

**Minutes of a meeting of Waimea Water Users held at Seifried Estate Meeting Room on Tuesday 5 December 2006, commencing at 7.00 pm**

**In attendance:** Ann Holmes, Brett Mytton, Lou Boyer, Ted Ford, Chris Russ, Gilbert Russ, Jan Cook (EDA), Lars Oliver Dam, Kevin King, Philip Field, Gillian Bishop, Michael Millar, Ann Winstanley, Marion Colville, Brian Ford, On Yee, Graeme Taylor, Terry Cook, Nelson Speedway Association, Murray Russ, Dennis Cassidy, Herman Seifried, Dave Wood, Chris White, Clive Pocklington, Stephen Sutton, Ken Polglase, Malcolm Irvine, Peter Crichton, Stephen Bennett, Julian Raine, Nick Patterson, David Easton, Steve Vickery, Colin Wishart, Gail Mason, David Robinson, Fergus O'Connor, Ross Higgins, Murray King, Dennis Bush-King, Joseph Thomas, Jeff Cuthbertson, Steve Markham, Mary-Anne Baker, Cr Richard Kempthorne, Valerie Gribble (Minute Secretary)

**Apologies:** George Eady, Dawn Berkett, Geoff Etherington, John Barnes, Mr Willis (Works Infrastructure), John and Margaret Ewers, Dave Plant (NCC), Barney Thomas

Murray King the Chairman of the Waimea Water Augmentation Committee welcomed everyone and noted apologies. Murray gave a brief background and outlined the order for the meeting. Murray introduced J Thomas to give the technical presentation of the study.

J Thomas gave a powerpoint presentation on the progress on the feasibility studies into water augmentation for the Waimea Basin.

Dave Robinson noted that the catchment yield graph appears to indicate increased variability and decline in flow over a 50 year period. Has that been projected forward to see what it would look like in 100 years?

Joseph Thomas said they have been looking at climate change possibilities. Indications we're getting from NIWA say winters will be wetter and summers drier. Indications are that it could be  $\pm 5\%$  change.

Ken Polglase asked what have we lost in the past by having a 250 l/s low flow at the Appleby Bridge.

Joseph Thomas said holistic values are looked at differently now. In the case of Appleby the dynamics have changed and we've also got saltwater intrusion. The proportionate use of water in the 80's and now is not the same. What we've lost is something the community will have to debate through the planning processes.

Mary-Anne Baker said back when 250 l/s was the minimum flow the approach to irrigation was different to now. We haven't done an economic analysis to compare, but we know there are losses and gains.

Ken Polglase said it appears by lifting the level it lifts the cost of the project and where do the costs lie to achieve those results that some would want to have in the river.

David Easton said when we looked at the cost of the dam, to build a dam in the first place was expensive. The more water you store the cheaper it is. To double the size of the dam we're only talking about 20% of the capital cost. To protect 250 l/s will be \$10 million, but to protect 1100 l/s at the bridge, there's only a small increase in capital cost.

Ken Polglase commented that the challenge in future will be to convince different parties that they, along with the irrigators, will benefit.

Murray King said the more buy-in from greater community the better. We don't want to see the river running dry or saltwater intrusion into the aquifers. It is important to highlight we as a committee are a diverse group, with Fish & Game, Department of Conservation and iwi involved. We're all driving for the same end result.

Ken Polglase said if we assume that we go with something like this in the future, am I right in assuming that all irrigators or landowners will have to buy into it. You can't carry on irrigating and not be part of the scheme.

Murray King said it would be hard to opt out. The next phase will look at ramifications of those options. We want to speed the process. Our mandate was to do it sooner rather than later, but process has to be followed. For cost of a bit extra storage its negligible for long term project. Only half the community survey responses have been summarised from the survey. The indicative results at this stage are urban response is 75% support and rural support 85% for augmentation.

Murray Russ commented on the quoting of low flows and asked if average flow figures at Appleby Bridge over winter are available.

Joseph Thomas advised that normal base winter flow is about 4 to 6 cumecs. He undertook to provide those figures and advised there is a flow recorder now above Appleby Bridge and readings from it are accessible from the Tasman District Council website. [www.tasman.govt.nz](http://www.tasman.govt.nz)

Fergus O'Connor asked how much will it cost us per hectare.

