

## OTAGO REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT – EVIDENCE OF JOANNA HAY – SUMMARY

1. One of the many hats I wear is being part of the Steering Committee for our local catchment group – North Otago Sustainable Land Management Group (**NOSLAM**).
2. NOSLAM has a vision “to have an environment we are proud of, a vibrant community and strong agriculture in North Otago.” Our purpose is to “educate, assist and encourage the North Otago Farming Community to farm in conjunction with sustainable land management objectives and practices”.
3. The group was originally formed in the 1990s to deal with soil conservation in a dryland landscape. When those issues were managed through the development of irrigation schemes, NOSLAM went into hibernation. That was until it was revived about 10 years ago to deal with freshwater quality concerns. Since then, the group has been heavily involved with the community. The buy-in of farmers within our catchment is huge. Some examples of recent NOSLAM workstreams include:
  - a. Winter Grazing: we saw the issue and worked with the wider industry to bring everyone up to speed. Now everyone who engaged in a wide variety of workshops has a clear understanding of good wintering practices.
  - b. Riparian Plantings: with help of Jobs for Nature funding we have plantings dotted all around North Otago. Farmers paid for fencing and funding paid for plants and maintenance. Achieved a greater engagement and improvement in water quality.
  - c. Biodiversity corridor at Bowalley Creek. 11 different landowners have planted their boundaries the whole way down the creek.
4. NOSLAM’s purpose and goals are driven by taking people with us. Much of our work involves the wider community e.g Lions, Rotary, Soil Your Undies Project and engagement with local schools of which we have now engaged with 21 out of 23 schools.
5. The community and NOSLAM are thinking long term and intergenerationally for the area. There is so much good stuff going on – In my view the local catchment groups have the most potential to affect change within our catchments. We have been able to achieve substantive improvements already without regulatory controls. This needs to be acknowledged and reflected in policy.

### *RPS Visions and community*

6. Farms in Otago sustain families which sustain communities, they are also businesses that contribute to economic growth in the region. North Otago has a long history of agriculture, and it is part of the fabric of the community. I participated in the workshops held by the ORC in relation to the freshwater visions to help represent this part of the community.
7. The Vision in the RPS for Otago does not fully reflect the values identified at the Oamaru workshop. I don’t disagree with the environmental values that have been identified within the vision, but it does not reflect the other values that the community articulated like maintaining a high production food industry, maintaining rural communities that are thriving and certainty in relation to water allocation etc. Nor is there any recognition of the importance of existing irrigation schemes within the vision.
8. In my view the Visions do not reflect the community’s aspirations. They seem to have a very narrow focus. I’m concerned about what this means for the rural community in the future. It doesn’t appear to be recognised as an important part of the vision for the future and if there isn’t that shared vision, we may see a lack of engagement.

9. When making decisions we must remember that everything is interconnected. For our region to have a sustainable future we must ensure the three-legged stool of sustainability is balanced. The three legs being the three P's; people, planet and profit. As farmers, if we don't look after the economics our businesses suffer, they can't sustain their families or their communities. If we don't look after the people there is no-one to look after the land. If we don't look after the land our businesses suffer. For us to make a decision we can't only look at it with one leg of the stool or it will become imbalanced and fall over. The land must sustain the people.
10. Our decisions are for us today, our children tomorrow, and our grandchildren not yet born. While what before us is about land and water, ultimately it is about people. Our decisions must enable the people and communities to thrive alongside the environment.