

**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 FS00601ADD

AND **OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Local Authority

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF JEFFREY IAN WINMILL

DATED 26 APRIL 2023



GALLOWAY COOK ALLAN LAWYERS
Phil Page/Gus Griffin
Phil.Page@gallowaycookallan.co.nz
Gus.Griffin@gallowaycookallan.co.nz

PO Box 143
Dunedin 9054
Ph: +64 (3) 477 7312
Fax: (03) 477 5564

Summary of evidence

1. My name is Jeffrey Ian Winmill. Back in 2018 my family purchased a property called Rotherwood in the Maniototo valley, and in 2022 we purchased another smaller property close to the township of Waipiata.
2. My previous business history is in the poultry industry and subsequently as a director and shareholder in New Zealand's largest egg producing company Mainland Poultry.
3. I am also a Director of the Maniototo Irrigation Company Limited.
4. The purpose of my evidence is to explain the conversion of both the Rotherwood and Waipiata properties which were effectively traditional sheep and beef units that used mainly flood irrigation to highly productive beef and arable grain production using centre pivots with VRI technology, water storage and soil moisture monitoring.

Access to capital

5. My previous business ventures have enabled my family to invest significantly in the development of these properties. This is important to understand because the development was facilitated by access to private off-farm capital.
6. Like any business, farmers require a return on investment to not only cover our financial commitments but to produce a surplus for future development. Banks need assurance that the money can be repaid and to do this, we need confidence that we can produce high yielding crops and prime stock, all of which require reliable access to water. Water is security that the farm will be capable of paying off debt.

Access to water

7. The natural seasonal cycle in the Maniototo is a hot dry summer, and cold winters. Crops don't grow in the winter months as soil temperatures are too low, and they won't grow in the second half of the summer unless irrigation water is applied. You can't grow crops to feed stock over the winter without irrigation in the summer.

8. Any farming system must match the climatic conditions, and there are variable climatic conditions across the Maniototo and Otago. However, all are similar in that investment in things like environmental restoration, improved infrastructure, and product innovation requires secure access to water. Farming as we know it cannot continue without secure access to irrigation water.
9. Rotherwood Farming Ltd has been lucky that it holds shares in various irrigation companies, which provides secure access to water that has enabled these developments. We would not have undertaken these developments without access to secure irrigation water. Without this the value of the properties and their assets instantly diminishes.
10. However, all consents that are held through the Maniototo Irrigation Company will be renewed in 2034, which is within the lifetime of the RPS. I am asking the panel to consider the significant private investment that landowners have made in irrigation and provide security to the access of water for the lifetime of this RPS and beyond.

Climate change

11. Water is Rotherwood Farming's insurance against climate change, should that result in more westerly winds, less reliable rainfall and longer periods of summer droughts. On the other hand, warmer soil temperatures might lead to longer growing seasons. One thing is certain: reliability of irrigation is the single most important part of our climate change resilience. If this becomes too costly or impossible, then the Maniototo will lose important farming areas.

What change is required?

12. It is unclear what the PRPS requires farmers to do, in terms of water storage and irrigation efficiency, nor is it clear whether we will have the security of water beyond 2034 in the Maniototo. My business background has taught me never to agree to something I don't understand.

13. It seems necessary for there to be a framework that adequately provides for the benefits of irrigation and land use in the Maniototo, clear objectives in relation to any change that may be required and adequate timeframes for that change, when the actual end point can be understood and quantified.
14. What we have been able to achieve at Rotherwood Farming to convert a farming system and invest in irrigation efficiency and water storage, not only requires access to development capital, but also access to a reliable water supply.

I would be happy to take any of the Panel's questions.

Dated 1 May 2023

Jeffrey Ian Winmill