

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 -
WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

Submission Form

Submission on a publically notified proposed Regional Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

On: The Waikato Regional Councils proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 - Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

To: Waikato Regional Council
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Complete the following

Full Name(s): Malcolm and Sally Lee
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I am not a trade competitor for the purposes of the submission but the proposed plan has a direct impact on my ability to farm. If changes sought in the plan are adopted they may impact on others but I am not in direct trade competition with them.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

If others make similar submissions, I would consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.



3/3/17

Signature

date



3/3/17

Signature

date

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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Waikato Regional Councils proposed Plan Change 1.

Our names are Malcolm and Sally Lee. We farm in an equity partnership on a 500 ha hill country property at the headwaters of the Whangape sub-catchment, in Priority 1.

We are new to farming, and have been on this property for the past nine years. We have always endeavoured to do the right thing and follow best practice.

We run a predominantly 50:50 sheep:cattle ratio with a 10% variation dependant on season and markets:

- A breeding ewe flock, finishing some lambs, rest store;
- Trading beef- this includes heifers, steers and bulls but fluctuates year to year due to availability and product prices; and
- Dairy grazers.

It was both of our ambition to own and operate a farming business that allowed us to utilise our skills. We were both in our 40s when this opportunity arose. Malcolm has a practical background in shearing, and engineering, whilst Sally has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and experience in environmental management, farm consultancy and agri-business.

In the past nine years we have experienced financial and labour pressures, volatility in product prices and returns, and weather extremes. Due to these factors it is important that our farming business remains flexible to adapt to factors outside our control.

The property is 500 ha and has approximately 19 ha in native and 6 ha in pine plantation. In addition, in 2015 we embarked on a riparian retirement programme with the Waikato Regional Council. By winter 2017, this will equate to 2.3 km of waterway protected (some is shared by a neighbour and fenced only on our side) and 1.67 ha planted with natives. In addition, we aim to plant 50 poplar poles annually for shade/shelter and stabilisation. Whilst the poplar programme we have instigated since day one, we would have liked to have started fencing programme earlier but haven't due to financial constraints.

We have installed water reticulation to all our better country, which equates to 42 paddocks with access to troughs and 29 with natural water. There are plans to gradually install reticulated water to all paddocks. We started with no troughs.

This property has been largely a development property and we have till now focused on repairs and maintenance and development of infrastructure to enable us to carry on farming. There has been very little fat in the system to do other work. We need to remain flexible and nimble to survive.

Our aspirations for the future, over a 20-30 horizon, is to be able to farm this land sustainably and provide a home and livelihood for our family and business partner. This means long-term we need a level of flexibility for land use and secure long term consent to farm.

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The specific provisions of the proposal that this submission relates to and the decisions it seeks from Council are as detailed in the following table. The outcomes sought and the wording used is as a suggestion only, where a suggestion is proposed it is with the intention of 'or words to that effect'. The outcomes sought may require consequential changes to the plan, including Objectives, Policies, or other rules, or restructuring of the Plan, or parts thereof, to give effect to the relief sought.

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
	SUPPORT / OPPOSE	REASON	RELIEF SOUGHT
<p><i>Long-term Land Use</i> <i>Objectives 1,3 & 4</i> <i>Policy 5 & 7</i> <i>Rules 3.11.5.3 to 3.11.5.5</i> <i>And Schedule 1</i></p>	We oppose	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of uncertainty in what our farm can be used for in the future. • The risk that it poses for our business financially, for ourselves as individuals and for our community collectively. • Uncertainty on how this rule will impact on those that need to spray and control course as termed a woody plant? 	<p>We seek that the provision is amended as set out below:</p> <p>As an alternative we propose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would consider an amended approach that is renotified and allowed to provide a submission to around a sub-catchment approach with communities working together. <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process.</p>
<p><i>Nitrogen Reference Point</i> <i>Objectives 1 & 4</i> <i>Policy 2 & 7</i> <i>Rules 3.11.5.3 to 3.11.5.7</i> <i>Schedule B and</i></p>	We oppose	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our property along with other drystock operations are already low emitters of nitrogen • In the Whangape Sub-catchment, based on recordings at the Rangiriri/Glen Murray 	<p>We seek that the provision is deleted in its entirety.</p> <p>As an alternative we propose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would support a Land Use Capability approach; or

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<p><i>Schedule 1</i></p>		<p>monitoring point, we are already at the 80 year level therefore it is not an issue, and should not be capped as a result.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unfair, that those that are already at high pollution levels, such as many of the dairy farms, are allowed to continue at those levels, whilst we get capped. With drystock farms at 10-15, and even if dairy farms drop to the 75% quartile, in many cases they will still be emitting in excess of 30-40 units of N. • In our farming operation, it would limit any growth to our business. We have been in a development phase and the ability to grow more grass and improve profitability means we need to opportunity to increase our stocking rate (which has been low for a number of years due to drought) and sensible use of fertiliser to maximise our returns. • It is a floored allocation process and is a form of grandparenting. Any limits through Nitrogen Reference Point, especially at low rates that drystock already is, means the value of our farm will drop and limit any development work. By capping us, we are not going to be able to meet the objectives of MPI and B+L NZ of a 4% productivity increase. • Questions around the suitability of Overseer to be used for this purpose. Currently it uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-catchment, which would allow the catchment to monitor its own land use and N loading to maintain levels at current levels. <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process.</p>

