

12 May 2008



## **Health Impact Assessment called alarmist at Central Plains Water resource consent hearing**

Central Plains Water Limited (CPWL) chairman Pat Morrison shares the concerns expressed today by Philip Milne, chairman of the CPWL resource consent hearing, that the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) presented by Dr Alistair Humphrey on behalf of the Canterbury District Health Board is “unnecessarily alarmist”.

He says Central Plains also agrees with Mr Milne’s questioning of Dr Humphrey that the HIA contains no evidence to support the claim that if the scheme goes ahead, exposure to nitrates in drinking water will result in significant future risk of infant death from methaemoglobinaemia, a condition that results in blueness around the mouth, hands and feet in babies. The HIA states that methaemoglobinaemia is very rare in New Zealand and only one case (in 1994) has ever been reported.

“The Commissioners also noted that the conclusions within the HIA were not in agreement with those made by ECan expert Dr Hanson and Christchurch City Council representative Mr Callendar, that conditions and effects, in particular to drinking water, can be addressed by mitigation.

“We have commissioned detailed scientific studies that confirm the aquifers from which Christchurch draws its drinking water will not be compromised if the scheme goes ahead,” says Mr Morrison.

“Central Plains is also concerned that the majority of the people who participated in the HIA are opponents of the scheme. We were disappointed that the report came to conclusions despite Dr Humphrey acknowledging that the report’s authors did not read all the CPW evidence.

“Of most concern is that the HIA did not take into account the comprehensive evidence on the proposed Sustainable Management Accord prepared by Claire Mulcock. Some of the issues expressed in the HIA are proposed as mitigation measures within Ms Mulcock’s evidence.

-Ends-

### **For further information:**

Pat Morrison, Chairman, Central Plains Water Limited (CPWL) – ph (021) 434 222

Erin Jamieson, Convergence Communications – ph (03) 365 0081 (021) 743 237,  
email [erin@conv.co.nz](mailto:erin@conv.co.nz)