

My name is Peter Jolly.

I am a third generation farmer.

My grand-father having drawn our property, Kotiti, 106 years ago in the sub-division ballot of Morven Hills.

Today I want to focus on four points :

1. the value of Lindis water to farming in Tarras
2. why Tarras must remain part of the Lindis catchment
3. why any minimum flow set must not be any more than 450ls at the Ardgour recording site
4. a longer transition period.

1. Our property is approximately 1840 hectares and until recently was 90% dry land, 10% irrigated, approximately 180 hectares, all laser leveled borderdykes.

All sorts of methodology can be used in determining the value of water to any particular property. The following is my experience after 40 years of farming on my own account.

When I started out all our irrigation was wild flood – extremely inefficient and only watered the hollows – it's value to the property was minimal.

As the dry land was developed and the stock numbers increased drought became a bigger issue, we became governed by what we could summer, not what we could winter.

Through the 1980's borderdykes were developed on all the irrigable land.

This gave us the summer security for all capital stock, all surplus stock was sold at weaning.

The advent of laser leveled borderdykes in the late 90's was a game changer, we could now fatten all our black faced lambs, about 2000, we were also able to winter all our merino lambs, about 5000, we also had the assurance of being able to fill all the silage pits even in a dry year.

The following numbers are what Lindis water was worth to Kotiti :

2000 black faced lambs, an additional \$30 / head fattening  
versus store price, \$60,000  
Wintering, shearing, finishing 3500 surplus merino lambs,  
wool plus meat equals \$90 per head over and above store  
weaning market, \$315,000  
Improved ewe wool weights of .75kgs / head equals  
5,625kgs @ \$9.50, \$53,000  
5% increase in lambing due to improved ewe weights equals  
370 lambs @ average \$100, \$37000  
Totals up to \$465,000

No winter feed has been bought in as the irrigation has given  
us the ability to fill silage pits even if lucerne crops have  
failed due to drought or late frosts.

Clearly it can be seen water has been worth approximately  
\$465,000 in gross turnover without allowing for silage and  
more importantly the mental stress that goes with drought,  
to quantify that you only need to look to the people of North  
Canterbury.

Without Lindis water this property would probably have  
sustained one full labour unit instead of the 3 families plus  
casuals that it has for the past 15 years.

The ORC commissioned Berl to do an economic impact  
report on the effects of different levels of minimum flows on  
the Lindis.

From the numbers I have given and other submitters will  
substantiate in their own form it is clearly obvious that this  
report bears absolutely no relevance to the Tarras district.

It is beyond belief that a potentially far reaching report such  
as this could be written in an air-conditioned office in  
Wellington with absolutely no local input.

That the ORC could even use this document in making their assessment is irresponsible, it should have been consigned to the shredder where it rightfully belongs.

2. Tarras must remain in the the Lindis catchment for the following reasons :

a. it has historically relied on the Lindis river for irrigation

b. it is land-locked from any alternative water source

There are no guarantees that individual farmers would be able to gain appropriate easements from land owners, statutory bodies and Contact Energy to gain access to the Clutha river.

Then be granted a water permit and come to a suitable arrangement with Aurora.

Then the huge financial hurdle of achieving the above before any on farm can begin.

The Tarras Creek in it's natural state gathered water from Archie's Creek, the Cluden Springs, Deep Creek down through the Cluden Swamp then followed around the toe of the Bend Terrace to Lindis Crossing.

Even in it's moidified state it still carries water to Lindis Crossing to this day

3. During the course of this hearing it will become very clear that there is no sound scientific or practical reason for imposing a minimum flow of any more than 450ls or may I suggest even less.

The eco-system of the river has evolved over the past 85 years to what it is today and is recognized under the present

river management as a very good spawning ground for brown trout.

With good will and commonsense the Lindis River of the future can be a win win for all stake-holders.

For farmers to invest in modern forms of irrigation, for it to be bankable and economically viable requires a reliability factor of not less than 90%. If that is not allowed to be achieved because of a high minimum flow being imposed I suggest some farms would become uneconomic, others could be reduced to becoming breeding units only and thus being left fully exposed to the vagrancies of the store stock market.

Tarras was founded on farming well over 100 years ago, farming has been the back-bone of the local economy for all of that time. If farms are allowed to become un-economic because of some poorly thought out decision the ramifications will have long reaching negative effects on the social infrastructure of Tarras, ie the school already struggling with of a roll of less than a dozen, sports clubs, social clubs, local businesses etc would all suffer negatively.

So to exclude Tarras from the Lindis catchment is clearly in breach of the RMA which states the economic and social well-being of affected communities must be considered.

The primary allocation needs to be raised to 1900 l/s from the proposed 1000 l/s to give farmers the confidence to modernize their irrigation systems and water management techniques.

Water storage although probably on a relatively small scale needs to be encouraged by giving permit holders the flexibility to harvest water when flows allow.

Over the course of the next few days you will hear from people who have no vested interest in the district and who are asking for a minimum flow that would totally destroy the social and economic structure of Tarras.

The fact that water does not always flow under "the bottom bridge" is not unique, one only has to drive through mid-Canterbury on state highway one across the Selwyn bridge to see a much larger dry riverbed than the Lindis.

4. The transition period needs to be extended to allow all water users to :

a. See firsthand and understand how any change to the Lindis river management will effect the viability of their irrigation/farming operation.

b. If multiple points of take are going to be implemented, ie the decommissioning of the Tarras and Ardgour races, the flow patterns on the middle reaches of the river need to be assessed before any water extraction system can be planned, permitted and power supply delivered if pumping is required.

c. It is only after this process has been established that any changes to on farm methods of irrigation systems can be planned and implemented.

Conclusion.

Commissioners, I stand before you today as third generation Tarras resident, proud of my heritage.

This hearing is not just about the Lindis river, it is about the greater Tarras district.

Tarras was founded on farming, water from the Lindis river made a huge amount of that possible and because of that we have a community infra-structure that has been developed over the past 100 years which the newer residents of Tarras can now reap the benefits of.

The future of our district as we have known it lies in your hands.

I urge you to come to a decision that is a good compromise solution so that all parties can move on with their lives.

Thank you.