

# PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 WAIKATO AND WAIPĀ RIVER CATCHMENTS



Submission form on publicly notified – Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 – Waikato and Waipā River Catchments.

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FORM 5 Clause 6 of First Schedule, Resource Management Act 1991

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## SUBMISSIONS CAN BE

Mailed to	Chief Executive, 401 Grey Street, Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre, Hamilton 3240
Delivered to	Waikato Regional Council, 401 Grey Street, Hamilton East, Hamilton
Faxed to	(07) 859 0998 <i>Please Note: if you fax your submission, please post or deliver a copy to one of the above addresses</i>
Emailed to	healthyivers@waikatoregion.govt.nz <i>Please Note: Submissions received by email must contain full contact details.</i>
Online at	www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyivers

We need to receive your submission by 5pm, 8 March 2017.

## YOUR NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

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## ADDRESS FOR SERVICE OF SUBMITTER

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address for service of person making submission: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

## TRADE COMPETITION AND ADVERSE EFFECTS (select appropriate)

- I could /  could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.  
 I am /  am not directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that:  
 (a) adversely effects the environment, and  
 (b) does not relate to the trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

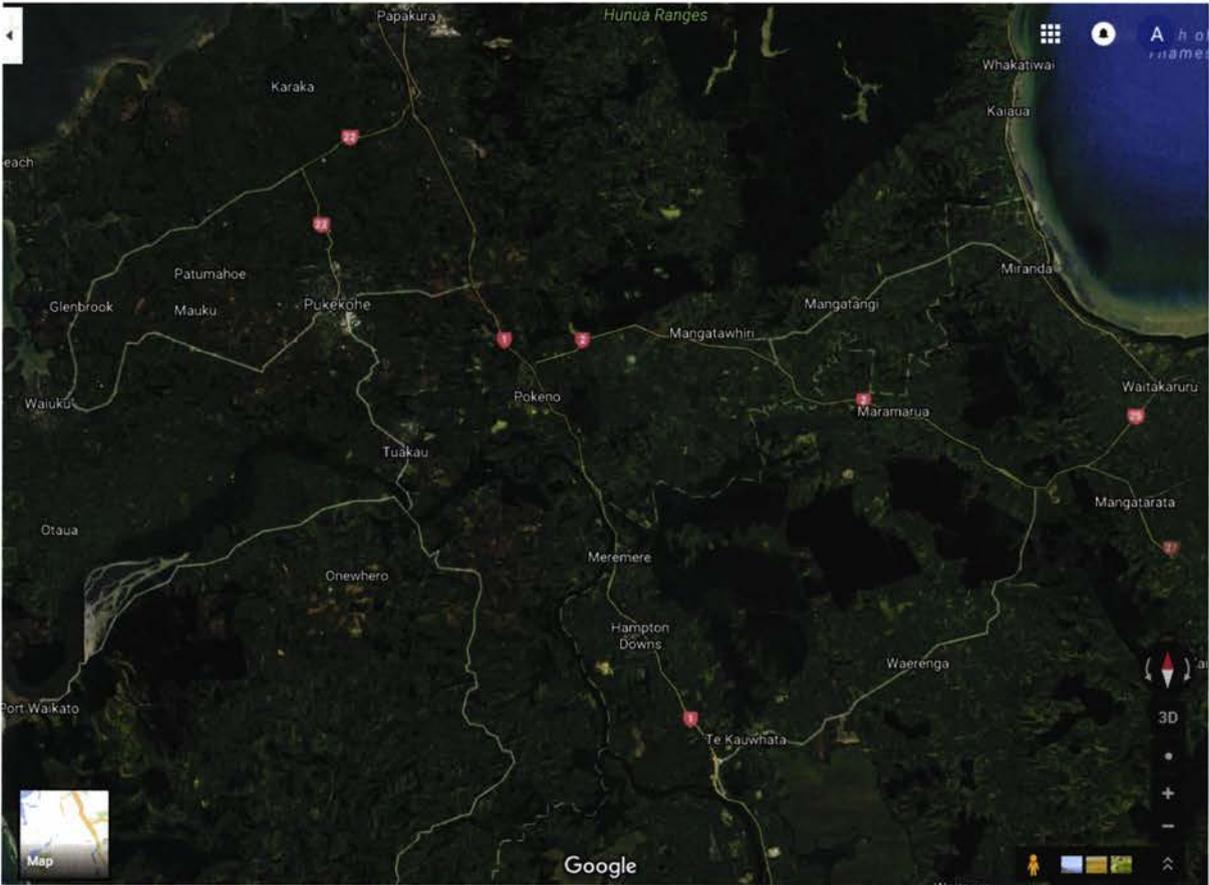
Delete entire paragraph if you could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

We wish to speak at a Council hearing.

