

**BEFORE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED  
BY THE OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021  
(Non-freshwater parts)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the First Schedule to the Act

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of a submission under clause 6 of the First Schedule

**BY** **BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND LIMITED and DEER  
INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND**  
**Submitters**

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**BRIEF OF SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE OF THOMAS SPENCER ORCHISTON**  
**4 May 2023**

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## **BACKGROUND**

1. My name is Thomas Spencer Orchiston.
2. My qualifications and experience are set out in paragraphs 2 to 10 of my brief of evidence dated 23 November 2023.
3. I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court 2014 Practice Note and agree to comply with it. I confirm this evidence has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses set out in the 2014 Environment Court Practice Note. I declare I am an employee of the submitter B+LNZ. I confirm the opinions I have expressed in this brief of evidence represent my true and complete professional opinions. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## **EVIDENCE**

4. Sheep and beef farming in Otago involves a large degree of complexity and diversity due to the spatial and temporal variations in physical landscape, climate, biological systems and social factors.
5. Flexibility is needed in farming systems and within communities to allow for adaptive and innovative responses that can be targeted to specific land uses and locations, at specific times, to achieve desired outcomes.

6. Collaborative community scale responses such as catchment groups can address relevant local issues and explore opportunities to strengthen communities allowing them to be more sustainable and resilient. External stakeholders need to actively engage with communities and catchment groups to provide appropriate support.
7. Mana whenua are important partners and stakeholders in the community and can make important contributions to catchment groups which can lead to improved community and environmental outcomes.
8. Farm planning can help farmers understand their contributions to catchment, freshwater and environmental outcomes and help to inform decisions about appropriate on-farm management actions.
9. A farm planning approach can provide for the necessary flexibility that is needed by farmers and allow them to adaptively manage and respond appropriately to internal and external pressures, while remaining profitable and environmentally sustainable. Farm planning also allows for an integrated approach to management of natural resources which all have a degree of interconnectedness. For example, changes made to the land or soil can impact what happens in waterways, or changes to vegetation or native biodiversity may result in changes to water or land resources.
10. Catchment groups and communities need to be actively engaged with regulators and stakeholders to ensure that community views and voices are adequately and appropriately represented in policy decision making. Having successful conversations and listening to catchment groups and community members will lead to better community connections and development of trusted relationships.

Trust within the community and with stakeholders and regulators will allow the community to successfully respond to risks and opportunities and result in improved environmental outcomes as well as improved community wellbeing.

11. Communities have a vested interest in local issues and by helping them develop their own values and goals, the community can work collectively towards them, increasing likelihood of those values and goals being achieved. Communities need to be able to respond in a flexible way to particular issues so that innovative and appropriate actions can be taken. Better outcomes can be achieved when communities and individuals are able to respond adaptively to the change.
12. I support the changes recommended by B+LNZ and DINZ:<sup>1</sup>
  - (a) LF-WAI-P4-Integrated catchment and sub-catchment adaptive management;
  - (b) LF-VM-P7-Community involvement;
  - (c) LF-LS-P20-Mapping of Highly Productive Land and community involvement; and
  - (d) LF-LS-P24-District Plans.

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<sup>1</sup> See legal submissions of counsel for B+LNZ and DINZ at [17-20].

### *New report*

13. A research report recently released by Sinner et al. (2023) prepared by the Cawthron Institute, investigated catchment groups and case studies from around New Zealand. I was part of their policy advisory group.
14. They defined a catchment group as:
  - (a) focusing on an area primarily defined by catchment boundaries
  - (b) acting to address a challenge or seize an opportunity by working together rather than as individuals
  - (c) having an ongoing commitment and action from the people who live in or have a connection to the catchment and are exercising responsibility for land and waterways within their property boundaries
15. The report found examples of groups:
  - (a) showing leadership in learning about the health of local waterways
  - (b) taking responsibility and acting together to restore freshwater systems
  - (c) developing relationships between tangata whenua and farming communities
  - (d) acting to restore the mana of people and water

16. Sinner et al. (2023) made 30 recommendations under the headings:
  - (a) Understanding catchment groups
  - (b) Tangata whenua
  - (c) Building wider relationships
  - (d) Catchment groups and freshwater policy
  - (e) Capacity and capability over the long term
  - (f) Tracking progress
  
17. The report outlined the increasing regulatory pressures on catchment groups and made a number of recommendations including:
  - (a) Freshwater policy that encourages and rewards catchment groups
  - (b) Policy agencies building and improving communication and relationships with catchment groups and being realistic about expectations and support needed by the groups
  - (c) Improving relationships and build trust between catchment groups and tangata whenua
  - (d) Catchment groups needing to be adequately supported and resourced including access to funding, expertise, data, information sharing, partnerships and reduced consent requirements. A long-term view is needed for funding and support

- (e) Agencies supporting relationship building between catchment groups and tangata whenua and providing resources to allow for this

*Updated catchment group list*

18. The following is an updated list of formal or informal Catchment groups in Otago as at May 2023 (there may be other groups that exist that are not mentioned in this list). There are a total of 43 groups including umbrella and sub-catchment groups:

- (a) Otago Catchment Community Inc. (Otago umbrella organisation)
- (b) Tiaki Maniototo
- (c) Mid Taieri Wai
- (d) Owhiro
- (e) Tomahawk Lagoon
- (f) Lowburn Group
- (g) Open VUE group
- (h) Glenorchy
- (i) Ida Valley

- (j) Kyeburn
- (k) Lake Hayes
- (l) Lindis
- (m) Upper Taieri Wai
- (n) Teviot Valley
- (o) Pomahaka
- (p) Thomsons Creek
- (q) Otago Peninsula Group
- (r) Moeraki
- (s) East Otago groups
  - (i) Waikouaiti
  - (ii) Pleasant River
  - (iii) Waihemo Shag River
- (t) Wai Wanaka groups
  - (i) Lake Hāwea
  - (ii) Hāwea Flat



- (iii) Cardrona
- (iv) Luggate
- (v) Maungawera
- (vi) Lake Wānaka
- (vii) Wakatipu
  
- (u) NOSLaM (North Otago Sustainable Land Management) groups
  - (i) Awamoko
  - (ii) Waiareka
  - (iii) Kakanui
  - (iv) Friston
  - (v) Battersby
  
- (v) River Care South groups
  - (i) Waiwera-Kaihiku
  - (ii) Owaka
  - (iii) Tuapeka-Waitahuna

(iv) Lower Clutha-Lake

(v) Tuakitoto

(vi) Tokomariro

Thomas Spencer Orchiston

4 May 2023

## **REFERENCES**

Sinner, J., Robb, C., Kilvington, M., Tane, P., Tadaki, M., Challies, E. (2023). Where next for catchment groups? Lifting ambition and gearing up for the long game. Prepared for Our and Land and Water National Science Challenge. Cawthron Report No. 3881.

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Simpson, C.(2021). Pomahaka Winter Grazing Survey Summary Report. Landcare Trust report.