

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 -  
WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

**Submission Form**

Submission on a publically notified proposed Regional Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

**On:** The Waikato Regional Councils proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 -  
Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

**To:** Waikato Regional Council  
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Hamilton East  
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I am not a trade competitor for the purposes of the submission but the proposed plan has a direct impact on my ability to farm. If changes sought in the plan are adopted they may impact on others but I am not in direct trade competition with them.

**I wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

**If others make similar submissions, I would consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature date 6-3-17

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature date 6-3-17.



# WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS

## Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Waikato Regional Councils proposed Plan Change 1.

We own a 54ha property, which we are running as a dairy heifer grazing unit, in Te Pahu in the Kaniwhaniwha catchment (sub-catchment 36) – this has been deemed to be a priority 2 sub-catchment for implementation of Farm Environmental Plans : timeframe implications - N ref point by 31.3.2019, FEP by 1.7.2023, total stock exclusion by 1.7.2026

We have owned this property for approx. 10 years

When we bought the property it had been farmed in a substandard manner with little / no inputs and had approx. 20ha of regenerated gorse. We have been developing the property by clearing the gorse, extending the water system with troughs in paddocks so stock do not drink out of the creeks (there were 6 troughs when we bought the property now there are 33 troughs), fenced paddocks and fenced off a large portion of the waterways so stock are excluded. This is an on-going project with work being undertaken on a regular basis as time and funds allow. Stocking rate has been increase and there is potential for further increases.

We both work off farm as the farming operation was not economic when we bought it.

## WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS

The specific provisions of the proposal that this submission relates to and the decisions it seeks from Council are as detailed in the following table. The outcomes sought and the wording used is as a suggestion only, where a suggestion is proposed it is with the intention of 'or words to that effect'. The outcomes sought may require consequential changes to the plan, including Objectives, Policies, or other rules, or restructuring of the Plan, or parts thereof, to give effect to the relief sought.

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
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<p><b>The Plan as a Whole</b></p>	<p>Support with amendments</p>	<p>We agree that waterways need to be preserved/improved to an agreed standard that is acceptable to recreational users while maintaining New Zealand's economic base.</p> <p>The proposed Plan <u>concedes</u> that the targets will be "costly and difficult" (pg 15)</p> <p>The proposed Plan <u>concedes</u> that these are "ambitious targets" (pg 15)</p> <p>The proposed plan <u>concedes</u> that "innovation in technology and practices" will be required to meet the targets (pg 15)</p> <p>We don't want to end up with a failing business due to prohibitive costs (as a consequence of all the repercussions of Plan Change 1), which could see profitable land reverting back to be un-productive. The multiplier effect (with many other farmers in a similar situation to ourselves) will result in the deterioration of the NZ economy as a whole (tax take down -&gt; consequentially less</p>	<p>Modify the Plan to include a section whereby the economics of properties are incorporated with the environmental aspects : take into account the economic costs versus the environmental gains</p> <p>Change objectives/targets to be realistic – it is unachievable / unrealistic to go back to the natural state of 1863 (and why would you want to).</p> <p>Set objectives / targets to be realistic with the technologies we have now – we can't assume there will be technological advances</p> <p>Incorporate an all-inclusive user pays system so a portion of the costs that farmer will incur (fencing, water systems, loss of income, loss of asset value, consents, FEP etc) are shared with those that will benefit (water takers / users)</p>

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		<p>money to be allocated to health, education, the welfare system, infrastructure, etc)</p> <p>We would like to acknowledge the effort farmers have already made to achieve these targets despite not knowing what the targets were i.e. farmers continually strive to look after the land and waterways – we commenced fencing off the waterways soon after we bought our property, &gt;94% of dairy farmers have fenced off water ways, &gt;52% of sheep and beef farmers have fenced off water ways – done to be sustainable farmers in the community.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 16</b></p> <p><b><i>"Provision has been made for some flexibility of land use for Maori land that has not been able to develop due to historic and legal implications"</i></b></p>	Oppose	<p>There should be no discrimination due to ancestry.</p> <p>We have not being able to develop our property as fast as we would have liked to (economics, time). We also aspire to making "optimal use" of our land but may not be able to achieve this due to Plan Change 1 and will be disadvantaged in terms of the value of the farming asset and the potential business returns.</p>	Remove this policy completely from the plan – one rule to apply irrespective of ownership
<p><b><i>Withdrawal of the north-eastern portion of the Waikato River Catchment from the Plan</i></b></p>	Oppose	Exclusion of a considerable portion of catchment from the Plan has significant consequences :	Withdraw the plan in its entirety until the north-eastern portion of the Waikato River Catchment is re inserted into the plan at which time the plan can be notified in an unabridged form