We are farmers in Franklin Waikato drainage districts,

M Dean  
chairman

Submission on the Proposed  
Waikato Regional Plan Change 1  
Waikato and Waipa River Catchment



Prepared by the  
Franklin Waikato Drainage advisory subcommittee  
Waikato Regional Council

## Submission

### Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

#### Introduction

We would like to begin by thanking all those who have made such a huge effort formulating and communicating this plan and making ourselves and the majority of the Waikato farming community more aware of the need to keep working on improving water quality in the region. The Healthy Rivers Plan for Change does have some very good and well thought out features such as requiring Farm Environment Plans and the accreditation system to ensure only people who know what they are talking about are working with farmers on environmental compliance.

**The main problem with the plan is the uncertainty it creates over the long term future prosperity of farming in the Region.**

The features of the plan change closely related to drainage issues we oppose and want changed are:

#### 1) **The 5m cultivation setback rule.**

A very important issue for farmers in drainage districts, of which there are over 100 in the lower Waikato, is the stipulation that no cultivation can take place closer than 5m from drains that hold water all year around. In most pumped drainage districts the majority of drains can hold water all year around but often have no flow for over 6 months of the year. In fact it is good peat management to keep water in drains as high as possible over summer. Many of these drainage districts still have layers of stumps and timber underground and these need to be removed every so often by digger or stumpchipper right up to the edge of the drain. If a farmer is only allowed to cultivate to within 5m of the drain, with the passage of time, the drains will eventually become walled off from the centre of the paddock which will then become excessively wet. Eventually additional drains will then be required.

Also drainage rates are expensive with some farmers having to pay up to approximately \$200/hectare/year. Can farmers who are paying this level of drainage rates afford to have say 20% of their land drop out of production and the rest suffer reduced production? **See photograph.**

**In drainage districts, farmers have to be able to cultivate right up to the edge of their drains and pull back elevated drainbanks at least every 6-8 years if they need to.**

If the 5m rule is a feature of the plan for drainage districts it is believed that compensation will be sought by some farmers.

Refer page 40

4 e.i

Our submission is that:

**Farmers in drainage districts are exempted from the 5m cultivation setback rule.**

## 2) The 1m and 3m fencing setback rules.

These rules will create weed control problems requiring spraying with chemicals. It is best to let cattle graze under a wire right up to the edge of a drain for weed control purposes as weeds such as Canadian Fleabane are a serious problem in drainage districts, acting as a reservoir of seed production to infest further afield. Also too many weeds such as Glyceria and Blackberry can short out electric fences and allow livestock into drains. It would cause most farmers a lot of difficulty with weeds and drain cleaning if the setback was any more than ½ m.

Many farm races in drainage districts were formed by digging drains each side of where a race was needed and using all drain cleanings to form the race. In most cases the drains on both sides are necessary to keep land acceptably dry in winter. It would cause some farmers a lot of difficulty with farm machinery and stock movement if the setback was any more than ½ m.

Refer page 40

4 e.2 and

Page 50

Schedule C.2

**Our submission is that:**

**A ½ m fencing setback be uniformly applied in all setback situations in drainage districts.**

## 3) Flexibility for young farmers with land use change designated as Non-Complying.

It is noted that provision is made in the objectives and policies, for some flexibility with non-complying activities for the development of tangata whenua ancestral lands, land use change. Farm Environment Plans and mitigation stipulations for enthusiastic young farmers getting into their first rundown farm should not be so harsh that New Zealand farming loses its vitality and gets locked into an old fashioned time warp operated by old people. This is the situation in Japan and we do not want that here.

**In this submission we propose that the same flexibility and supportive approach extended to tangata whenua in chapter 3.11 also be extended to enthusiastic young farmers with environmental as well as traditional farming training and experience to take over and revamp rundown farms or blocks of land that are fit for the purpose of intensification or the proposed change of land use.**

# Concluding comments

## 1) Historic background.

Successive governments and Councils since the 1950s and before have put a lot of investment and management time into drainage districts to convert flood prone land into farms. This investment has been more than matched by farmer investment and most people agree the results have been economically outstanding. Many drainage districts have been opened by Ministers of the Crown. They are some of New Zealand's best and most productive cropping and pasture land. Is it sensible to hobble this land with problematic rules and bureaucracy that will diminish the returns to the nation on this investment?

## 2) Sediment.

The monitoring of water quality in any drainage district can be undertaken by water sampling at the discharge point of the scheme. The Motukaraka Drainage District has had to monitor its water discharge for the last 19 years and the sediment load out of the Motukaraka has always been found to be less than the Mauramarua river that the Motukaraka discharges into.

## 3) Swimming.

During the hot summer months, when people want to swim, there is little or no rain. Over this period the drainage districts are sealed unless the pumps are activated by heavy rain. In many years the pumps don't operate from the end of November to the end of May.

