

Media Release

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Hurunui Water Project supports WCO Hearing

Hurunui Water Project has withdrawn its application to postpone the Water Conservation Order (WCO) appeal hearings for the Hurunui River scheduled for mid year.

A number of submitters including the applicants for the WCO (Fish and Game and Whitewater NZ Inc) and Hurunui Water Project, have appealed last year's WCO recommendation that the North Branch of the Hurunui be granted a WCO, while the South Branch is made available for water storage.

Project Manager Amanda Loeffen says the project now believes the WCO appeal hearings should proceed as scheduled as other applicants do not support a delay.

After placing its resource consent application to take water from the Hurunui River and Lake Sumner on hold in mid October, the project has spent the past three months attempting to broker support for the collaborative approach suggested by the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

"We had hoped that the WCO hearings could be put on hold so that all parties could work through the strategy's zonal committee as a way of sorting out our differences. We felt the strategy offered a chance for disparate groups to come together and would result in a better outcome for the residents of Hurunui."

"However, while Hurunui District Council has supported this approach, all other parties to the WCO have either elected to oppose the application to put the WCO on hold or have remained neutral. We therefore believe it will not achieve anything positive to have a further delay on hearings. It is in the best interests of everyone for us to withdraw and allow the WCO appeal process to proceed as planned."

Ms Loeffen says while it was disappointing to make this call, the project was heartened by news that the Hurunui catchment has been chosen as a pilot for the Canterbury Water Management Strategy. This will see a district-wide committee appointed to develop and endorse a local solution for the use, development and protection of local water resources.

"We are looking forward to meeting with others and finding common ground that we can all live with. The people of Hurunui need to know how their water resources will be managed and what water resources are available to grow the district and region."

For more information please contact:

Amanda Loeffen, Project Manager, Hurunui Water Project, Ph 021 359 049 or email info@hurunuiwater.co.nz.

