

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED ON BEHALF OF THE
OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

UNDER The Resource Management Act 1991
(the **Act** or **RMA**)

**IN THE
MATTER** of an original submission on the
Proposed Regional Policy Statement
for Otago 2021 (**PRPS**)

BETWEEN **OTAGO WATER RESOURCE USER
GROUP**

Submitter OS00235 and FS00235

FEDERATED FARMERS NZ INC

Submitter OS00239 and FS00239

DAIRY NZ

Submitter FS00601

AND **OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Local Authority

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF JOANNA HAY

DATED 1 MAY 2023



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Summary of evidence

1. My name is Jo Hay, I refer you to my experience and expertise outlined in my evidence.¹
2. My evidence touches on the social fabric as the cornerstone of the rural community – one that is based on relationships and families. Our own farming story is based on an intergenerational vision that includes grandparents and children².
3. Our home farm is in near Herbert in North Otago, we also lease a property at Moeraki. Myself, my husband, and our three primary school aged children farm sheep and beef over 670 hectares split between two properties³. Our farming evidence is tied intrinsically to the importance of rural communities as people and families. I am asking the panel to not forget their story and their connection with the environment where they live.
4. My evidence talks about how people living in rural areas contribute to the social fabric of the local community. Most rural people are involved in multiple groups as volunteers to help support things like the local schools, fire brigades, catchment groups⁴. I am well aware from my involvement in the community of the challenges that individuals and groups face in adapting to change and my evidence touches on how I think this needs to be handled in order to preserve the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of our communities.
5. My evidence also covers the impact of regulatory change on a rural community.

The social fabric of a community and its connection with wellbeing

6. My evidence tells a story of a rural community and the depth of involvement of its inhabitants have in keeping the social support and

¹ At [1-14]

² At [52-54]

³ At [17-27]

⁴ At [6-14]

networks going. The connections are deep and broad, and cover all of the well beings, the social, environmental, economic and cultural. Rural communities aren't doing it for themselves or to line their own pockets. They're doing it for the greater good, because they know it's the right thing to do, because it's how communities work

7. My own involvement in the community involves in some weeks over 40 hours of volunteer time and support.⁵
8. My involvement for the North Otago Sustainable Land Management Group (NOSLAM) catchment group is an example of positive environmental change led by a community vision – with a process about education taking everyone on the journey. Leading from alongside, not from the front.⁶

The impact of regulatory change

9. One thing I have noticed from all the community things I am involved with is that the people in the sector are swamped. They are carrying a heavy burden of stress caused by the onslaught of regulations⁷ amongst other things.
10. A large proportion of our sector is in a reactive state. People need to be able to think and respond in a measured thoughtful way, not just have a kneejerk reaction. But this is where the sector is at. From what I see in my community I think it is impacting every facet of their lives. It's hard to give back and support others in the community when you are tapped out.

What do we want?⁸

11. At the end of the day all of this is about people, not just the land and air and water, but the people that it sustains. We are all part of that environment, and that includes the wider community and families

⁵ At [13-14]

⁶ At [32-34]

⁷ At [36-39]

⁸ At [27].

12. Timing is crucial here. A collective voice that represents a united vision for our future environment. The people that live and work in an area know it is best. We need to give people the opportunity to build the outcomes together with clear and achievable timeframes. Council needs to be brave and listen to the voices of the people and families who live here.

13. **I would be happy to answer any of the Panel's questions.**

Dated 1 May 2023

Jo Hay