The Franklin Waikato drainage advisory subcommittee believe that over the hot summer months Japanese Koi carp are the main problem causing the Mauramarua and Mangatawhiri rivers to be discoloured and unfit for swimming, yet farmers unfairly get the blame.

***See photographs and commentary based on the Mangatawhiri River.***

Prepared by

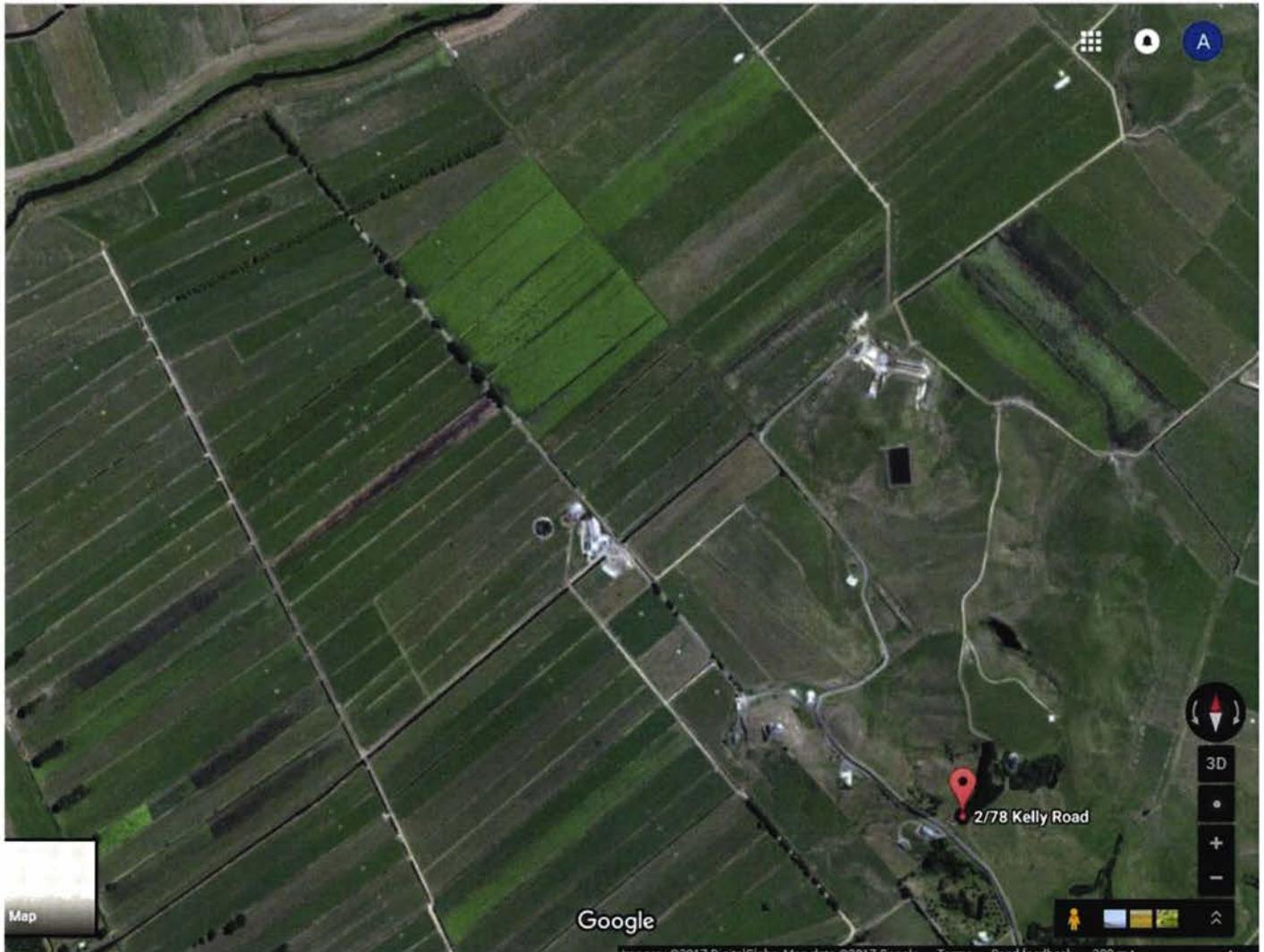
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***We want to present our submission at a Waikato Regional Council hearing.***

## Close up view of the drainage network in Compartment 3 Mangatawhiri Drainage District



An issue for the farmers in the Mangatawhiri Drainage District is that with this network of drains, the 5m no cultivation rule is going to prove very problematic both in terms of land loss and dealing with stumps.

Also many farm races have drains on both sides and numerous culverts. The job of preventing winter water runoff into drains will be very expensive, almost impossible. Also inflexible application of the one meter and three meter fence setback rules would shut down many of these races. Half a meter fencing setback would be better for all situations.

