

17 August 2006
For immediate release



PROPOSED CENTRAL PLAINS WATER SCHEME WILL NOT IMPACT COAST TO COAST EVENT

The proposed Central Plains Water irrigation scheme will not impact the annual Coast to Coast event as reported recently. During February when the event is run, it will be unusual for the scheme to be taking water from the Waimakariri River due to low-river flow restrictions set by the Waimakariri Regional River Plan which the scheme will abide by. Furthermore organisers of the event can be assured that the scheme could undertake not to take any water when the Coast to Coast event is running.

Central Plains Water Limited Project Manager Derek Crombie says, "The Waimakariri River will not be left 'dry' over any stretch as a result of this scheme, the current low-flow minimum will be protected and no change to the summer minimum flow condition is required."

"While Central Plains Water acknowledges the heart-felt protest held today by members of the kayaking community, the scheme is seeking resource consent to only take water that may be allocated under the Waimakariri Regional River Plan. This plan was prepared by Environment Canterbury after extensive community consultation and it is disappointing that the kayaking community now seek to revisit issues that were already canvassed in the plan's preparation."

The proposed amount of water the scheme will harness and turn to productive use is only a fraction of the volume of water that currently runs out to sea. While the scheme proposes to take a maximum of 40 cumecs the Waimakariri at any one time, its annual average take would only be 9 cumecs from the Waimakariri.

"We are keen to enhance opportunities for recreation and have consulted with a range of recreational groups to find out what could be worked into the final design of the irrigation scheme," says Derek Crombie. "Our consultation has posed the question – if Central Plains Water goes ahead, what would be your dream recreational facility based on the scheme design? How can we make this area really great for recreation in Canterbury?"

"It is ironic that kayakers, as one of the largest potential beneficiaries of the recreational opportunities fostered by the scheme, are protesting their opposition. Some of the exciting opportunities Central Plains Water are continuing to investigate include the provision of a 12 km reservoir suitable for a wide range of water sports within 50 minutes of Christchurch, a proposed artificial whitewater kayaking course, a flat water canoeing course on the 54 km headrace canal and a biking circuit along its banks."

Derek Crombie says it is important to remember that the Central Plains Water scheme has yet to go through a very thorough Resource Consent process. This will deal with the environmental effects of the scheme in fine detail. Central Plains Water trusts in this process to safeguard the interests of the community, and encourages all interested people to participate actively in the process.

-ENDS-

For further information:

Derek Crombie
Project Manager – Central Plains Water Limited
(03) 378 2111 or 0272 790 107