mangapiko sub-catchments (show slide 1 catchment locations).

The idea of this was to see what water quality data was available with WRC and to determine how relevant the data was to Hill Country Farming i.e. was there any justification for the significant compliance costs being imposed upon this particular farming group through the provisions set out in PC1. All the group ask is that costs are fair and reasonable, sustainable for them and their thriving rural communities, and justified relative to their contribution to water quality issues. This too, as you know, is the direction set out in the Vision and Strategy and NPS-FM.

I am not a water quality scientist, however, the data to me, as presented in the Water Report provided with the advocacy statement suggested several things:

1. Despite a number of recorded monitoring locations, there are in fact very few locations with long term data available within each sub-catchment.
2. Those sites with long term data available focus on the bottom of each sub-catchment (show slides 2 and 3, table and map respectively for Waerenga Stream Catchment) do not reflect the contribution of any particular land use within a sub-catchment, instead representing the overall output of each sub-catchment (show again on Waerenga where LUC is evident and sampling locations are at the base of each sub-catchment).
3. Each of the long term data collection locations assessed, appear to have the potential to be heavily affected by local influences (show slides of google earth sample locations for Mangapiko and Taniwha Road as example).
4. Turbidity and visual clarity have been reported as showing a trend of significant decline in each of the sampling locations we looked at that had long term data available. All of which are in the lower reaches of the relevant sub-catchments. It is considered that koi carp could be playing a significant role in this outcome (show photos of carp near Taniwha Road site and fenceline).
5. The only set of data that was available for a hill country farming system in proximity to these catchments was provided privately and suggested minimal contribution of nutrients N and P to water that ran through the farm over a ten year period.
6. Overall it is considered that within the sub-catchments assessed, data does not justify the excessive compliance costs being imposed upon hill country farmers through the provisions proposed in PC1 (costs have been discussed elsewhere in the Hill County Farmers presentation).
7. Estimated costs are considered likely to be unsustainable for the majority of hill country farmers and their communities, and the justification for such high costs in the area assess appears to be lacking.
8. The members of the HCFG are committed to improving water quality but in a sustainable way that is relative of their contribution to water quality issues.

Thank you.

Jason.....

Environmental problems – like all problems are solvable. But real progress is a function – not just of beliefs and aspirations but of problem solving supported by relevant data and practical evidence based solutions.

Yes there is science in PC1, some good science and a lot of it. Yes there is data too -stacks of it. We have seen the photos of the piles of “technical reports”. Some of us have read many of them. We have listened patiently as the models were lauded as being peer reviewed by a Nobel prize winner in Europe. All good stuff - but our question is - is it relevant science? Relevant to hill country? Relevant to us? Look hard and dig down into these reports and you will find they are almost entirely based upon lowland experiments in intensive farmland, in other regions and even in other countries with very little in common with Waikato hill country.

As Kelly just showed you - our water... is not even included in the model data, that the CSG used to make decisions - at least not until after travelling through many kms of intensive land use by other sectors. It's like testing your ankle and diagnosing a broken finger. There is of course that spurious argument that goes “Ahh but its all cumulative, so we don't need to actually know anything about your water because we just “know” that you are, in some shape or form, contributing in some way to the problems down stream so you need to do this and this”. Yes - of course we understand the word “**cumulative**”**too**. We also understand the concept of “**collective responsibility**” but sometimes we wonder if this Council really does have any interest whatsoever in the word “**causative**”?

We are no modelling experts and farbeit for us to criticise the parameters and coefficients of the Models that underpin this proposal - you will no doubt receive plenty of expert advice on these matters over the course of the Hearings. But even ordinary people, like us, can understand that sometimes what you leave out of a model is just as important as what you put in.

Recently we were both amazed and concerned to learn that no allowance was made in the water modelling for the great 'slug of sediment' that will slowly but surely move down our streams if farmers are forced to fence to 25 degrees. I can only assume that the modellers were very poorly advised about the practicalities of building fences in hill country.

Let me try and illustrate these to you...

