

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL VARIATION 1 TO THE PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL
PLAN CHANGE 1 WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**



Submission Form

Submission on a publically notified proposed Regional Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

On: The Waikato Regional Councils proposed Variation 1 to the proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 - Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

To: Chief Executive
Waikato Regional Council
401 Grey Street
Hamilton East
Private bag 3038
Waikato Mail Center
HAMILTON 3240

Full Name: Joanna Lee Ashby and Raymond John Ashby

Postal Address: 1706 East Coast Road, RD3, Pokeno

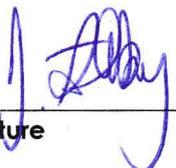
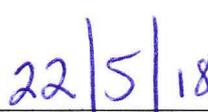
Phone (Cell): 021 101 0128

Postcode: 2473

Email: jo@ashbyfarm.nz

I am not a trade competitor for the purposes of the submission but the variation has a direct impact on my ability to farm. If changes sought in the plan are adopted they may impact on others but I am not in direct trade competition with them. I am happy to present with others which may have similar submissions.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Signature date

INTRODUCTION

Our names are Raymond and Joanna Ashby. Our family farm a beef farm at Maramarua. Our farm is mostly rolling but several large paddocks are steep hill country with a stream at the bottom of these steep hills. The steep hills are predominately rock. The stream is fed from the surrounding Maramarua Forest.

We are environmentally minded farmers. Since purchasing the farm in 2014, we have carried out intensive fencing of wetland habitats, as well as upgrading and repairing the fencing network, and updating the water reticulation system. We have undertaken this work in a structured manner, as far as our financial restraints have allowed.

We have concerns regarding the impact that Plan Change 1 will have on our farming business including viability, and the health and wellbeing of our family including economic and emotional wellbeing.

SUBMISSION ON VARIATION 1 TO THE WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL'S PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 1

Position: We oppose Variation 1 to the proposed Plan Change 1 (PC1)

Reason: Variation 1 to the proposed Plan Change 1, effectively acts to incorporate the Hauraki sub catchments into proposed plan change 1 with the effect that the provisions including rules of PC1 then apply to the Hauraki Sub Catchments:

Relief Sought: We seek that Variation 1 is deleted in its entirety

The specific provisions of the proposal that this submission relates to and the decisions it seeks from Council are as detailed in the following table. The outcomes sought and the wording used is as a suggestion only, where a suggestion is proposed it is with the intention of 'or words to that effect'. The outcomes sought may require consequential changes to the plan, including Objectives, Policies, or other rules, or restructuring of the Plan, or parts thereof, to give effect to the relief sought.

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<p>The specific provisions my submission relates to are:</p> <p>State specifically what Objective, Policy, Rule, map, glossary, or issue you are referring to.</p>	<p>My submission is that:</p> <p>State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether you support, oppose or wish to amend each provision listed in column 1; and • brief reasons for your views. 	<p>The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:</p> <p>Give:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • precise details of the outcomes you would like to see for each provision. The more specific you can be the easier it will be for the Council to understand the outcome you seek
<p>Restricting land use change.</p> <p>Policy 6 Rule 3.11.5.7 and any other relevant provisions within the plan</p>	<p>Oppose: Oppose Restricting land use change.</p> <p>Reason: We have concerns about the impact Variation 1 which incorporates proposed Plan Change 1 (PC1), will have on farming businesses, including opportunities for land owners to achieve their vision for their land.</p> <p>We believe that management frameworks including controls over land use and on farm activities and farm management should be effects based not land use based.</p> <p>Conversion of some land use to other land use doesn't necessarily have an impact on fresh water.</p>	<p>Delete restriction on land use change and instead adopt an approach which is effects based in relation to water quality.</p>
<p>Nitrogen management application of the Nitrogen Reference Point (NRP) & use of OVERSEER</p> <p>Policy 2 and 7</p>	<p>Oppose: We oppose this grandparenting approach (holding users to their Nitrogen Reference Point).</p> <p>Reason: The low emitters are being penalised and the polluters may continue to pollute. There is no scientific</p>	<p>We seek that the Nitrogen Reference Point and use of OVERSEER are removed from the plan in their entirety.</p>