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The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		<p>standard stock weights for animals which often are no related to actual on-farm. This could have a huge impact on farmers in the future if it was ever to change. Also the use of district rainfall and not actual. We have 9 years worth of rainfall data that is pertinent to our place.</p>	
<p><i>Stock exclusion</i> <i>Rule 3.11.5.1 to 3.11.5.4</i> <i>Schedule C</i></p>	<p>We support but wish to amend with that of the National Standard</p>	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of uncertainty of how the slope is to be determined once past 15°, with large variations and interpretations. • The health and safety concern and obligations if we were to access some of these areas to fence off. • Definition of the waterways is too broad in a hill country environment, especially in the headwaters. • Lack of clarity around the determination of distance from waterway, and in some cases could be protected single wire but not to the distances described due to practicality and also safety. • The timeframe in being able to complete the tasks required by 2023. • Limited manual resources available to achieve. 	<p>We seek that the provision is amended as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the National Policy Statement on Fresh Water be adopted as the standard • Definition for waterway to be adopted as 1 metre wide and 300 mm deep. • Only fence waterways that fit criteria above that is less the 15° slope. • Extend the timeframes <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process.</p>

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The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of fencing beyond 15° is prohibited to most drystock farmers as demonstrated by the Federated Farmers Study. • Going forward there appears to be no indication that there will be any costs subsidies. • Encouragement for water reticulation and shade and shelter trees assist in feed utilisation of paddocks and are good practice. In areas above 15° such solutions over an acceptable time frame should be seen as positive. • Seek clarification over the use of temporary (semi-permanent) or permanent type fencing structures. 	
<p><i>Farm Environment Plans</i> <i>Pages 15-16</i> <i>Policy 2</i> <i>Rules 3.11.5.3 to 3.11.5.7</i> <i>And Schedule 1</i></p>	<p>We support the concept with the following amendments ...</p>	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) – the concept themselves we are supportive of. • FEPs should be working documents and should not be bound to title. By doing this and according to the proposed plan, farmers could be in breach of proposed work that may not be done due to climatic events, financial hardship or personal factors. • If committed to title, then they should not include personal goals but be strictly 	<p>We seek that the provision is amended as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the FEP should not be bound to title. • That it should not include personal goals, especially if it is on the title. • There should be a template and allow farmers to work and prepare their own plans to help reduce the financial burden on farmers and to deal with the limited resource

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The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		<p>farm/land based.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake a FEP under the proposed plan, is like to be expensive and prohibitive for some landowners as per industry estimates. In particular small landholdings. • Limited resource to undertake the preparation of FEPs to the standard set by Waikato Regional Council. • The timeframe in which these plans need to be completed are too narrow. • The need to be flexible i.e. if a plan is set out in concept, but does not work practically, there is limited ability to try alternatives without a costly exercise. • Uncertain that if committed to title and suppose to be reviewed annually, how any amendments are suppose to be documented and at whose cost. It then becomes prohibited. • The only exception is if there is an adverse event. Currently this is declared by government on a regional basis and as we all know adverse events can be quite localised. Government then needs to reconsider the level of impact of smaller areas or the plan needs to show more flexibility for small local adverse events. Also, this does not take into 	<p>available to prepare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on mitigation rather than rules. <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process.</p>

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The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		consideration any financial impacts outside farmers control.	
<p><i>Restricting Land Use Change</i> <i>Pages 15-16</i> <i>Policy 6</i> <i>Rule 3.11.5.7</i></p>	<p>We oppose</p>	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devalues the potential value of land. • All provisions are already contained within the plan, therefore an irrelevant point. • Do what we can whilst adhering to the other parts of the plan already. • Need to be flexible within our farming systems due to product prices and seasonal variations. Therefore the ability to alter ratio or add or delete crops need to be allowed, providing meeting other parts of the plan. • What impact will this have on any cropping programme we wish to undertake? There is uncertainty around how this will be interpreted. • Uncertainty around any gorse clearance on this policy and rule. 	<p>We seek that the provision is deleted in its entirety.</p> <p>As an alternative we propose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow operations some level of flexibility in land use change such as 10%, so that farmers can manage their farm outputs sustainable and remain profitable that fits with financial and seasonal constraints. <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process.</p>
<p><i>Contaminant Loss for Farm Objective 1 & 3</i> <i>Policies 1, 2, 4 & 7</i> <i>Rule 3.11.5.3 to 3.11.5.7</i></p>	<p>We oppose</p>	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution of Koi Carp make water clarity and issue and it needs to be contained in this proposed plan. 	<p>We seek that it be amended as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment to the plan to contain rules for the elimination of Koi Carp.

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The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
<p><i>And Schedule 1</i> <i>And Table 11-1</i></p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this not to be a cost that is born by the farmers. • Water quality improvement required by farmers should be linked to sub-catchments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those effects which are caused by farmers either individually or collectively. ○ Those impacts outside of the control of farmers such as Koi Carp, and discharges from native vegetation etc should be taken into consideration. <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process</p>
<p><i>Policy Sub-Catchment but no rules</i> <i>Policy 9</i> <i>Subcatchment Management</i> <i>3.11.4.1 and 3.11.4.5</i></p>	<p>We support</p>	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe that as a collective group of farmers that we will work for the benefit of our own back yard rather than draconian rules set out in the proposed plan. This will need to include a revision of the rules around fencing, nitrogen levels etc and not necessarily adopt the overall plan rules. • If an individual opts out of sub-catchment approach, there needs to be consideration as to how they are treated and the impact that may have on obtaining the goals of the 	<p>We seek that it be amended as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is not given effect by there being no rules, therefore subcatchment rules are required. <p>,with any consequential amendments arising from the submissions process</p>

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The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		subcatchment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See also comment around adverse events as described under Farm Environment Plans. 	

Yours sincerely

Sally and Malcolm Lee




3/3/17

Signature

Date