By way of explanation, I have 21 years practical farming experience, where I have planned, built and maintained fences including the redevelopment and replacement of 300ha of old traditional fences with new electric fences over the past 5 years. I also have 18 years prior part-time employment for New Zealand largest fencing company, where my responsibilities included the design and installation of fences in many different countries and environments. And...there are many others in this room who could be considered more expert than myself when it comes to fencing. We have watched over time - what happens during fence construction and after fence construction.

This... is what you need to do to construct a 25 degree hill country fence... First due to the undulating nature of hill country, most fences will require “mechanical benching” with bulldozers so that fencing contractors can safely move their tractors along the fence line. This creates large amounts of “spill”, dirt which travels down hill over several years as you can see in the centre photo. The end result is that this “spill” creeps into our waterways, as sediment as you can see in the photo on the right.



Secondly to exacerbate the situation, once the fence is installed - and cattle and sheep are obstructed from following the natural contour lines of the hills and are instead forced to move up and down along those very fence lines. In winter time, it causes what is known as “pugging” or “stock tracking” which is basically a shadow of mud that follows each fence line.



Eventually...by forcing us to subdivide our large paddocks into halves and quarters as we fence out 2 or 3 creeks in every paddock the regional council will in effect, be creating small pockets of intensive farming in every headwater of every stream across the Waikato. Where once, cattle could once spread out across large areas, at low densities, seeking shelter in storms...now they will be mobbed into smaller areas, running up and down fence lines that will follow our creeks, so in times of bad weather our creeks will become the repositories of long trails of mud which must eventually flow down into the Waikato river.

I know it sounds counter-intuitive, and I know there is evidence that fencing creeks is a good idea on lowland intensive farms - but putting up fences on both sides of a hill country creek is about the worst possible thing you can do for that creek and not to factor in such a massive amount sediment generation into the scientific water modelling, speak volumes of the lack of understanding and deficiency of advice that was given to those who did the modelling.

Indeed this is why the LAWF, New Zealand’s national freshwater leadership group...recommended as far back as November 2015 that installation of mandatory fencing on flats and lowland hills was a good idea but beyond that other approaches were deemed to be more appropriate. *“stock exclusion regulation **would be impractical in hill country (>15°) areas...Instead, councils will set stock exclusion rules in critical source areas or areas of ecological significance based on a risk-assessment undertaken in the catchment.”*** Land and Water Forum, 4th report 2015.

This is why even as recently as May 2018 in their advice to Minister Parker the LAWF made a special point of noting

Stock access to waterways – livestock can disturb stream beds and transport soil into waterways if not excluded. This is particularly problematic in intensively farmed areas. In hill country areas sediment management is often more appropriately undertaken through critical source area identification and management. **Requiring fencing in hill country can increase sediment loss to waterways through land clearance and track building and maintenance for fences.**

I have seen this sediment, first hand... on the land we farm where have replaced old fences with new ones. Our creeks now carry more sediment than they used to and I regret that. Eventually maybe in another 5 years it will be flushed out – but if sediment is, as the regional council’s figures suggest, one of the main issues for our sub-catchment...is it really appropriate to recommend a set of rules that will inadvertently multiply this sediment discharge many times over?

Nothing highlights the complete lack of understanding about hill country environments more than the pernicious oversimplification...promoted by some dairy industry lobbyists and then parroted by desk-top experts, that goes... “Oh but the dairy farmers have fenced off their waterways so why shouldn’t the drystock farmers”. Look, I take my hat off to the dairy farmers who have fenced their lowland waterways with their single hot-wires. Good on them, it was the right thing to do. And it’s not just the dairy industry that has taken these steps – many beef farmers and indeed many of our members with

similar low lying land are doing exactly that. Here is a shot of some of the intensively farmed beef fattening land in our valley where my neighbour has already done exactly that. He didn't need regulations. He did it because it was practicable and affordable and he decided it was the right thing to do.



But to pretend – that a rule that appears to be beneficial on an intensive beef farm or dairy farm should be just ‘cut and paste’ onto extensive hill country, holus bolus, is simply mendacious. And just because the people on the CSG made such a recommendation without any scientific justification and without any real idea of what they were in fact recommending either financially or environmentally – is absolutely no excuse to continue down this path.

