

My name is John Perriam and I'm a member of the Lindis Catchment Group.

I have farmed Bendigo Station since 1978 and previous to that I farmed at Lowburn, where our family was displaced for the Clutha Hydro Development Scheme and Clyde dam.

During this time I served on two consecutive Government appointed commissions.

Since my time at Bendigo I have chaired the establishment of Merino NZ, and established two international partnerships in both fine wool and wine.

I've received the AC Cameron award for farming excellence in NZ, The Grasslands award for Conservation in farming and have been the recipient of The Order Of Merit for services to the industry. ✓

Since being involved with the Lindis Catchment Group, and given my background, I have become acutely aware of the uncertainties and financial and social implications being faced by the Tarras and Lindis farming communities.

For several generations viable family farming enterprises have been the fabric of this pioneering community, built on the land and more importantly water. Economic prosperity in farming can take many years to establish, and is at best a delicate balancing act - and I can fully appreciate, with the proposed irrigation restrictions, the uncertainty and financial and social issues farmers are facing, all in the so called name of the national good.

Our position at Bendigo being on the banks of the Clutha and holding existing Lindis water rights is much more fortunate than those farming upstream and depending on the Lindis alone. ✓

But having said this, we also are very aware of the cost of replacing Lindis water with Clutha water, as we have just completed Stage one along the highway at Bendigo to replace part of our Begg water right from the Lindis, with Clutha water, at a cost of \$15,000 per ltr sec - a total cost of \$1.3 million. Stage two is now on hold, with only two years to run under current consents.

The Begg right has a long history, but in short is a direct right from the crown and is the first right to the Lindis, but the last take, a recipe for much animosity over the years. The take is metered and monitored by the ORC, and under current legislation Bendigo is entitled to 90 ltrs sec until 2021, five more years.

The length of the transition period and the changes in the rules will be extremely important in enabling farmers, with takes such as Beggs, to quickly find more efficient alternatives, for the betterment of all the users of Lindis water.

Addressing the costs of irrigators transitioning from Lindis to Clutha water, where possible, could well hold a solution.

Given that the proposed restrictions are for the national good, many successful

models exist that, if used as precedents, could enable the Lindis to become a show piece.

The current proposal to restrict the farming community to possibly up to 50 percent of their current water allocation is totally unjust, and will have serious implications for a wide section of the community.

We are fortunate – with the Clutha River - to have one of the world's most reliable water sources running through the valley and past the mouth of the Lindis River.

We at Bendigo are also very fortunate to have both the Clutha River and Lake Dunstan at our doorstep. And over recent years both Contact Energy and Local Authorities have been very encouraging to work with.

Today approximately 450 litres per second is used to irrigate 450 ha of mainly Pinot vines at Bendigo. A collective investment of outside capital of around \$45m.

- These vines produce approximately one million bottles of high quality wine per annum, on what was previously rabbit infested dry semi arid land, and a liability to the station, and NZ. Today both the creation of job opportunities and wider benefit to the economy is enormous, while the amount of water used in Bendigo vineyard irrigation represents a minuscule percent of the Clutha River.

A point I would like to drive home is that not one grape would have been planted on Bendigo without a one hundred percent reliable water source.

The other point I would make is that 25 years ago no consultants nor myself could see the potential inherent values these lower semi arid faces would one day offer.

The same goes for the Lindis Valley, and I do hope the current users are not underselling themselves with what to me is a very generous offer to release 450 ltrs back into the river.

- Unfortunately the cost of replacing Lindis water with water from the Clutha, is not possible or affordable in many individual cases, because of the major capital outlays needed, additional ongoing running costs and easement issues.

I am convinced that in order to avoid unfair hardship, and for the Lindis to be a robust model for the future, a block of national capital is needed, to assist current irrigators to find fair solutions and ways of putting water back in the Lindis for the national good. Models similar to The Clutha Development Scheme, LDL Scheme or Rabbit and Land Management Scheme could be considered.

In summary I would make two main points:

Firstly: There is an immediate need for the introduction of enabling legislation to encourage water takes to be traded, or moved to create more efficient utilisation of water within the catchment. Such legislation would also assist in transitional issues, directly or indirectly, allowing time for individuals to finance change.

Secondly: A block of national funding is required, to assist with ways of structuring equitable solutions for existing water users to let water back into the Lindis, without facing unfair hardship. Such funding could also be used to enhance public access to the Lindis, and to provide recreational amenities, as happened with the Clyde dam project.

The Lindis, like Lake Dunstan has the potential to become a showpiece for the region and nation, but this will not happen by restricting land use change through legislation limiting water takes.

Taking a helicopter view, it is imperative that Clutha River water, which runs directly past the mouth of the Lindis becomes part of a new multi - use model.

This was the recommendation of the Clutha Valley Development Commission, many years ago and to the credit of the locals, they did try with the proposed Tarras Irrigation scheme.