



Decision makers: The panel of commissioners, Andrew Fenemor, left, Philip Milne, Bob Nixon and Ray O'Callaghan, at the Central Plains Water Trust consent hearing.

Mixed emotions over water dam decision

By LORRAINE CARMODY

Waianiwi Valley farmers may be elated following the commissioners' likely rejection of Central Plains Water's proposed dam, but others affected by the proposed \$409 million scheme aren't smiling yet.

Many Malvern landowners affected by the scheme's head race canal were still in limbo, anti-scheme group Malvern Hills Protection Society spokeswoman Rosalie Snoyink said.

"Someone rang [last week] and said 'does that mean I can put a For Sale notice outside my property?' I said 'well I wouldn't do it quite so soon'. She's restricted; she can't sell."

The hearing commissioners indicated on April 3 they would "most likely" recommend to Central Plains to withdraw the notice of requirement for the 55 metre-high dam and reservoir in the Waianiwi Valley, near Coalgate, and the upper Waimakariri River intake and 10km tunnel.

"We want all those notice of requirements removed from properties

and the sooner the better, really," Mrs Snoyink said.

"That notice of requirement on properties has really seriously disadvantaged a lot of people financially. It has blighted their property, so they want to be free of it as soon as they can."

The society had interpreted from the commissioners' surprise April 3 announcement that the dam and reservoir would not be given consent, she said. "As far as we are concerned that spells the end of the project."

Central Plains had indicated it would seek approval for the main canal and delivery races after hearing commissioners suggested they could potentially grant consents for a downgraded scheme.

"That's not what we want," Mrs Snoyink said.

"We really want it to be over. We want the whole scheme to be over and not drag on for several more months while they try and find a scheme that might work."

After the resumption of the hearing on May 11, commissioners would decide whether to make a final decision or leave

the hearing open so more information could be provided by Central Plains.

The society would be calling for the first option of rejecting the scheme when the hearing resumed, Mrs Snoyink said.

The announcement by the four commissioners had taken the society by surprise.

"We didn't expect it so soon.

"We didn't think we'd get a decision until June."

Waianiwi Valley farmers were delighted with the news, she said.

"You can just tell in people's voices. But there are still people worried out there. It is hard to get your head around it."

Farmer backers of the irrigation scheme proposed taking up to 40 cubic metres of water from two intakes on the Waimakariri River and one on the Rakaia River to irrigate 60,000 hectares of farmland.

Under the proposal, up to 280 million cubic metres of water was to be stored in the dam in the Waianiwi Valley.

Commissioners began hearing seven months of evidence in February last year.

ECan shares lake worries

Environment Canterbury (ECan) has joined parliamentary commissioner for the environment, Jan Wright, in expressing the need for improved water quality protection measures in Canterbury high country lakes.

Wright stated her concerns in a recent report on land tenure. Noting that newly privatised lakeshore land was being fertilised and used to run stock, she said there were "few, if any, regulatory restrictions on future intensification."

She said that, left unchecked, there was "the potential for an irreversible decline in water quality and appearance, like that already seen in Lake Hayes and major North Island lakes."

Wright said it was imperative that ECan introduce rules for monitoring and controlling discharges of nutrients, pathogens and sediments to high country lakes.

In response, ECan chief executive Dr Bryan Jenkins said Wright's recommendations were "very much aligned to moves Environment Canterbury has already developed through the proposed Natural Resources Regional Plan."

Jenkins said that measures would include "controls on stock access to lakes and streams and setting standards for water quality."

Work is under way in Lake Benmore to identify acceptable lake water quality standards.

Toxic algae a danger to dogs

Environment Canterbury (ECan) is warning dog owners to be careful around rivers and streams due to the continued presence of toxic algae.

"We advise a general warning to river users throughout the region that the toxic alga Phormidium is likely to be present in some river areas," said ECan water quality scientist Shirley Hayward.

"Dog owners should be particularly wary, and keep their dogs away from any areas of rivers where dark brown/black algal mats are present. People should not swim in areas where there are large amounts of dark brown/black algae."

The algae have flourished due to warm weather and low rainfall causing flows in Canterbury's hill fed rivers to remain low. Large quantities of Phormidium have been found in parts of the Ashley and Selwyn rivers. Phormidium has also been observed in the Opihi, Hurunui and Waiau rivers.



Making case: Rosalie Snoyink, of the Malvern Protection Society, speaks at one of the many meetings and hearings.



School Holiday Specials
Buy Two, Get One Free:

- One Square Meal 4pk
- Smart Cookie 600gm bag
- Rookie Cookie 600gm bag

Plus Other Specials In Store

Exclusive to Central Canterbury News readers. Bring this advert into the shop and be in the draw to

Win A - Tee Shirt & Cookie Muncher Soft Toy




Available from Wednesday 15 April - Sunday 26 April, while stocks last
Open Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm, Saturday/Sunday: 9.30am - 4.30pm
789 Main South Road, Templeton. Phone 349 3523

WESTMEAT SPECIALS

Valid until 1.30pm, Saturday 18th April

Grain Fed Rump Steak
\$12.99kg

Bolar Roast
\$8.99kg

Dry Cured Shoulder Bacon
\$12.99kg

Beef Ribs
\$6.99kg

Ph 03-349 5078
100 Carmen Road
WESTMEAT Hornby, Christchurch

Opening Hours: Mon to Fri 7-5 and Sat 7-1:30