



31 JUL 2024

Cr Gretchen Robertson  
Chairperson  
Otago Regional Council  
[Gretchen.Robertson@orc.govt.nz](mailto:Gretchen.Robertson@orc.govt.nz)

Dear Gretchen,

## **Report to the Minister under section 27 of the Resource Management Act 1991**

I have received and reviewed the Otago Regional Council's report which I requested under s27 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

The report outlines the costs, benefits, and implications of notifying the proposed Land and Water Regional Plan (pLWRP) ahead of the review the coalition government has committed to of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM). Alongside committing to review the NPS-FM, the Government extended the deadline for notification of freshwater planning instruments until 2027.

I expect councillors to have carefully weighed the costs and benefits of when to notify freshwater planning instruments. Having reviewed your report, I remain concerned that notifying the Otago Regional Councils pLWRP will impose additional costs on ratepayers due to changes your council may need to make to the Land and Water Plan once the NPS-FM has been reviewed and replaced.

My concern has been intensified by recent media including estimates as to the amount the pLWRP would cost Otago ratepayers. Media articles reference a case study Federated Farmers and Beef + Lamb have seen and there is some indication that this has come from information that may be held by your council. Given I specifically requested information on the costs I would have expected such information to have been made available to me. I also expect it to be made available to Otago ratepayers. Can you, as a matter of urgency, confirm if recent media is a result of information that your council held? And if so, please provide it as part of my original s27 RMA request.

In addition, I expect to see specific information on the costs of proposals for our productive sectors, and specifically the forestry and farming sectors, included in the required evaluation report under section 32 of the RMA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Penny Simmonds', written over a faint blue watermark of the signature.

Hon Penny Simmonds  
**Minister for the Environment**