There are far better solutions for hill country waterways that come without this financial and environmental baggage - they are called CSAs or critical source areas.

We note Dr Christopher Dada's (B&L expert evidence) executive summary, where he suggests the deletion of blanket hill country fencing rules due to their relative lack of effectiveness in mitigating Ecoli and sediment runoff from hills and instead recommends increasing requirements to manage critical source areas and overland flow pathways

We agree with Richard Parkes (B&L expert) evidence and the quote he uses that:

“Management of Critical Source Areas (CSAs) is one of the best ways to mitigate environmental risk associated with sheep and beef farming, with up to 80 percent of sediment and phosphorus loss able to be mitigated in this way (McDowell et al., 2011; Monaghan et al., 2017).”

Quite simply CSA management in dealing with those small areas that make a big difference to our water - will deliver a far better “bang for our buck” in improving the health of our headwater ecology.

One of the positive things of becoming involved in this PC1 process is that I have learned what a CSA is and now identify CSA's, as I go about my daily business on the farm. Here are a few photos and costs estimates that might help illustrate the practicalities of CSA remediation.



CSA Management:

Bulldozing 1 hour x \$140
 Bulldozer transport \$200
 Fencing: \$20/m x 450m
 Planting: 100 poles x \$20

Total cost: \$11,340



CSA Management

Fencing: 25m x \$20/m
 Planting: 10 Kowhai, 10 flaxes @ \$4.30 ea

Total Cost \$786



Last Winter. A Hill-top Dam where cattle camp, eroding dam face and surrounding banks

This summer. Cost to fix: 10m 2 wire permanent electric fencing x \$5.47/m, 50m bungy, 1 x bungy gate, 10 x Warratahs, 25 Insulators, 1 x S150 Solar Energiser, 1 x trough, 20m x 20mm alkathene, 5 hours labour: **Total Cost = \$1574**



Raupo swamp in valley floor
 Cost to fix: 100m 2 wire permanent electric fencing x \$5.47/m, 50m bungy, 4 x bungy gates, 20m underground cable, 1 Pk Woodpost claw insulators
Total Cost = \$778 (electrified from existing fence)
 it

These are the things we can do and should be doing. These are the things that will bring real improvements to our headwater catchments - not wasting our time and huge amounts of money building vast networks of

completely unnecessary fences along our streams that will simply create more mud in the winter,.

There are two possible alternatives to the CSGs proposed stock exclusion rule that we would like this commission to consider.

Alternative 1

1. Define Intensive and Non Intensive Farming
2. Apply blanket fencing rules to Intensive Farms and to high risk activities on Non-Intensive Farms.
3. Focus on CSAs for Non-Intensive Farms

Adopted by: Auckland, Gisborne, Southland, Canterbury, Marlborough, Horizons and Taranaki.

Alternative 2

1. Blanket fencing rule up to 15° for all farms
2. Focus on CSAs management beyond 15°

Adopted by Wellington, Northland,
Recommended by LAWF, NPS-FM.

Our preference would be the first approach because it is simple – simple to understand, simple to implement, simple to police.

And there would be no “losers” in making such a modification ..

For us the drystock farmers – Plan suddenly becomes affordable, aspirational and inclusive.

For stream-ecology – No “slug of sediment” created in upland creeks

For WRC – Fencing rule suddenly becomes easy to apply – instead of being a bureaucratic “minefield” of inconsistencies and grey areas.

And for Iwi – who are faced with the same conundrums as us. Nationally, Iwi are far more invested in drystock than dairy, with huge hill country based corporations like Atihau and Mangatu/Integrated Foods. I would venture to say that collectively Iwi are the biggest landowner of hill country farms in New Zealand. If Waikato Iwi want PC1 to be held up as a model template of co-governance nationally then it needs to be amended to properly consider the realities of hill country farming.

But IF...if the WRC wants to adopt a 25 degree stock exclusion approach that flies in the face of what little science has been done in hill country, that goes against advice that national bodies of experts have recommended to government, that is completely out of step with other regions and that ignores all the practical experience of the people who actually live in the hills– then surely, surely the onus is on the council to first provide some evidence that such an approach might work and that such costs are justified??. To date we have not been shown one skerrick of evidence to suggest that fencing to 25 degrees is a good idea.

