

My name is Clarke McKenzie, director of Rimu Grasslands. We farm sheep, beef and do dairy support with my wife Fiona Young, on two properties in the Waimatuku and Aparima catchments. Our land is made up of central plains, gleyed, oxidising and riverine units on our farms. We are part of the newly formed Waimatuku Catchment Group.

Fiona is a director of our company, I'd like to declare she is currently working in the Land and Water Services Division of Environment Southland. Also, though kayaking, I'm friends with Councillor Rodway. I work off-farm as a software engineer at Alliance Group Ltd.

My parents started farming in Southern Southland and moved to our Otahuti property 47 years ago. Over time the farm has grown to 220 Ha, and we added 120 Ha at Fairfax in 2007. I am a fourth generation Southland farmer.

We are not opposed to the Water + Land Plan, we support the intent and believe environmental controls are needed so that future generations can enjoy what we enjoy.

We believe parts of the plan are flawed, we expect the plan to be fair and in our opinion it is not.

Today I'd like to concentrate on Objective 2, Objective 6, Policy 16, and associated Rules 20,21,22.

Objective 2 states that Water and Land is recognised as an enabler of the economic, social and cultural well-being of our region. For us this is an important objective in the plan and we support it completely. It connects water and land to our family, friends, our community and our business.

Objective 6

There is no reduction in the quality of freshwater and water in estuaries and coastal lagoons by:

- (a) maintaining the quality of water in waterbodies, estuaries and coastal lagoons, where the water quality is not degraded; and
 - (b) improving the quality of water in waterbodies, estuaries and coastal lagoons, that have been degraded by human activities.

We think that **Objective 6** is important for our farming operation. Objective 6 fits in with an old farming saying about "passing the land to the next generation better than we found it". Section (b) talks of improving the quality of water that have been degraded by human activities.

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Submitter Name:

Rimu Grasslands

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In the Waimatuku catchment, we've been told that nitrates are a key problem for water quality and they are caused by human activities. I understand that because of our soils – tile drains and cracking in summer – that our catchment has high nitrate levels and is considered to be degraded. (NOF access it a C.)

How has this happened? Since 1990 there has been significant land use change in the catchment, and a move away from sheep/beef + crop farms to dairying. Today 50% of the Waimatuku Catchment is dairying, 25% sheep and beef, 25% cropping/other.

In the 1980's sheep\ beef\cropping dominated farming. The recognised farm practice of his day was to stock your farm in a way to feed through the most difficult period of the year. This was either during winter, or late spring when lambs were at foot. No supplements were brought in, very little nitrogen was used.

Today our ewes are more fertile, our pasture types are changing, we grow more food and we grow our lambs heavier in order to increase our returns. The Southland Catchment Board and the Government played a part in this. The Waimatuku River has been straightened and lowered more than once to allow drainage to be more effective so we can grow better pasture. We are intensive sheep farmers, and farm alongside other intensive farm types who may have far greater nitrate losses.

We support Objective 6. But we **DO NOT** think the Plan manages existing farming types to ensure they operate in a sustainable way that is suitable and appropriate for the land. And affords the opportunity of development and expansion that we and other farmers have had in the catchment. While ensuring degraded water quality is improved.

The link between Objective 6 and Policy 16 is of deep concern to us. We think that Policy 16 will constrain our future ability to change our farming practices

It is not fair and equitable to allow existing farmers to continue in an unsustainable way while new more sustainable operations are prevented from setting up. We want new dairy farming deleted from this policy.

We support the need to have a farm plan as part of Rule 20, Land Sustainability do excellent job, with actions that we can do overtime as part of a farm business plan to improve soil and water on our farm. We already have a Focus Farm Plan for both our properties. Actions in this plan include continue fencing off waterways, we have a nutrient budget for our Aparima block and will get one for our Waimatuku Block, and ensure we don't cultivate in critical source areas.

But we **DO NOT** think that Rules 21 and 22 are right – we think that Rule 21 is very much status quo farming, and Rule 22 (read with Policy 16) stops me, my children or another owner from changing to dairying. We oppose Rule 22 and want the requirement for new dairy farms to get a consent removed. We do not think Rule 21 sends the right signal to the community that change is required, particularly from farming operations that have relatively high nitrogen losses.

Limit setting may be needed to sort this out, though we are unclear about what this process is going to be. We wonder if rules for bringing feed onto the property is the answer as that should control the right stocking rate for the land.

Rule 64 - Temporary canoe gate or ski lane markers we are pleased to see this as permitted activity.

Implementation

The Implementation of the Plan has not been discussed. The costs associated to the plan are unclear, the timelines are unclear, enforcement and penalties are unclear, the consent process is unclear. Any time line in the plan should be delayed until how the plan is to be implemented is worked out.

To finish I want to return to Objective 2. The social cost of this Plan is as large as any environment or economic cost. This Plan creates an uneven playing field, and it is dividing our communities. It doesn't need to be this way. We must address the problems that are here in part because of rapidly accelerating stock numbers and then we can all prosper no matter how we choose to use our land.

Thanks for your time.