

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Ian Gunn, Manager, Operations

Waingawa River Scheme - Rating

1. Purpose

To outline to the Committee concerns being expressed about the current rating system for the Waingawa River Scheme.

2. Background

The Waingawa River Scheme is the youngest river scheme in the Wairarapa. It was formed in 1992.

There was considerable debate at the time the Scheme was created. Option D, which was developed after discussion with all parties, was accepted as the preferred option.

The characteristics of Option D are –

- uniform clear fairway
- light protection of fairway edge
- fairway cleared of islands and vegetation
- closure of back channels
- minimum practical buffer zone width
- voluntary retirement of buffer zones
- stock exclusion fencing

A rating scheme and funding mix was developed (see Attachment 1).

3. Rating Concern

Concern about the fairness of the present rating scheme has been expressed for some time. At this year's annual general meeting of the Waingawa River Advisory Committee the parties expressed a view that the rates could not increase until a more equitable rating system was developed. Those parties were directed to consider their position and to write to the Council if they still held this view.

In June 1999 the Council had received two letters (see Attachments 2 and 3) –

- D Tulloch, signed by 15 landowners
- G Tulloch

Both letters assert the unfairness of the current rating system.

The points raised are as follows:-

- (a) Masterton District Council should pay more because of
 - the potential for damage to Masterton from a course change
 - the usage of water by Masterton residents during summer
- (b) Rates should be based on the river frontage length.
- (c) Minimum base rate should be charged on all properties bounding the river.
- (d) Potential risk of damage from flooding should be considered.
- (e) The local rating cost should be shared over a wider area as the river is used for water, gravel, drainage and recreation purposes.
- (f) Where the assets are used, e.g. water, gravel, recreation, should be considered.

4. Comment

A number of these issues are answered in Attachment 1 to this report.

Water supply and other benefits are, in my opinion, outside the scope of the rating scheme. It should be noted that there are two large water takes from the Waingawa River -

- (a) Carterton District Council Water Race, 482 litres/second
- (b) Masterton District Council Public Water Supply, 463 litres/second

It is expected that the Scheme's rates would be reviewed following its tenth anniversary. Normally the Council pays for such reviews independent of the scheme. I believe that it is appropriate for the review to occur at this time. If the Advisory Committee wishes to undertake a review earlier the Scheme should pay. At this time staff strongly believe that the rating classification as struck is fair.

5. Communications

The outcome of this report needs to be reported to those parties who have signed letters and the Scheme Advisory Committee. The outcome of any further deliberations needs to be passed onto Scheme members in the Council's annual rates newsletter.

6. Recommendation

- (1) *That the Committee endorse that it is the Waingawa Scheme Advisory Committee's decision to review its rating classification.*
- (2) *That any decision to review the rating classification prior to the tenth anniversary of the Scheme be funded from the Waingawa River Scheme's funds.*

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