

## Media Release

7 August 2008

---

### Timaru consulted on water

Timaru's water came under the spotlight last night at a meeting for people representing local community groups and organizations. These meetings, to list the benefits and uses of water, are being held around the region, as a prelude to developing a strategy for managing Canterbury's water over the next 20 years.

The meeting was positive and those attending reported that they "felt consulted" as a result, facilitator Judith Earl-Goulet said. The key uses that emerged fell into two broad groups: uses such as drinking, irrigation and recreation, and intrinsic value.

"People felt uses such as drinking and recreation are 'givens' and it is relatively easy to identify what those uses and benefits are, Judith said. "People agreed that things such as having clean and healthy water that sustains life, and just knowing that water is there are important but much harder to identify.

The group also recognised and felt comfortable with the fact that what may be a benefit for one group could be a negative for others, Judith said.

"Not using water and valuing it in and of itself came across as very important for many people. I think there is a real recognition of the challenges in managing competing values."

The Canterbury Water Management Strategy is being developed under leadership of the Mayoral Forum, a group of mayors and chief executives from all of Canterbury's councils. Mayor Janie Annear represents Timaru on the Forum.

The strategy is a response to growing pressure on the region's water resources. For instance, in the seven years to 2006 there was a 49% increase in water allocated for irrigation in Canterbury. About half of New Zealand's hydroelectricity is generated in South Canterbury.

Further meetings are being held in Fairlie (14 August) and Waimate (27 August). To attend one of these meetings you need to represent a local community group or organisation. There will be opportunities for the public to be involved later in the year.

To find out more about the Canterbury Water Management Strategy programme, or register to attend a meeting, go to [www.canterburywater.org.nz](http://www.canterburywater.org.nz)

#### Ends

For further information:

Judith Earl-Goulet

027 687 6248