

05 May 2022

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Tēnā koe Neil,

### **Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) submission on Ashburton District Council's draft Annual Plan 2022/23**

Environment Canterbury welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on your draft Annual Plan 2022/23.

While we do not intend to comment on the two main topics for consultation, we would like to comment on some matters of shared interest. Environment Canterbury strongly supports a collaborative, joined up approach from the region's councils and we look forward to continuing to work together to achieve this. The example in May and June 2021 of our two councils working together following the significant flood event in your district, and the very successful flood recovery community sessions, clearly demonstrates how our councils can work in unison providing greater value for the community.

### **Canterbury Regional Forums**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum, and the regional forums and working groups that support it, provide valuable mechanisms for local government in Canterbury. The Mayoral Forum is also a key means of demonstrating a strong and unified voice on the priority issues for our region. With the current challenges facing local government through the suite of major central government-led reforms, as well as those brought by COVID-19, the value of this strong and unified voice cannot be underestimated. We appreciate your continued commitment to working alongside your Mayoral Forum colleagues for the benefit of Canterbury and its communities, and we look forward to continuing to work with your Council on implementing the Canterbury Regional Forums' work programmes, particularly the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2020-22, over the remainder of this local government term. Thank you for leading the Mayoral Forum's discussions on the Essential Freshwater reform programme, and chairing the Forum's Essential Freshwater Steering Group meetings in 2021.

We also appreciate your chief executive's leadership of the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum since 2021. This Forum provides excellent support to the Mayoral Forum, and goes a long way to ensure it can operate efficiently and effectively.

## **Canterbury Water Management Strategy and Three Waters**

Environment Canterbury acknowledges the Council's participation in, and support of, the Ashburton Zone Committee and the contribution to implementing the zone committee's action plan. We thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to the Canterbury Water Management Strategy and your willingness to work collaboratively with other councils. We look forward to continuing to work with your council to improve alignment on matters associated with managing land use, including for the reduction of nitrate levels, and providing support for landholders to meet requirements of central government and regional and district plans.

We support the Council's resourcing of water-related infrastructure and we are particularly encouraged by the additional funding for upgrades to treatment of water supply schemes for Methven, Methven-Springfield, Mount Somers and Rakaia as well as improvements to wastewater infrastructure for North West Ashburton and Rakaia. We would like to acknowledge the excellent progress made at Lake Clearwater to improve wastewater management. With respect to subdivision expansion and lifestyle blocks, we are happy to continue to assist with advice on alternative onsite wastewater management, to reduce the impact of septic systems.

A focus for Environment Canterbury is to increase flows in the Ashburton River to meet the outcomes anticipated by the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (Ashburton sub-regional chapter) and the Zone Implementation programme of the Ashburton Zone Committee. A key aspect of this has been the review of 88 resource consents to implement the Plan minimum flows. We would like to emphasise the importance of accurate information about your Council's water abstraction for stock water so we can provide more certainty to Ashburton consent holders affected by the consent review process. We see opportunities to improve the reliability of supply by more effective operation of the Ashburton District Council stock water races. We would welcome the opportunity to continue to work with your staff to identify and implement efficiency gains while managing any adverse effects on the indigenous biodiversity values of the system.

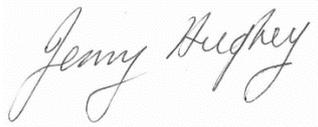
### **Biodiversity**

We would like to acknowledge your involvement in and support of the Canterbury Biodiversity Champions group and look forward to working together to develop shared regional approaches to key biodiversity challenges for the region, including ongoing work to identify significant natural areas (SNAs) in line with the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement.

Environment Canterbury strongly supports close working relationships and sharing of information between Ashburton District Council, Papatipu Rūnanga and Environment Canterbury. Aligned and integrated approaches to managing the effects of land use will help deliver positive outcomes for social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing across the district.

We do wish to be heard in support of our submission. To arrange a time, please contact [Governance@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:Governance@ecan.govt.nz). If you have any queries in relation to our submission, please contact Adrienne Lomax, Regional Leadership and Policy, [Adrienne.Lomax@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:Adrienne.Lomax@ecan.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenny Hughey". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Jenny Hughey  
Chair