

Manuherikia Catchment Group (MCG)

Newsletter no 2

Deemed Permit renewal application update

All the permit applications and the Overview have been accepted by the ORC under Sec88. That means all water users can continue operating their permits until the replacement permits are issued. It doesn't matter if the replacements aren't issued before the current permits expire as Section 124 of the Act gives the right to keep using the old permits.

The next response from the ORC will be the list of Section 92s, request for further information. However it is likely we will ask for all the applications to be placed on hold pending the results of Plan Change 7. We do not want to incur processing costs that will be wasted if the options for permit length is not available after PC7.

All the work done so far is not wasted money. The science, future proposals, assessments of water demand and use are all relevant for the limit setting process ahead and the eventual replacement of permits. The farmers remain in the box seat with indepth knowledge of how the catchment works. There was no choice to lodge a reduced application as it wouldn't have been accepted by the ORC. However if the Plan Change decision does close the door on permits longer than 6 years the farmers have a strong case not to pay ORC processing invoices beyond a minimal amount.

Catchment group unity

The work completed by the farmers and their consultants has been exhaustive. The outcome is an incredible testimony to what a cohesive group of farmers can achieve. We have a strong position based on facts. Our strength will remain in staying tight as a team and looking after the catchment as a whole. We can not let individuals be disadvantaged or selected out as special.

Budget

MCG is covering the costs of the Overview and the work required keeping the catchment team approach. The MCG's River Management Plan includes the minimum flow work, the residual flows, allocation blocks and flow sharing. All documents can be accessed from McKeague Consultancy Ltd just email Susie McKeague or manuherikiacatchmentgroup@gmail.com

The current budget was designed to take us through to June 2021 assuming we would be addressing Section 92 and preparing for a hearing. Given both of those activities will be delayed we anticipate the budget will cover costs for longer than to June 2021.

Water Quality

There is increasing awareness and discussion of where MCG will head in the future. There is potentially a role as an umbrella organisation for the sub-catchment groups, with an increased focus on water quality and making environmental gains working together as a whole community to increase our environmental resilience.

OWRUG PC7 case

Last week (week 3 of proceedings) our consultant team were in court giving evidence. It has been a stressful start to proceedings however after week 2 it was felt the court had settled more into a routine. Expert caucusing was held in week 3, which is where the experts try to come to common ground on many of the issues with the plan change, for example the issues with the calculating allocation.

We strongly encourage anyone who can make it to court sessions to watch proceedings and offer moral support to the team to do so. It is important for the court to see how much impact this plan change will have on the community by the number of community members present in the court taking an interest in proceedings. If you would like more regular updates on court proceedings these are coming through the Consultant team via OWRUG please email manuherikiacatchmentgroup@gmail.com

He waka eke noa – we are all in this together, hold strong as a team