Joseph Thomas said that this is only a preliminary raw cost figure with no contingency or other potential cost issues incorporated into it and this assuming the raw cost is \$17.4 million and unfinalised stage one feedback from the economic report on a 70% irrigator 30 % Council split on this cost is, approximately \$230+ per hectare for servicing the loan. J Thomas further reiterated that much more detailed work including contingencies need to be worked on including how funding splits are made to derive more detail cost

figures. Wai-iti Dam rates are currently \$300 per ha. Stage II will look at more detailed cost figures.

Fergus O'Connor commented that it is likely the cost would be more about \$300 per hectare.

Joseph Thomas gave a powerpoint presentation on what the Phase II work will involve.

Julian Raine gave an overview of the funding proposal for Phase II.

Graeme Taylor asked if industry ie NPI, Alliance etc are paying now towards this.

Julian Raine said 80% of water consumed with water permits is irrigators and 20% is industry schemes.

Jeff Cuthbertson said \$500,000 is being funded by Council's water account. NPI, Alliance are part of that water group, therefore all share in the \$500,000.

Graeme Taylor asked when the dam comes on stream will all these people be supplied water. He considered \$25 per property targeted rate for unirrigated rural property seems very little to fund the investigation.

Ken Polglase noted that maybe irrigators are not necessarily the culprits for the position we find ourselves in today. We're the ones wearing the problems but they haven't necessarily been created by our own doing.

Graeme Taylor considered the problems were through negligence of Council.

Murray King said Tasman District Council has done a good job in water allocation compared with other areas in New Zealand.

Brian Johnson asked with the 22% perceived over allocation, what implications does over allocation have between now and 2015 on people renewing water rights.

Joseph Thomas said Mary-Anne Baker will answer that question in her address.

Nick Paterson asked for clarification on the water user levy and what it is supporting.

Joseph Thomas replied that Council charges a Section 36 charge. You pay monitoring fees to Council for water resource monitoring work. The special augmentation levy has been tagged to this. Currently in Phase I Water users pay \$40,000 and Council pays \$40,000 per year, SFF \$80,000 a year this is a 50:50 cash cost split. The user cash contribution of \$40,000 includes Fish & Game \$1,000, Waimea East Irrigation \$5,000, Tasman District Council urban

supply \$4,000 and \$30,000 is levied on all water permit holders (excluding Wai-iti).

Murray King said the committee thinks this is a worthwhile cause. He acknowledged the comments from Ken Polglase, but we can't turn the clock back and if we don't move forward the consequences are dire.

**Moved Murray King/Ken Polglase.**

**That the Waimea water users support the proposal for funding of phase 2 works for the water augmentation dam.**

**Carried unanimously.**

Graeme Taylor asked when water allocation comes up for review in 2013 will the allocation decrease?

Mary-Anne Baker said users will still get a renewal but conditions in the plan currently allow Council to look at what is needed. In 2013 if the dam is imminent, it is more than likely Council won't reduce the allocation.

Graeme Taylor said it was use it or lose it. We don't want you to take it off us at review.

Richard Kempthorne said if people aren't using it at all, then it comes under the bona fide review. If users are being extremely careful and not using all their water right to help someone else, they won't lose it.

Joseph Thomas said the Dry Weather Task Force make recommendations to Council. They have a say, but politicians decide.

Gail Mason asked with the new water permit applications, do they include Tasman District Council's right to pump to Dovedale. All rural schemes water use are increasing.

Mary-Anne Baker said those rural schemes have consents to take water.

The option of transferring the unused part falls away. At time of renewal, the plan says we'll look at the least amount of water. Council is retaining that as a discretion. The closer to the reality of the dam, the less likely the Council will be to take water away that's not being used.

Murray Russ asked with the water plan of action is there a danger the government could impose rules and regulations that could undermine this.

Fergus O'Connor spoke about water being used for domestic use, and some could use water from water tanks, roof tanks, and asked would that mean Council policy would limit the amount of subdivision that connects to systems that draw water from the plains. We need to know Council is limiting the

amount of water they're taking out for subdivision. The river quickly drops down after a fresh and we need to know what is happening.

Richard Kempthorne said the urban supply has its limits and rural residential supplies have limits. In Redwood Valley, there are no new connections being allowed.

Jeff Cuthbertson said there is a moratorium on all rural connections and has been in place for a year or more.

David Easton said 20% is used by urban/industrial.

Ken Polglase expressed grave concerns about water allocation being based on soil-type.

Mary-Anne Baker said the soil issue is looking at the kind of soil type and the numbers take into account irrigation of most crops under local climate conditions on the Waimea Plains. It is possible that not every single crop will be met with 35 mls but most irrigation should be enough at that.

