

**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**

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**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF JAMES DICEY**

**DATED 26 APRIL 2023**

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## Summary of evidence

1. My full name is James Dicey. I am the owner of Grape Vision Limited, a vineyard development, management, brokerage and consultancy business based in Central Otago. My evidence provides a full summary of my experience and expertise.<sup>1</sup>
2. This evidence addresses the viticulture industry within Otago; the importance of water; investment timelines; ability to adapt to change; and the pressures the sector faces.
3. Where my evidence addresses freshwater, it is in the context of the non-freshwater provisions of this PRPS.

### *The industry builds on the region's unique characteristics*

4. The Otago region possesses unique characteristics for producing high quality wine. These are not characteristics that can be replicated in other locations.<sup>2</sup>
5. Therefore, the sector is particularly vulnerable to regulatory changes that alter its ability to make the most of the unique characteristics that it relies on.<sup>3</sup>
6. A key characteristic is the low rainfall the region experiences, which enables growers to control yield and vigour. Due to the unpredictable, irregular and insufficient rainfall grapes require water to produce economic quantities of high-quality grapes.<sup>4</sup>
7. Water is also required to enable the significant frosts to be mitigated through the application of water for frost fighting.<sup>5</sup>
8. Considerable time and investment in infrastructure is taken to develop a vineyard. It costs around \$75,000 per hectare to even plant a

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<sup>1</sup> At [1]-[9].

<sup>2</sup> At [41].

<sup>3</sup> At [42].

<sup>4</sup> At [32] to [35].

<sup>5</sup> At [29] and [35].

vineyard and a further \$45,000 – \$55,000 to get the vines to maturity, excluding the cost of land.<sup>6</sup>

*Pressures*<sup>7</sup>

9. The wine sector faces many pressures including:
  - (a) Rising costs;
  - (b) Access to staff;
  - (c) Access to land;
  - (d) Access to water; and
  - (e) Never ending compliance cycle.
10. The final point appears to have accelerated in the last decade and this looks set to continue in the near term.
11. Significant investment has occurred to develop land for viticulture - with long term returns the focus for most. The ability to 'pivot' to other land uses is limited and should be undesirable given the unique qualities of the region and the wine it creates.<sup>8</sup>
12. **I would be happy to take any of the Panel's questions.**

Dated 26 April 2023

James Dicey

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<sup>6</sup> At [37].

<sup>7</sup> At [40].

<sup>8</sup> At [43].