

Media Release

For Immediate Release

11 March 2009

Crunch Time for Decisions on the Future of Canterbury Water

A group of Canterbury's leading water experts came together recently to progress a long-term workable solution to this critical issue for the region.

The Steering Group for the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) appointed by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (representing the Canterbury Councils) met to agree a series of possible approaches to water management, which will be taken to the public for consultation over the coming months.

Steering Committee Chair, Bede O'Malley (also Mayor of Ashburton District) says "the time has come when we have to make some hard decisions and commit to a strategy for the future of our region's water. Coming up with a solution that is in the best interests of the region is no easy task but the reality is we have to, and soon.

"Water is a growing issue and one of the new Government's priorities. It's a complex issue and simplistic solutions just won't do, and that's why the CWMS has invested considerable time in scientific research and stakeholder and public consultation."

The Steering Group has confirmed plans to produce the first draft of the water management strategy in June 2009. Between now and then some specific research will be undertaken but the main activity will be stakeholder and public consultation and preparation of the detailed strategy

Steering Committee Chair, Bede O'Malley says, "It's critical to the long-term success of the strategy that we consult extensively with the wider Canterbury community and

all its key stakeholders to ensure we have provided everyone with the opportunity to have their say.”

Stakeholder meetings will be held in Twizel, Timaru, Ashburton, Darfield, Christchurch and Culverden from the middle of March where a number of possible approaches will be presented for consideration and input. Following these meetings a document will be produced that will form the basis of wider public consultation. In each area two meetings will be held on consecutive weeks to ensure that people have sufficient time to consider the options, discuss issues and provide informed feedback.

“Water is a highly emotive subject for many people, particularly here in Canterbury. Most people have an opinion or a view on the subject. Really you could go as far as to say water defines Canterbury and the people who choose to live here.

“We encourage all Cantabrians to engage in the consultation process. This will be the final and most vital opportunity for those with an interest in the future of water for whatever reason to have their say.”

To find out more information about the Canterbury Water Management Strategy and the stakeholder meetings, go to www.canterburywater.org.nz

Ends

For further information please contact:
Bede O’Malley, Chair, CWMS Steering Group, 027 631 4784 or
Geoff Henley, 04 382 6607, 027 4470 447

The Mayoral Forum

- Mayor Bede O’Malley - Ashburton District Council
- Brian Lester - Ashburton District Council
- Mayor Bob Parker - (Chair) Christchurch City Council
- Tony Marryatt - Christchurch City Council
- Sir Kerry Burke - Environment Canterbury
- Dr Bryan Jenkins - Environment Canterbury
- Mayor Garry Jackson - Hurunui District Council
- Andrew Dalziel - Hurunui District Council
- Mayor Kevin Heays - Kaikoura District Council
- Stuart Grant - Kaikoura District Council
- Mayor John O’Neill - Mackenzie District Council
- Glen Innes - Mackenzie District Council
- Mayor Kelvin Coe - Selwyn District Council

- Paul Davey - Selwyn District Council
- Mayor Janie Annear - Timaru District Council
- Warwick Isaacs - Timaru District Council
- Mayor John Coles - Waimate District Council
- Tony Alden - Waimate District Council
- Mayor Ron Keating - Waimakariri District Council
- Jim Palmer - Waimakariri District Council
- Mayor Alex Familton - Waitaki District Council
- Michael Ross - Waitaki District Council
- Jude Pani - Environment Canterbury (Administrative Support)

The Steering Group:

- Bede O'Malley - Chair and Mayoral Forum representative
- John Greer - Central government agencies (alternate Murray Doak)
- Brian Lester & Bryan Jenkins - Chief executive representatives
- Peter Townsend - Industry representative/regional economic
- David O'Connell - Ngai Tahu
- Murray Rodgers - Community/Water Rights Trust
- Grant McFadden - Historical knowledge of water management in Canterbury/water management policy
- Angus McKay & Eugenie Sage - ECan councillor representatives
- Graham Sutton - Irrigation New Zealand
- Peter Scott - Opihi irrigation, Minister for the Environment water advisory group and southern region representative
- Martin Clements - Fish and Game New Zealand and Minister for the Environment water advisory group
- Hugh Canard – Kayaking and recreation representative
- Alastair James – Chair, Canterbury District Health Board
- Edith Smith – Forest and Bird and conservation representative

Upcoming workshops:

Two nights are being set aside in each place to ensure people can contribute and ideally to attend both nights as each meeting deals with different issues.

Twizel Events Centre: Thursday, April 2 and April 9

Timaru, Greyway Lounge Phar Lap Raceway: Wednesday, April 1 and April 8

Ashburton College Library: Tuesday, March 31 and April 7

Darfield Recreation Centre: Tuesday, March 17 and March 24

Christchurch, Oxford Tce/Madras St Baptist Church: Wednesday, March 18 and March 25

Culverden, Amuri School Community Hall: Thursday, March 19 and March 26

All meetings begin at 7.30pm and finish at 9.30 pm.

For more information: www.canterburywater.org.nz