

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

Submission Form

Submission on a publicly 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

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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 a similar submission I would consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.

Signature



date

2 / 3 / 17

Introduction:

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

I am a West Coast catchment land owner and farmer on the Upper Awakino River. My family have farmed sheep and beef in New Zealand for six generations. My children and grandchildren are of Ngati Maniapoto descent. I have been farming all my working life, and for 13 years on our current 2,400ha property (680ha effective, 1720ha in native bush).

My family farmed for 90 years, and I lived for 50 years, on the banks of the lower Waipa at Karakariki. Over those years, especially in the last 35 years, I have been disgusted at the degradation I have seen in the Waipa. As a child and teenager I swam in clear water, even though it had a muddy bottom. We could see the trout, in abundance. Now all we see is mud and koi carp. On the other hand, I have seen a massive improvement in the water quality of the Waikato River running through Hamilton. I migrated from the Waipa catchment to Mahoenui. We feel we are tangata whenua, guardians and stewards (kaitiakitanga) of the land, and have a strong spiritual connection to the land which we consider our turangawaiwai. I farm with strong consideration of the environment, very aware that the impact of my farm management affects future generations.

I realise that the current plan is not for our area, however I submit this both in support of my fellow farmers in the catchment areas affected, and in anticipation of a similar plan change for the West Coast catchment.

The Awakino River boundaries our property for approximately 12 kilometres. All water flowing on the farm and in the Awakino River on our farm boundary is drinkable, unless the river is in flood (an act of God!). Waikato District Council employees have commented that the Awakino River up the Gibbon Road valley is the jewel of all rivers in the Waikato Regional Council catchment. Since owning the property we have been improving the impact of our farming business on the environment by fencing the Awakino River, fencing native bush, altering stock class ratios (sheep to cattle) as well as changing the class of cattle to younger and smaller stock. I believe that farming practices e.g. the class of stock and stock ratios, should be altered for the land, rather than altering the land for the stock. I have decreased our stocking rate from 11 stock units (traditional) per hectare to approximately 9.6 stock units (traditional) per hectare. Fertiliser has been reduced and more precise applications have been used e.g. helicopter and form of fertiliser. Minimal chemical is currently used.

Our elderly neighbour, who has farmed down river from us for 50+ years has seen a remarkable improvement in river clarity since we have implemented the above actions. We have plans to further decrease sediment, which we see as our major environmental issue. We experience high rainfall. We are reforesting some areas cleared by early farmers, strategically planting steeper southerly faces and low fertility areas, as well as three grassed areas prone to slumping and erosion.

We encourage fishermen, trampers, and campers to enjoy the beauty of the property, especially young families who cannot otherwise afford holidays. Low decile schools use the farm and river for school camps and education outside the classroom.

New Zealand is diverse. I sincerely hope that common sense prevails as we all work together to reach the goal of clean safe water in Aotearoa. In my view each farm business should be individually assessed as regards to the impact it has on water quality, and individual farm plans made regarding the measures needed to rectify damaging discharges, rather than one rule for all.

Provision	My submission is that I:	The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is to:
3.11.2 Objective 2	Support this Objective. I agree the social, economic and cultural wellbeing need to be maintained, however have concerns about smaller farming communities dying through the subsequent economic pressures on farmers. I have concerns the rules could make the objectives counterintuitive, one objective negating another.	Strongly consider the social and economic wellbeing of farming businesses and communities as this plan is implemented. I recommend an amendment to this Objective to: 'Social, economic and cultural wellbeing is maintained in the short term and long term.'
3.11.2 Objective 4.b	Oppose this Objective. I would support this Objective if the goal posts were fixed. This Objective implies targets in table 3.11-1 could be altered. I recommend an amendment to this provision.	Amend this Objective to: 'recognising that further implementation methods and management approaches may be required by subsequent regional plans to meet Objective 1.'
3.11.2 Objective 5.b	Oppose this Objective. While I agree that tangata whenua values should be integrated into the co-management of the river and water bodies, I oppose this objective as it is racist and divisive. I feel there should be one rule for all. I recommend an amendment to this provision.	Delete paragraph 3.11.2.5.b in its entirety.
3.11.3 Policy 1	Support this Policy. I am especially pleased to note that sheep are not exclude from rivers, streams, drains and wetlands. If sheep were excluded we would have a major weed problem, and difficulties excluding chemicals used for weed control from waterways. Fishermen have commented that they appreciate the weed free, clean banks of the upper Awakino.	

<p>3.11.3 Policy 2.a and b.</p>	<p>Oppose this Policy. I am not aware of a current Certified Industry Scheme. Such a scheme needs to be set before policy can be written. I recommend an amendment to this provision.</p>	<p>Amend the paragraphs to confirm the Certified Industry Scheme to be used.</p>
<p>3.11.3 Policy 2.c</p>	<p>Oppose this Policy. No account is made in calculating the nitrogen reference point for historic changes made, in my case the 13 years of management changes and fencing to improve water and bush quality. While I would not take this step as I am passionate about improving the environment, there is a temptation reverse the environmental work I have undertaken, increasing stocking rates and class ratios, so as to establish a higher Nitrogen Reference Point for our property. I would argue for a flexibility for land use change, with the deciding factor being impact to water quality rather than an historical Nitrogen Reference Point. I recommend an amendment to this provision.</p>	<p>Amend the methodology of calculating the nitrogen reference point, taking into account the historic changes made over several decades on individual properties to improve water quality.</p>
<p>3.11.3 Policy 4</p>	<p>Opposed to this Policy. Why should the goal posts change only for low discharging activities. Why should low discharging activities be penalised, at the benefit of high discharging activities? The same policy should also be for higher discharge activities. I recommend an amendment to this provision.</p>	<p>Amend Policy to included high and low discharge activities.</p>
<p>3.11.3 Policy 7.b</p>	<p>Opposed to this Policy. I feel this is racist, and there should be one rule for all. I also repeat my thoughts in Policy 2.c. I recommend an amendment to this provision.</p>	<p>Amend policy to prevent extreme high diffuse discharge.</p>

<p>3.11.5 Rules: Schedule B</p>	<p>Opposed to the use of Overseer as the tool used. No account is made in calculating the nitrogen reference point for historic changes made, in my case the 13 years of management changes and fencing to improve water and bush quality. While I would not take this step as I am passionate about improving the environment, there is a temptation reverse the environmental work I have undertaken, increasing stocking rates and class ratios, so as to establish a higher Nitrogen Reference Point for our property. I would argue for a flexibility for land use change, with the deciding factor being impact to water quality rather than an historical Nitrogen Reference Point. I recommend an amendment to this provision</p>	<p>Overseer is not held in high esteem by many in the agricultural industry, including our advisors. Amend the methodology of calculating the nitrogen reference point, taking into account the historic changes made over several decades on individual properties to improve water quality.</p>
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Yours sincerely

Christopher Barker



Signature

Date

3/3/17