We would draw the commission’s attention to the statement made by WRC CEO Vaughan Payne, in the WRC as proponent evidence *“A complex issue such as water quality management needs to be founded on a robust information and evidential basis, one that has been tested, and one that is open and transparent and shared with all involved.”Point 34*

We totally agree with this statement and we would like the commission to consider the following as a kind of ‘litmus test’ to see whether or not the present proposal lives up to these important ideals.

On November 21 2018, at the Information Forum we submitted a number of simple questions:

Verbal question 1 - Did the economic model allow for any impact on land value? Answer No it did not. Mr Doole then went on to say it was a good question and he agreed that anything which impacts profitability will inevitably impact land value.

Several other written questions were not able to be answered on the day due to time constraints. After much toing and froing our questions were kindly answered by WRC’s Science Manager Mike Scarsbrook on 28 February. Mike’s very detailed and considered response is appended to these notes but in summary...

Question: Did the TLG provide any cost benefit analysis so that the CSG to make an informed decision when deciding to apply blanket fencing on slopes of up to 25 degrees -

Answer: No they did not. Mike then goes on to say that an attempt was made to model the costs of this decision afterwards

Question: Did the Economic impact model include any allowance for the cost of "mitigating" the many thousands of hill country streams >25 degrees as proposed by the CSG.

Answer: No it did not. This despite the fact that Richmond has already shown that for 3 of the 5 farms assessed - this "mitigation" cost was in the order of between 150k to 240k - per farm.

Question: Was any allowance made in the water model for additional sediment created by farmers being forced to build fences in hill country

Answer No allowance was made.

Now putting aside for the moment that fact that in order to obtain some straight-forward answers to some simple questions we were ping-ponged from an Information Forum to a modelling expert, to the Chair of the TLG and then back to various WRC staff over a period of more than 3 months, which left us questioning the *openness and transparency* of the process - putting that aside for the moment.....**Does a process whereby such critical aspects such as land devaluation, mitigation costs for tens of thousands of creeks and collateral environmental damage are simply omitted from the modelling that underpins it sound like one that is "founded on robust information"? And does a process where an important CSG decision...with potentially catastrophic financial implications for individual families, is not informed by any hard analysis whatsoever and is instead made upon an arbitrary and aspirational "whim" - sound like one that is "founded on an evidential basis" to this commission? Because they sure don't to us.**

So let's do the science over the next 10 years, let's test the hill country catchments, gather the data and see what works and what doesn't. Let's find the robust solutions that will pass the 'litmus test as prescribed by Mr Payne... but in the mean-time, until we have these understandings, let's start with a more cautious and more scientifically based approach - one that focuses upon those **small areas that can make a big difference** - the CSAs.

IN CONCLUSION

There are some fantastic hill country solutions out there. Ones that if given a chance WILL help clean up our waterways. They are different to the dairy industry solutions – just as we are different to the dairy farmers. Our water is different, our overall footprint is different and our specific issues are different. **Sadly those workable hill country solutions focusing on CSAs, have been pushed into the margins by a bloody-minded and ignorant "one rule for all" approach that pays no heed to catchment nor to topography nor ecosystem, nor to economy.** All we are asking for is a set of hill country rules that are appropriate to our environment and are not based upon what works for dairy farmers on flat land.

We urge this Commission...to advise the WRC to put aside their surreptitious defence of this CSG proposal. To start opening their ears and to listen to our hill country communities and EMBRACE, yes EMBRACE some fundamental changes to make this plan a workable one. The two key issues requiring further work, as we have shown today are the fencing to 25 degree rule which will be not only astronomically expensive but also introduces a whole new level of environmental risk and regulatory uncertainty...and the NRP regime. We need a more flexible more iterative and more thoughtful approach on both of these things, so we can move away from this adversarial circus and actually start doing things to improve our water.

