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For immediate release



CENTRAL PLAINS WATER WINS PRIORITY ON RAKAIA WATER

Central Plains Water welcomes the news that the Environment Court has granted priority to its applications over competing applications by Synlait Investments Limited and Robindale Dairies Limited, to take water from the Rakaia River.

Central Plains Water sought a declaration from the Environment Court last year to determine whether or not it had priority to the Rakaia water, given it had lodged its application with Environment Canterbury before Synlait Investments.

The decision comes in the lead up to hearings before the Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury on Central Plains Water Trust's applications for land and water use consents to build an irrigation scheme.

"This decision is very good news for Central Plains Water," says company Chairman Pat Morrison. "It means that, under the river's Conservation Order, when there is surplus water in the Rakaia, Central Plains Water can access that water for irrigation ahead of Synlait Investments and Robindale Dairies. This means Central Plains Water has access to more reliable water.

"While the decision is still open to appeal, it takes out one uncertainty and allows us to focus our attention on gaining the consents needed to build the scheme", says Pat Morrison.

The decision comes on the back of the scheme getting farmer endorsement for a tunnel proposal which will minimise disruption during construction and operation of the scheme's proposed reservoir intake. Central Plains Water last month lodged resource consent applications and a notice of requirement to build a 10km tunnel to supply the irrigation scheme's storage reservoir, alleviating concerns of landowners in the area.

A resource consent hearing is anticipated in July 2007 to consider the environmental effects of the scheme in fine detail. Central Plains Water will present scientific studies that address the impact of the scheme, and also proposed mitigation strategies at the hearing.

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For further information:

Pat Morrison
Chairman – Central Plains Water Limited
(03) 318 3783 or 021 434 222