

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED ON BEHALF
OF THE OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

UNDER The Resource Management Act 1991 (the **Act** or **RMA**)

IN THE MATTER of an original submission on the Proposed Regional Policy Statement for Otago 2021 (**PRPS**)

BETWEEN **OTAGO WATER RESOURCE USER GROUP**

Submitter FPI043

FEDERATED FARMERS NZ INC

Submitter FPI026 and FSFPI026

DAIRY NZ

Submitter FPI024 and FSFPI024

**BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND LTD and DEER
INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND**

Submitter FPI025 and FSFPI025

AND **OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Local Authority

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF EMMA CRUTCHLEY

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SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF EMMA CRUTCHLEY

1. My name is Emma Crutchley, I am a sheep beef and arable farmer at 'Puketoi' in the Maniototo Basin with my husband and our two children. My family has farmed here since my grandfather purchased it as a dryland block in 1939.
2. This evidence is an updated version of what I presented to this Panel in the non-freshwater hearings.
3. The main additions I've made relate to: water allocation; local solutions to local challenges; and the process for consultation under the Visions.

Maniototo Irrigation Scheme and irrigation at Puketoi

4. Currently the world is both changing and demanding change. As farmers we have the ability to meet these demands as well as the demands around how we use our resources, both land capital and natural resources. In my evidence I have discussed how this takes time, and also how it requires the tools in the toolbox.
5. In my evidence I discuss how stored water maintains minimum flows in the Taieri and also supplies an allocation of water to farmers and some of the mechanics around how that works. I also talk about the allocation of water we have at Puketoi and how we have used this to create resilience within our business. Unused allocation remains in the Loganburn Dam (community storage) which can be utilised for environmental flows.
6. I discuss in my brief the variability and diversity of climate across Otago, which is only likely to increase as our climate changes. In response to this we are focussing on three key objectives within farming businesses: adaptation to climate change; reducing our emissions; and producing food.
7. There is a negative narrative associated with freshwater use for irrigation of over allocation, intensive agriculture and exported food. These associations are holding back the necessary discussion

regarding community capture and storage and holding our communities back from addressing the three key objectives.

8. The variability in the Taiari catchment means that some seasons irrigators do not go close to using all available allocation and in other years demand can be higher. The catchment storage system was designed to allow us to prepare for dry seasons and smooth out this variability.

Security of Water allocation

9. Secure water is that last 25% (see Figure 3 of evidence) and allows us to: diversify land use over time to meet growing demand; produce reliable yields of crops to reduce the cost of food production; maintain animal growth rates through dry periods (reducing greenhouse gas emissions); establish shelter on farm and native plants improving biodiversity within farm systems; and adapt to climate change. It is the biggest tool in our toolbox.
10. We are always looking for ways to reduce our water use through the summer when demand is higher. One of these ways has been to incorporate arable crops that require little to no water at harvest, often at the driest time of the year. This leaves livestock production within the business more resilient.
11. We have a small amount of on farm storage, and when we have certainty around regulatory requirements, we are likely to consider more if it is needed – this comes at a time when returns to farming business are low so it will take time to adapt.

Flatlining of the Taiari River

12. Issues like Climate change are wicked problems, this means moving too fast with blunt regulatory mechanisms can have unintended consequence.
13. I can see how unintended consequences can evolve from some proposals around how to manage freshwater in catchments such as the Taiari. I have discussed this from paragraph 79 onwards.

14. The Taieri can 'flatline', meaning that the river is held at or just above minimum flow for long periods of time which doesn't represent the Taieri's natural character. One response to this is reducing the allocation rate of water for irrigation.
15. An irrigator will respond to this by taking more water for storage during the shoulders of the season when actual water demand is less. Stored water is then used when demand is higher during summer.
16. The more water that is taken for storage on private farms, the less water is available for environmental flows, therefore the more pronounced flat lining is likely to become regardless of whether minimum flow requirements are raised.
17. One size fits all approaches copied from other parts of NZ are not suitable for the uniqueness of the Taieri Catchment.
18. Changes to allocation systems need to consider the unique characteristics of the catchment socially and environmentally, and the unintended consequence now and into the future as we adapt to change.

Local solutions to local challenges

19. People don't want to be changed, they want to be part of the change and they will support what they create. An important part of avoiding unintended consequence and achieving a high level of environmental stewardship is putting people (rural communities) at the heart of the discussion. We know and understand the environment we live in. Multigenerational farming families have a sense of place and passion for the environment we live in.
20. Listening to people and creating participatory engagement opportunities builds a sense of ownership over solutions which is half of the journey to creating outcomes. People need to feel heard and there has been a lack of recognition for social capital and the willingness of community members to work with regional council on relevant issues meaning we lose people from the journey and fewer and fewer people are engaging.

21. When I attended this hearing for the non-freshwater chapters the panel highlighted how great it was to hear from farmers, the trouble is there are less and less farmers putting their name forward to engage - making this is a more and more exhausting process for the few of us that are willing to show up.
22. In 2020 I attended the Visions workshop with regional council staff and councillors in Ranfurly. The process was short, unimaginative, and leading. We were given a range of statements related to various things and asked to put 'ticks' or post-it notes next to those that resonated.
23. Despite this the community still identified values listed in paragraph 88 of my evidence. Three key themes came through: the importance of community input, the importance of farming and a general sense of too many regulations.
24. Throughout my evidence I discuss how diverse Otago is. The similarity and high level and genericness the visions and values for the whole of Otago hints toward a one size fits all regulatory framework that has been rushed. Overall, it was not a process that I felt was reflective of the sense of community ownership that a vision should have.
25. I support the recognition of the environmental values in the vision for the Taiari, but the vision does not reflect the detail that was clearly identified by the community.
26. There is no shortage of evidence that when communities are included in the change there will be a much higher level of compliance than if the change is done to them.
27. **I would be happy to answer any of the Panel's questions.**