We also question the integrity of an approach that asks us to make huge and unfounded capital investments to head down a path which **may or may not** lead to a set of final 80 year targets. What if these paths we are being pushed down are dead-ends and we have to abandon our investments and go in new directions? Of course even the best laid plans require tinkering with as time goes by... **but any responsible plan should not only show where we are going...but how we will get there. Not how we will get part way there, then we will make up the rest as we go along - like some sort of children's "treasure hunt", where we go from the chook-house to the Puriri tree looking for new clues which might show us where to go next.** We ask instead, that the WRC, tells us what is required now to achieve their 80 year targets, in a forthright and transparent manner rather hiding them behind Plan change 2 and

"kicking this can" further down the road. Tell us now and let's see if we can achieve it somehow, BEFORE we start to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars. Or if they really can't give us that certainty of direction now, then please...lets start with a more cautious and less capital intensive approach - at least until we know where we are heading and what will be required to achieve the final 80 year vision and strategy.

We also consider it inequitable and inconsistent to impose punitive obligations upon one landowner in order to meet overall water quality targets whilst other landowners with considerably more intensive practices are entrenched and indeed rewarded by the NRP regime. Take farm C from the Baker Ag study as an example. This farm has one of the lowest footprints in Waikato, an NRP of 7 with low stocking rates, low fertilizer usage, and has recently changed part of farm from intensive dairying back into drystock. Indeed this was the very farm that the photograph of the Koura I showed earlier...was taken from. **As a result of their relatively benign footprint and their environmental foresight this family now faces (through cash compliance costs and likely capital devaluation) a PC1 bill in excess of \$2M! Does the commission really think it good policy making to impoverish a farm with water this good? To financially persecute a family that has done no harm to their water and indeed taken concrete actions to improve it?** We agree with the S42A report itself which comments at para 132 that N grand parenting is costly, inflexible and "...potentially has a range of unintended consequences." It is precisely because of such unintended consequences that we seek the removal of the NRP regime and replacement by more flexible sub-catchment approach to N management, where N is targeted in those catchments where it is problematic and some N flexibility is given to the lowest emitters in those catchments..

We believe long term changes will only be secured when all sectors "buy-in" to the plan – when it becomes "our plan". We strongly reject the S42 notion of a so called "collaborative" approach because it ended up with no consensus and morphed into a 'majority rules' approach where the minority viewpoint was trampled upon. That in itself would be bad enough for any project that purports to reflect the whole community's wishes **but when the unheeded minority was in fact -the "stakeholder" with the most water - it is nothing short of a recipe for disaster. The CSG in ignoring the real concerns the drystock sector has set a ball into motion. It is a 'ball of trouble' wrapped up in the shiny veneer of a "claytons consultation" - where feedback is asked for and then disregarded.** We question the veracity of the statement by Mr Vaughan Payne in the WRC's statement of evidence *"The power of the collaborative process was that those most impacted by the policy were those who 'held the pen'.* This is a clever metaphor but not an entirely accurate one. As this commission will by now be discovering - **drystock farmers are by far the most heavily impacted by the proposal and if our representative James Bailey "held the pen" - then why are none of our concerns addressed? Perhaps our pen was filled with "invisible ink"? In truth...the sector "most impacted" was unable to write any part of the proposal and that is why we were unable to sign up to it. Because 23 other people on the CSG started making some promises – that James knew - we couldn't possibly keep.** So the WRC can pretend all it likes that this is a community driven plan – but it is not "our plan" as it excludes us by dismissing our community's feedback. Any "plan" that turns a blind eye to the concerns of those who more than anyone else have to live with these waterways, will at best, achieve small pockets of grudging compliance and at worst - as we have seen already in the Horizons region - region-wide non-compliance and never ending legal wrangling

We hope that this commission will realise that in refusing to sign up to PC1 so far, our sector is not shirking from it's environmental responsibilities. Quite the opposite. We are taking responsibility to identify the shortcomings in this plan and providing solutions to fix them to achieve what the S42 describes as "better and long lasting solutions" We are a sector with much to offer in unlocking potential gains in water quality. But we also have other responsibilities -to our families, our neighbours, our businesses, our local communities and not least to our local environment. We would gladly "sign up" to any plan that recognises and nurtures those things. But it won't be the current proposal.

