

**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 RICHARD PLUNKET

DATED 26 APRIL 2023



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Summary of evidence

1. My name is Richard Plunket, I am a shareholder and director of Banarach Farm Limited. I was a Director of Lower Waitaki Irrigation Company until October 2022. I refer you to my experience and expertise outlined in my evidence.¹
2. The farming sector is under a lot of pressure.² It is stressful, frustrating and we do not get to ignore it.³
3. I don't know if I want my two boys to follow in my footsteps. The stress and pressure that I'm dealing with is not sustainable. The perception of farming in the community means I am not necessarily proud to tell people what I do anymore, despite the pride I have in our operation.⁴
4. My evidence demonstrates the practical realities of implementing the changes required by regulation and the various dynamics that need to be considered in doing so.

Change from all directions

5. There are environmental, production, animal welfare and health and safety changes coming at us from all angles.⁵
6. Most farmers have made huge changes over the years to improve what we are doing. We genuinely consider ourselves caretakers of the little piece of dirt we have and aim to leave it in an improved state for the next caretaker. Though there are laggards within our sector, this is true of all sectors.⁶

Practical realities⁷

7. The practical reality of implementing regulatory change is an integrated exercise that engages many different areas of expertise. For example,

¹ At [1]-[4].

² At [31].

³ At [33].

⁴ At [34].

⁵ At [32].

⁶ At [35].

⁷ At [3]-[4], [10].

implementing spray irrigation is a significant cost that requires experts and contractors, and creates a demand profile for water within the scheme.

8. We are the only industry that pays full retail for every purchase we make but sell our product at wholesale, we cannot pass our costs on.⁸
9. What's important to me is that the practicality of making change is recognised. I am not opposed to making improvements, I am just asking that the sector be given the time and space to do it, that reflects the complexity of the systems and different stakeholders that need to be involved.

*What do we want?*⁹

10. We are asking for some acknowledgement of the contribution that we make to our communities and recognition that implementing change can require a fair few stars to be lined up. It is not just about what we can control on our own individual properties.¹⁰
11. We are up for the change and challenges that need to be addressed. What we need is certainty and an appropriate timeframe to complete the transition.¹¹
12. **I would be happy to answer any of the Panel's questions.**

Dated 26 April 2023

Richard Plunket

⁸ At [37].

⁹ At [27].

¹⁰ At [31].

¹¹ At [36].