

WATER FOR OUR FUTURE

Chairman's Message

Last week we saw the Government's pre Budget announcement of its Fresh Water Policy Package. What was most exciting was the launch of the 'Irrigation Acceleration Fund' to support the development of irrigation. While we are still awaiting concrete details, the Government will invest \$35 million over five years to help fund irrigation infrastructure proposals to the 'investment-ready' prospectus stage.

The expanded fund is the first stage of the process; for the second stage, up to \$400 million may be released for the construction of regional-scale schemes to encourage third-party capital investment. This new Government commitment to irrigation is very promising and we expect that Hurunui Water Project will benefit. Watch this space!

Locally the most significant event has been the release of the draft Zone Implementation Programme (ZIP) by the Hurunui Waiiau Zone Committee. As a member of the committee I am obviously biased, but I strongly believe that this draft plan is a major step forward for Hurunui.

I encourage all landowners and residents with an interest in water management to attend the Community Public meetings on the ZIP (see schedule page 3). If you have a view on the draft plan, you can submit written comments by 3 June.

While the committee has chosen to

focus on the Waitohi Basin as a water storage site, neither South Branch or Lake Sumner have been ruled out, which means the Hurunui Water Project has a key role to play in helping the committee understand the relative merits of these water bodies.

The ZIP will future proof our district because it allows for increased water storage and development down the track provided we ensure water quality standards are achieved and maintained. I look forward to seeing many of you at the coming public meetings.

Mike Hodgen
Chairman, HWP



View of South Branch.



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Appeal of NRRP dropped

HWP has withdrawn its appeal of Environment Canterbury's Natural Resources Regional Plan (NRRP). An appeal is no longer necessary as the Hurunui Waiiau Zone Committee's draft ZIP contains all the ingredients to successfully manage the water aspirations of the Hurunui community. As the ZIP takes precedence over the NRRP, we have chosen to focus our resources on supporting the ZIP and the Canterbury Water Management Strategy as a positive way forward.

ZIP Highlights

- Recognition that more water is required to deliver the economic and social targets and some of the culture, environmental and recreational targets in the zone. The ZIP suggests up to 100,000 hectares in Hurunui could be irrigated in the future.
- Support for an integrated approach that includes a major water storage reservoir in the Waitohi River. The integrated approach may also include major infrastructure for transfer of Waiau water to Hurunui Basin, storage of Waiau water, transfer of Hurunui water to Waipara area, and hydro-electric generation. At the same time the ZIP acknowledges that major water storage in the Waitohi River may not be affordable.
- A dam on the South Branch (Hurunui River) and a weir on Lake Sumner remain on the table as options for major water storage in the zone. The committee is seeking more information to understand the impacts of these options and possible mitigation and offsets.

Leaving options open for Lake Sumner and South Branch is positive as these water bodies have huge potential to meet community needs, including social and economic health along with environmental and recreational aspirations.

The zone committee is promoting the Waitohi in the ZIP if it can be made economically viable. This site was evaluated five years ago by HWP and we are happy to re-evaluate it. However our biggest concern is keeping the project affordable for farmers to invest in so irrigation can sustain all forms of land use and we can avoid over-intensification of the land. There may need to be a significant injection of Government funding to make this feasible.



MP Colin King visiting South Branch of the Hurunui with HWP and Zone representatives.

MP Colin King's visit

Kaikoura MP Colin King took the opportunity this month to visit the South Branch and Waitohi sites for water storage proposals. Fifteen interested members of the local community and Zone Committee representatives joined us as well to see for themselves the sites and discuss their relative merits. Please get in touch with us at the office (ph 03 378 3524) if you would be interested in joining us on our next trip into the high country.



4WD drive into the high country.



South Branch dam would be sited in the gorge.



Lake Sumner outlet in summer.

Lions visit Lake Sumner

More than 300 people visited the proposed weir site at Lake Sumner recently as part of a Hawarden Waikari Lions Club fundraiser. HWP was approached to provide commentary about its plans for Lake Sumner as part of a fundraising four wheel drive rally into Lake Station.

More than 120 vehicles participated over two days and HWP director Euan Frost says drivers came from as far away as Timaru, but most were local residents with no connection to the project. HIPT trustee Mark Zino hosted the first rally with Euan taking care of those attending the second. Simulations of the proposed weir and graphs of raised lake levels were presented and Euan says the groups were really interested in seeing for themselves how it would work.

“Because we were right beside where the weir would be, people could see what it would look like and what we are proposing. There were no negative comments at all.”

Shareholder calls

HWP will not call on its shareholders to pay their first instalment as expected next month. Instead shareholders will be asked to make the first call in September, when the directors of the HWP board expect to have more information on the progress of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy. All shareholders will be notified this month formally by mail. For more information check the Capital Raising page on our website www.hurunuiwater.co.nz

ZIP Community Public Meetings

We encourage interested Hurunui residents to attend upcoming public meetings on the ZIP and to make written comments if they have points to make. Written submissions should be sent to admin@canterburywater.org.nz by 3 June.

The community public meetings will be held at Amberley (Tuesday 17 May), Cheviot (Thursday 19 May), Culverden (Monday 23 May), Hawarden (Wednesday 25 May) and Omihi (1 June). There will also be a public meeting in Christchurch.

For more information please contact Mike Hodgen on phone (03) 314 4063 or Amanda Loeffen on phone (03) 378 3524.

Facebook page



The Hurunui Water Project has now joined the social media movement! Please have a look at our Facebook page and click the ‘like’ button to show your support. Feel free to recommend our page to others. We’ll be posting updates weekly so staying in touch has just got easier.



HWP director Lindsay Lloyd joined the recent South Branch visit.

Website

The Hurunui Water Project website (www.hurunuiwater.co.nz) now includes reports released to the Zone Committee in recent weeks including ecological values and effects reports on Lake Sumner and South Branch along with a new study of the records, trends and knowledge of salmon in the Hurunui River. As further reports become available, we will post updates on the website.

Competition winners

The winners of our A&P show competition 'Go Wild in Hurunui' were drawn at the last HWP board meeting. Max Walker of Waikari won a four wheel drive trip into South Branch complete with gourmet picnic, Heather Macfarlane of Conway Flat won the guided fishing trip and Debbie Board of Hawarden won the jet boat trip. Thanks to everyone who visited us at the March A&P shows and entered the competition.

From the HWP Office

This bimonthly newsletter is just one of the ways that we are trying to keep all our interested parties in touch with developments at HWP. We are encouraged by the number of visitors to the website, and after a week we already have 49 people who have clicked the "Like" button on our Facebook page. It would be good to hear what you think of our newsletter too and if there is anything more you would like us to talk about. Get in touch by phone (03 378 3524), email (info@hurunuiwater.co.nz), website (www.hurunuiwater.co.nz), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hurunuiwaterproject) or drop by and say "hello" at one of the forthcoming community meetings!

See you soon,

Amanda Loeffen
Project Manager, HWP



Committee deputy chairman John Faulkener at the site of the proposed South Branch storage lake.