We are well aware that changes will require compromise and reconciliation, particularly on the 2 key issues of NRP and stock exclusion...But it needs to be real compromise, not window dressing, and it needs to be on both sides. **We won't be cajoled or bullied into accepting something that we have said very consistently and very clearly, right from the start of this process, 3 years ago when our sole representative on the CSG, James Bailey had the gumption to stand up and vote against it ... is both an absurdity, and an impossibility.**

We hope that it is still not too late, to make things right, to make the changes to come up with a plan that

will stick. But for this to happen we need goodwill and common sense come to the to surface on both sides. And before this can happen somebody has to be brave enough to stand up and say - "you know what...there are parts of this proposal where the CSG got it wrong". I ask you, the commissioners – When will someone in this decision making chain be courageous enough to stand up and acknowledge these fundamental failings?

Will it be when our beautiful little hill country creeks become barren and choked with sediment? Because their models failed to consider fencing "spill"...

Or will it be when our land and our homes are arbitrarily devalued for no good reason? Because the modellers chose not to include that small detail either...

Or will it be later when the bankers start foreclosing on peoples farms and destroying lives and communities? **Will someone then admit to the missing pieces of their model? Will someone then finally acknowledge the blindingly obvious shortcomings of this plan when they are falling down heavily upon the shoulders of our children in years to come? Because by then... it will be TOO LATE.**

We need to be honest enough and courageous enough to deal with them now – NOT in 10 years time when the pigeons start coming home to roost. That is what we hope this Hearings process is about...not a defence of the CSG proposal but an examination of it. An examination that identifies fundamental flaws in the policy and seeks to fix them before the 'rubber hits the road'. Before these deficiencies of theory start causing real grief in our communities.

You have the fundamental flaws in front of you. The grandparenting of Nitrogen and the 25 degree fencing rule.

Change those two things and you have an opportunity to forge a consensus which will last for 80 years.

Thankfully the fixes are also obvious – some N flexibility for the lowest emitters and either a) an intensity based or b) a 15 degree based fencing threshold.

Challenge us instead to mitigation our footprint through CSA management - to deal with those small areas that make a big difference – we can work with that approach - it will still be expensive but not ruinously so.

The justifications for change are there in front of you also – whether you seek environmental justifications, economic justifications or plain equity justifications.

Because when all the rhetoric is stripped away that's what this is all about - fairness. That's why we agree with Councillor Livingston who is constantly preaching that 'everyone must do their bit'. We are more than prepared to do our bit – but we won't do more than our bit. We won't implement a plan that will bankrupt us (nor our neighbours) and we won't be told we now have to reap from the seeds that some other sector has sown. We want a plan with widespread community support that includes our community - a plan that will stick. We want a plan that will improve our headwaters - not degrade them. We do understand - that we will have to bear significant costs for many many years to come. All we ask for in return is for some fairness - **where the costs imposed upon us are in some way proportionate to our environmental footprint.**

There is so much we can offer as the guardians of the most and the best water in the Waikato - but don't ask for too much. Because we do not accept and will never accept the current proposal - that undermines our very existence – nor any plan where those with the best water and those with the lightest footprints are asked bear the heaviest costs. Because that... is neither reasonable nor justified.

So we look forward to becoming involved in any revised plan, that is both inclusive and relevant - a plan that properly considers our financial capabilities our communities and our water too.

We thank the commission for your patience in hearing us out. We recognize your important role, in helping the greater Waikato community to find an equitable balance between aspirations on the one hand and livelihoods on the other. If we have laboured or wandered on some points - it is only because they are very very important to us. **Because long after all the Councilors and all WRC staff and all their consultants**

and all the lobbyists pack up their agendas and move on to their next projects – and when all their fine words about ‘shared solutions’ and ‘intergenerational change’ that roll so easily of the tongue today... have dissipated into thin air - it will still be us....the “ordinary people”, who pay the rates, - who will be left with this water on our land, and these costs on our balance sheets. That’s why more than anybody here in this room today - WE are absolutely committed to getting this plan right.

We have, after all, 1265 good reasons to get it right.

We look forward to your questions.