

Media Release

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Water Conservation Order decision paves way for Project to proceed

A realistic and community-focused decision” is the reaction of the Hurunui Water Project to Friday’s announcement that a Water Conservation Order for the Hurunui River will not include the South Branch, where water storage is proposed, says its Project Manager, Amanda Loeffen.

“The Tribunal’s announcement that the South Branch and its tributaries do not have outstanding values that make a storage scheme impossible confirms our investigations. Research has shown that the South Branch is the only large-scale feasible option in North Canterbury for water storage. Without this option, there would be no real future for farming in most of the Hurunui.”

“We are especially delighted that the Tribunal has specifically mentioned taking into account the needs of the wider community in respect of these waters.”

The board of the Hurunui Water Project will now meet to decide whether to vary the resource consent application for storage in both the South Branch and Lake Sumner. “We are obviously disappointed that Lake Sumner has been included in the Water Conservation Order for the North Branch of the river, but we will seek community feedback before deciding whether to appeal this part of the decision,” says Ms Loeffen.

Meanwhile, locals wanting to support the current resource consent application will receive brochures this week allowing them to submit in favour of the proposal.

Hawarden farmer Mike Hodgen says more than 5000 brochures will be distributed throughout Hurunui District via the Hurunui News. Members of the Hurunui Irrigation and Power Trust will also distribute copies. Submissions on the resource consent application are required by Environment Canterbury by 11 September 2009.

A Freepost coupon within the brochure can be returned to indicate support for the resource consent application. Copies will also be available at Hurunui, Waimakariri District and Christchurch City Council service centres and libraries. The brochure can also be downloaded from the Project’s website www.hurunuiwater.co.nz

Mr Hodgen says Hurunui residents are starting to become hopeful that water storage will improve prospects for the district. A forecast \$250 million a year would be injected into Hurunui and wider Canterbury by the proposed scheme, he says.

“Hurunui job-seekers, families, the retired and business people will all benefit as around 800 new jobs will deliver flow on effects for everyone. This is the best opportunity we have to attract our

young people back to the district, hold onto and grow existing health and social services, and shore up our dwindling rural population. Water storage will give us a future all of us can look forward to.”

For more information contact:

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