

Oral submission PC10 Chris Sutton

When I originally wrote my submission to PC 10 I thought the process was to present before the elected Councillors. However, this is no longer the case and, with respect, all the memos etc. I wonder if I shouldn't be represented by a lawyer or have sought legal aid? This process is foreign to me.

I have decided to write out what I want to say in support of my submission. This allows you the opportunity to read, digest and if needed you can ask questions or retire early for lunch. This also disciplines me to be focused.

Allow me to introduce myself;

Presently my wife Rosemary and I are beef finishing/dairy grazing farmers at Rerewhakaaitu. Three years ago, we sold our dairy herd of 265 Friesians and converted the farm into a beef trading unit. This is very much a real-world experiment in land use change and I extend an invitation to the panel if you wish to visit our farm and/or meet with some of the Project Rerewhakaaitu Committee.

I have 34 years' dairy experience working from farm labourer, manager and 50:50 sharemilking to farm ownership.

I moved to Rotorua in the late 1970's, as a forest ranger trainee with the NZ Forest Service.

Leadership and representation positions, I've held recently;

- Dairy Company committeeman, Fonterra Networker.
- Provincial President, Rotorua Taupo Federated Farmers
- National Vice Chairman, Dairy Section Federated Farmers
- Board member of the Rotorua District Veterinary Club for 19 years 7 years as Chairman.
- Member of the BoPRC's Land Use Futures (LUF) Board.
- Founding member of Project Rerewhakaaitu. (A farmer led initiative working with scientists and Councils since 2003)

Positions I now hold;

- Deputy Chairman, Rotorua Rural Community Board, Rotorua Lakes Council.
- Chairman, Project Rerewhakaaitu.

These are my opinions/views and in no way, am I representing any of these organisations.

I wish to speak to each item in my submission and I feel it only appropriate that I offer a solution.

I stand to be corrected but, PC10 is a compromise involving grandparenting where all land owners are asked to reduce their nutrient discharge from that set in the benchmark with no compensation offered for business failure and social disruption.

1, Don't rule an industry out, buy it out if you want it gone!

Everyone's entitled to a dignified exit.

I believe the Incentives Board could buy dairy farms on a willing buyer/willing seller basis. Remove the ability to dairy, amalgamate properties if necessary to make them financially viable, and reintroduce them into the market place. The difference between purchase and sale price will be the cost of removing the targeted N.

To do this there will need to be a change in the terms of reference for the Incentives Board. However only after a couple of years and some KPI success should we consider injecting more capital if required.

2, What evidence do you have that Rotorua residents want a catchment planted in commercial forest?

The LUF Board received a report on the Taupo process from a Canadian scientist (I don't recall her name.) But in her report, she identified 2 major omissions.

1. There was no provision for stress or trauma counselling for farmers because of the social disruption they endured.
2. The general population were never given the opportunity to consider the ramifications of the proposed rules.

A similar thing is being repeated here in Rotorua.

Also, I see no restrictions with regards to logging around the lake shore or streams.

May I suggest no clear fell logging, within 500 metres of the lake edge, 200 metres either side of a stream wider than a metre and 100 metres either side of swamps, seeps, bogs or small streams. Also, no clear fell logging on land over 15 degrees within 1 kilometre of the lake or a flowing stream/river.

Logging can have the most devastating effect on the environment and the suggestion that we should spread the nutrient discharge (pulse of P) from this event over the forests crop rotation of 25 years is a big ask.

The LUF Board was told that Maori had not made a fortune out of pine trees yet we seem to think that forestry should be their natural default option.

3, Maori are hugely disadvantaged.

Maori are best to submit on this but while on the LUF Board I did gain an appreciation of their predicament.

4, Land Use Change symposium.

Since my submission there has been action by BoPRC, but some of these actions focus solely on addressing Nitrogen and lack a simple budget and a 5 year cashflow forecast.

5, Break the lake catchment into stream catchments with individual plans, combining to form the total Lake Rotorua Catchment Plan.

Too simple to be true?

It's not really, this was a Regional Council staff suggestion 12-15 years ago but lost in the political passage of time.

It works!

- Start with the land owners by getting them to have farm environmental management plans.
- Combine these into a stream catchment plan to be part of the whole lake catchment plan.
- Reverse the lake nutrient model back up the catchment incorporating "Land Use Capability Mapping" to set non-transferable/tradeable nutrient discharge allowances per land use type.

6, NZ's worst example.

Okay maybe I was a bit dramatic here, but I've had the opportunity of being involved and spectating.

In summary

1. If by taking dairying out of the catchment meets the communities desire, then please afford dairy farmers a dignified exit and buy them out.
2. Any option that involves a compromise will only end up being revisited and corrected at cost.
3. By using Land Use Capability mapping we can allocate land use options to those lands that are best suited for that use.

Chris Sutton

Rerewhakaaitu