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A large portion of the withdrawn area is Priority 1 sub-catchments – will targets now be achievable?</li> <li>- Are farmers in this catchment able to submit on the plan at a later date or do they have to accept the actions from other submissions?</li> <li>- Will farmers in the remaining sub-catchments be disadvantaged compared to the withdrawn sub-catchments who may operate under a different regime at a later date?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Nitrogen Reference Point (NRP) &amp; nitrogen Management</b></p> <p><i>Policies 2, 7 &amp; 13 Rules 3.11.5.2 to 3.11.5.7 Schedule B</i></p>	Oppose – major amendments required	<p><b>1)</b> Overseer does not recognize gorse as a contributor to N leaching</p> <p>Research undertaken on the quantification of nitrogen leaching from gorse has estimated that this could have a nitrogen leaching coefficient of 50kg N/ha. Gorse is capable of fixing up to 200kg/ha N annually (compared to white clover at 4-88)</p> <p>In our case this needs to be accounted for in the nutrient input/nitrogen output - we have removed @ 20ha of gorse which has a substantial impact on reducing the extent of nitrogen leaching from our property.</p>	<p>Remove the use of Overseer to derive the Nitrogen Reference Point.</p> <p>WRC to invest in a purpose built model that is more relevant and reliable to deliver the information on properties / management practices to enable a base (reference point) to be established and which will provide a robust basis on which to compare future results.</p> <p>Nitrogen usage could be allocated on an individual property capacity (as would be denoted in the FEP which would take into account soil type, average climatic conditions etc). This</p>

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		<p>If land reverts back to be covered in gorse due to economics (lack of), N leaching will actually increase which won't be accounted for under the current methodology proposed by the Plan.</p> <p>Refs:                      Environment Bay of Plenty publication March 2010 "Quantification of nitrogen leaching from gorse in the Lake Rotorua Catchment                      Nitrogen cycling in gorse dominated ecosystems in New Zealand – Magesan, Wang and Clinton                      Plus other information in the horizons catchment</p> <p><b>2)</b> We oppose the use of Overseer as the method of deriving the NRP. Overseer was not developed for the purpose the Plan is using it for. Overseer relies on an extensive quantity of assumptions. Results can vary widely depending on how the information/data is interpreted.</p> <p><b>3)</b> The grand-parenting approach (reference period - holding land usages and land users to historic leaching rates, stocking rates, and land uses), as taken in the Plan, penalizes the existing low emitters and benefits the existing high contaminators. Low emitters (such as us) will no longer be able to develop their farms to obtain optimal economies and achieve an acceptable return on investment. When properties are bought, the due diligence undertaken and subsequent price paid includes the future potential of the property. With the Plan as it stands, land values will be eroded and future</p>	<p>would then allow flexibility on intensity without impinging on where the property owner is in the property development cycle</p> <p>The sub-catchment approach should be extended to focus on contaminants that are pertinent to individual farms (which would be denoted in the FEP).</p> <p>Change the approach of nutrient management methods so that they are not based on grand-parenting - use science to regulate appropriate usage.</p>

