

Before the Independent Hearings Panel

under: The Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Submissions and further submissions in relation to the proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (Freshwater parts)

submitter: **Fonterra Limited**
Submitter ID FPI019

Summary of Evidence of Morgan Watt

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SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF MORGAN WATT

- 1 My evidence provides an overview of Fonterra's operations and current discharges at the Stirling manufacturing site. It also discusses the limitations regarding discharge methods at Stirling.
- 2 The Stirling site is Fonterra's key manufacturing operation within the Otago region. The Stirling site processes up to 1.8 million litres of milk every day, and over 200 tonnes of cheese is made at the site daily. The site is the largest cheese producer in Australasia and can process ten 20kg blocks of cheese per minute. Cheese production at the site has continued to grow with an increase in production of 23% over the last four years. Some 90% of the cheese made at Stirling is exported to key markets including South Korea and Japan, and the remaining 10% is consumed within New Zealand.
- 3 Fonterra holds a number of resource consents authorising activities at the Stirling site issued by Otago Regional Council and Clutha District Council. Consents issued by Otago Regional Council provide for activities including the take and use of water and discharges to air, water and land.
- 4 The Stirling site continues to investigate options that reduce wastewater discharge volumes. However, the discharge of wastewater to water is an important part of the current operation of the Stirling site.
- 5 There are a number of limitations regarding discharge methods at Stirling that mean it is not always practical (or better for the environment) to discharge to land rather than water.
- 6 Limitations include:
 - 6.1 Topographical considerations - much of the surrounding land is steep hillside meaning irrigation activities are difficult;
 - 6.2 Land constraints – Fonterra would require 370 ha of total land to treat 3,700m³ of wastewater per day. There would be considerable time and cost associated with acquiring further land for this purpose. The land currently used for irrigation of Fonterra's discharge is not owned by Fonterra; and
 - 6.3 Soil limitations – the surrounding soils are subject to wet conditions meaning they are unsuitable for irrigation for around 50% of the season.
- 7 Fonterra has made significant investment into its wastewater disposal system at Stirling. The wastewater discharged to the Clutha River is of high quality and it is important to Fonterra that the PORPS-FW provides a pathway for the consideration of ongoing wastewater and stormwater discharges to water from the site.