Some land in the Mangatawhiri Drainage District, needs to be stumpchipped and cultivated right up to the edge of drains every 6-8 years.



The following two photographs illustrate present practices.

Land that has been stumpchipped and put into Maize



Land that has been stumpchipped and put into Chickory



In the last 5 years farmers in the Mangatawhiri Drainage District have invested a lot of money to reduce ecoli and nutrient contamination to make their river swimmable. There is scope to do more but a lot has been achieved.

Fencing and gully/wetland planting  
Mangatawhiri Drainage District

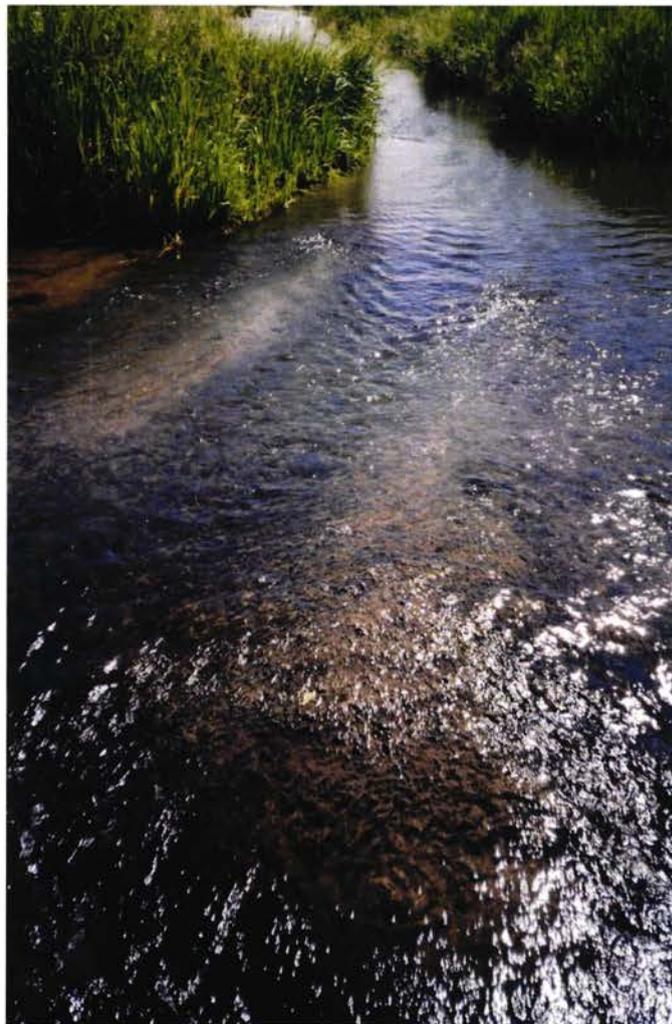


Bridge investment McIlroy family



In spite of these investments, even in summer the Mangatawhiri river still looks bad in the eye of the public.

In summer the public walking the Te Araroa trail see clear swimmable water , 200m below the State Highway 2 bridge.



Then they see brown unswimmable water at the Old State Highway 1 bridge just north of Mercer. Only approximately 7km separates these two photographs. Taken on the same day in January 2017 , with no rain for weeks beforehand to cause runoff from dairy farms. The public don't know that however and blame farmers.



This ugly eyesaw is a national historic place. It is the location General Cameron's army crossed the Mangatawhiri river in 1863 and by doing so started the Waikato War with Tainui.

The farmers bordering the river cannot contaminate the river over summer when there is no rain because without rain there is no runoff. Also the farms are walled off from the river by the stopbanks of their drainage districts. If there is no rain, the drainage districts pumps do not switch on.



Plume of silt from Japanese Koi carp disturbing an otherwise clear stream, a tributary of the Mangatawhiri river, in their search for food.



Japanese Koi carp working the silt for food. They are a waterway pest just like the opossum is a forest pest.



Also showing “oxygen weed” that was introduced to NZ in gold fish tanks, but is now also choking up the Mangatawhiri River and its tributaries.

Same waterway just 1 kilometre upstream where there are no Japanese Koi carp or “oxygen” weed.



Japanese Koi carp silting up an area behind the Compartment 2 pump station. This is on the river side of the pumps. At the time this photograph was taken the pumps had not operated for at least 6 weeks. The river adjacent to this ponding area is clear.



Japanese Koi carp

The interface between the Mangatawhiri river and the Japanese Koi carp habitat behind the Compartment 2 pump station.



The clear water of the Mangatawhiri river adjacent to the Japanese koi carp habitat.



The Mangatawhiri River prior to its arrival at the Mangatawhiri Drainage District has a massive Auckland water supply dam located at its headwaters in the Hunua ranges.



Auckland “Watercare” releases so little water out of this dam over summer that it causes the water in the lower reaches of the Mangatawhiri river to stagnate over summer. Farmers unfairly get the blame for this.