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		<p>economic benefits may not be able to be realized.</p> <p><b>4)</b> The grand-parenting years (reference period) chosen to determine the NRP value were drought years with stocking rates and fertilizer inputs reduced from 'normal' climatic years – this will mean we are restricted to carrying lower numbers of stock going forward.</p>	
<p><b>Farm Environment Plans (FEP)</b></p> <p>Policy 2, Rule 3.11.4.3, Schedule 1</p>	<p>Support with amendments</p>	<p><b>1)</b> Oppose having to have a 'certified farm environment planner' prepare a FEP. It is believed the cost of these plans will initially be &gt;\$3,000 then there will be ongoing costs with plans being changed as goals in the FEP are achieved. For our size of operation these cost are prohibitive (we will not be able to leverage off a certified industry scheme)</p> <p>I believe that I am capable of completing a FEP for our property as outlined in Schedule 1</p> <p><b>2)</b> Oppose having to have a 'certified farm nutrient advisor prepare the nitrogen reference point due to cost</p> <p>I have used overseer on-line and believe I am capable of developing our nitrogen reference point</p>	<p>Delete requirement for certified personnel to complete FEP's and NRP's.</p> <p>Insert FEP's and NRP's can be done by individuals and can be audited by WRC</p> <p>WRC to have a template that can be completed by the landowner / manager.</p> <p>Adopt an approach whereby the land owner is responsible for providing the FEP and the NRP – farm owner can undertake the process themselves or employ a consultant – knowing that these could be audited</p>



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		<p>My background: I have a Bachelor of Agri Econ and a PG Dip in Finance, have worked in the forestry industry, dairy industry (consulting service) and in rural finance dealing with farmers &amp; properties on a daily basis.</p> <p>Many other farmers have similar qualifications and off farm experience and would be capable of completing FEP's and NRP's</p>	<p>Eg GST is self-regulated, Health and safety Plans can be completed by an individual</p> <p>WRC to provide training to allow those that want to complete their own FEP and derive their N reference points</p>
<p><b>Stock exclusion</b></p> <p><i>Policy 3, Policy 4, Rule 3.11.5.1, 3.11.5.2, 3.11.5.3, 3.11.5.4 and Schedule C</i></p>	Support with amendments	<p>We have a creek at the back of our property which we have fenced off to exclude stock from the water way. We cross the creek four to five times a month to access the 5.8ha of grazing land on the far side (10% of our property). The cost to put in a lawfully established structure would be prohibitive for our scale yet is a significant portion of land which needs to be accessed. We cross stock in a controlled manner and once across the creek are excluded from the creek.</p> <p>The Plan should be consistent with the Sustainable Dairy Water Accord which has a differing definition of what a water body and fencing requirements : water body over 1meter wide and 30cm deep needs to be fenced</p>	<p>Amend total exclusion to have allowance for stock to cross waterbodies if they are being actively controlled. Individual FEP's to state how many times crossings are allowable</p> <p>Individual FEP to outline mitigations against contaminants, relevant to each farm. In-line with the M.F.E. Draft Regulatory Impact Assessment: Stock exclusion # 114 pg 24</p> <p>Change the definition of a waterway to that of the National Water Accord</p> <p>Any waterway fencing should be subsidized by the WRC (refer to point under the Plan as a Whole - beneficiaries share in costs)</p>

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			Flexibility needs to be in the Plan for allowance of grazing on different contours taking into account soil type, distance from water bodies, climatic conditions, vegetative cover, type of stock, etc to determine a applicable stocking rate. This would be contained in the individual property FEP which would break down the property into areas/blocks as per above. Stocking rates would vary from block to block within a property providing flexibility for farmers to control grazing over all areas.
<b>Policy 6</b> <b>Land use change</b>	Support with amendments	A portion of our property in the past has been used as part of the milking platform with a neighbouring property.  Current owners and future owners shouldn't be disadvantaged with current land use.	Allowance for the land to be used as it was anytime in the past  Take into account the capability of the land.
<b>3.11.5.2 # 3</b> <b>Permitted activity</b>	Support with amendments	Grazing properties <100ha are sub-economic units therefore the permitted activity rule should be extended to cover an increase from the current proposed 20ha to a larger area  Cost of the consenting process & ongoing costs as mentioned previously	Increase the size of property to align with an economic model incorporating property size

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		<p>Allowance needs to be made for grazing of slopes over 15%.</p>	<p>Flexibility needs to be in the Plan for allowance of grazing on different contours taking into account soil type, distance from water bodies, climatic conditions, vegetative cover, type of stock, etc to determine a applicable stocking rate. This would be contained in the individual property FEP which would break down the property into areas/blocks as per above. Stocking rates would vary from block to block within a property providing flexibility for farmers to control grazing over all areas. This needs to be a permitted activity.</p>

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Yours sincerely

*[Faint signature]*

ASHLEY JOHN CHRISTIAN  
FRANCES AND ANDERSON.



6-3-17.

Signature

Date



6-3-17.