Ken Polglase said you're talking about the field aspect and we're talking about evaporation.

Mary-Anne Baker said it is an issue we will revisit.

Ken Polglase said his concern was there is potential for water allocation to be reduced on the premise that your soil doesn't need it. He asked how the unused water within Waimea East Irrigation scheme will be handled?

Mary-Anne Baker said the Waimea East Irrigation scheme consent has just been reviewed and renewed. They have a lot of flexibility to use the water allocated to them and they get less now.

Philip Field asked Mary-Anne to elaborate on what she means when she says decline applications to transfer water rights.

Mary-Anne Baker said to ensure sustainable management is not undermined by, in the meantime, having people transfer water to unirrigated land.

Philip Field asked if he sells his land can the water right transfer to the new owner.

Mary-Anne said yes you can. She is talking about site to site transfer.

Graeme Taylor said if Council chooses to lower the water right then they lower the value of the property in some cases.

Mary-Anne Baker said in the proposed plan, we'd prefer you to transfer that unused water to someone else to use it. Risk is small (that Council will review permits or reduce allocations). When considering the option to reduce

allocations, we're talking about renewals that won't happen until 2013. If we haven't got the dam then we're definitely going to have to look at other mechanisms.

Graeme Taylor said there will be legal battles over it.

Richard Kempthorne said Council could take the view we are critically short of water therefore any review could look at bona fide issues. The holding pattern variation is not looking at taking a hard line.

Philip Field said the water permit is there to give you permission to use water, not to store it up against the value of your property. If you don't use it, or if you are consistently not using it, it should be released to someone else.

Murray Russ said he is leasing a block and growing lucerne for winter feed that doesn't need water. If that allocation was transferred away would he get it back when a market gardener leases it and needs more water?

Richard Kempthorne advised Mr Russ to raise the issue with Mary-Anne Baker about so you make sure that users don't inadvertently lose it.

Nick Paterson said the meeting is focusing on negativity and people losing water rights. Clearly there's not enough water, and we will be in serious difficulties if something doesn't happen. We've got 5 – 7 years to sort it out. That's where our focus should be.

Philip Field said it is a good proposal and should be pursued.

Herman Seifried commented about a water user selling his right for ten years to a neighbour. If Council takes it off it's hard to get it back.

Mary-Anne Baker said we haven't got enough water. If you do things with your permit that uses more than you did, it reduces supply for others. The net result is trying to minimise the impact on security of supply for everybody on the plains.

Gillian Bishop said there is a risk if people are afraid of losing their water rights, that water use will increase.

Mary-Anne said the discussion started to focus on water permit reviews but the variation is not saying Council is going to do reviews, not until we've got a dam.

Richard Kempthorne said Council has been working like that for the last four years, whereas it could have taken a hard line approach on review. All water users were being careful and pulling back in a drought situation. Council decided with people voluntarily pulling back and not using water they were not going to look at bona fide reviews.

??(Lady) asked if we know we're over-allocated, but what percentage water does get used?

Mary-Anne said we've got water meter data. It's never used in 100% of allocated amounts, its very variable depending on the nature of the season.

Joseph Thomas said 60 – 80% depending on what zone. Hau Plains is the only zone that gets almost to 100%. The implication of rationing affects people differently.

Richard Kempthorne said Council has a planning meeting tomorrow when it will be considering the matter of the holding pattern, then it will be notified on 13 January 2007. All water users will be notified so then there will be a public submission process and everyone who is interested is able to be involved.

Graeme Taylor asked for a copy of the minutes from this meeting.

Fergus O'Connor said after every fresh rainfall the river has gone down quickly and he thinks it's the pine trees. He can't accept the argument that they don't take up huge amounts of water that would normally be flowing down the river and considered there should be more investigations done into it.

**Nick Patterson/Michael Miller**

**THAT the meeting support Council in pursuing option 3, holding pattern for water resource allocation.**

Majority support, few opposed, some undecided.

Murray King thanked people for their mostly supportive comments. He said looking at other Councils, Tasman District Council is proactive in managing water, especially with the Dry Weather Task Force and they are prepared to listen and bend the rules.

Representatives on Waimea Water Augmentation Committee from the respective zones are:

Steve Sutton – Waimea West  
Julian Raine – Golden Hills and Hope minor aquifer  
Kit Maling – Waimea East Irrigation Co  
David Easton – Upper Confine  
Murray King – Lower Confine  
Dennis Cassidy – Delta

Meeting concluded at 9.30 pm.