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<p>Rules 3.11.5.2 to -3.11.5.7(inclusive) Schedule B and all other areas in PC1 which refer to the Nitrogen Reference Point</p>	<p>evidence that a blanket rule for nitrogen restriction will achieve the best environmental outcomes in an efficient and effective manner.</p> <p>It penalises the low emitters – who, because of the NRP and how it is applied in the plan, will no longer be able to optimise the use of their land including soils. Optimisation also includes addressing other contaminants of concern such as sediment, phosphorus, and pathogens, along with other environmental issues such as protection of biodiversity, indigenous habitats, and addressing climate change as well as adapting to climate change.</p> <p>We oppose the use of overseer as a means of determining the NRP – it relies on a wide number of assumptions and can vary depending on the information that is entered into it. OVERSEER was never designed to be used for this purpose.</p> <p>The use of OVERSEER for estimating NRP rather than what it was designed to be used for, will create misleading results on sheep and beef properties which have significant trading approaches.</p>	<p>We seek that provisions which act to tie in existing land use, and nitrogen discharge profiles to historic rates, are deleted in their entirety.</p> <p>We seek that Variation 1 and PC1 be amended to provide flexibility for sheep and beef farmers to discharge beyond historic rates in order to optimise their farming systems within environment constraints and in relation to changes in markets and climate.</p> <p>We seek the inclusion of a nitrogen discharge flexibility cap for land use based on the natural capital of the land. Its inherent land use capability.</p>

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	<p>The years chosen to determine the NRP value were drought years in our area, thus stocking rates were very low – this will mean we are restricted to carrying lower numbers of stock going forward, than what is desirable in relation to farming to our grass curves.</p> <p>Our farm was purchased in 2014. For the previous 12 years prior to us purchasing the farm, we believe no fertiliser was applied to the farm. The farm was operating at a sub operating level or below its capacity. Since purchasing the property we have improved soil health resulting in increased grass production and have stocked the farm accordingly.</p> <p>Animals are fed from what is produced from farm. We don't bring in any external feed supplements. The grass curve changes from year to year depending on climate. Our stocking policy reflects this as well as market changes. To be future proofed, flexibility needs to be provided for.</p>	

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<p>Stock exclusion</p> <p>Policy 3, Policy 4, Rule 3.11.5.1,3.11.5.2, 3.11.5.3, 3.11.5.4 and Schedule C</p>	<p>Oppose: Fencing waterways on hill country greater than 15 degrees slope.</p> <p>Reason: Cannot safely get to those areas and if we did, for us, we would be fencing into rock. The hill country area is not as productive as our rolling/flat land, which is reflected in our stocking policies and livestock management. The hill country is not intensively grazed, and we use lighter and younger stock. The hill country is grazed once every 3-4 weeks. Fencing these areas would be nearly impossible, uneconomical and unsafe. As the hill paddocks are not grazed intensively, the effect on the waterways is minimal.</p> <p>The primary route of pathogen inputs to waterways in the hill country is overland flow not deposition. Fencing does not stop overland flow pathways.</p> <p>Tailored farm specific identification and management of critical source areas, will be fair and more efficient and effective at addressing pathogen issues.</p>	<p>Delete requirements to exclude stock from waterbodies by fencing in the hill country (land over 15 degrees slope).</p> <p>Limit cattle on unfenced hill country to no more than 18SU per hectare over autumn/winter therefore lessening impact on environment.</p> <p>Amend stock exclusion to be 'effective stock exclusion' defined as <i>"Effectively barred from access to the beds of lakes and rivers, drains, wetlands, either through a natural barrier (such as a cliff or vegetation), a permanent fence, new technologies such as a 'virtual' GPS fence, and livestock management approaches. Temporary fencing may be used"</i>.</p> <p>Change timeframes for fencing to enable flexibility on a farm by farm basis through FEP.</p>

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	<p>We are generally concerned at the timeframes for fencing to be put in place. Example: What happens if a farmer is 65 years old, can't do the fencing because of physical constraints and can't afford to do fencing anyway because of financial constraints. Timeframes for fencing needs to be flexible and established on a farm by farm basis.</p> <p>On our farm, the cost of getting water reticulation to those steep hill paddocks would be significant. This includes establishing troughs throughout our hill country, along with pumping costs, and reticulation requirements (tank, pumps, alkathene). Because the job would be huge physically and financially, it would have to be staged over a number of years. To impose fencing requirements, along with reticulation is likely to place a significant financial burden on the farm. Given the significant costs, it also reduces our ability to address other environmental issues such as other critical source areas, and targeted restoration or retirement. We feel this reason together with the inability to fence the steep hill country, makes the stock exclusion provisions unreasonable and the cost is not warranted for the small amount of cattle farmed on our hills.</p>	

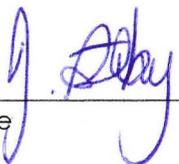
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<p>Riparian setback distances</p> <p>Schedule C, Schedule 1, and any other related provisions.</p>	<p>OPPOSE: Variation 1 which incorporated PC1 should not establish setback distances in a blanket way.</p> <p>REASON: Riparian setback should be based on slope and individual risk factor and should be determined on a case by case basis in accordance with tailored farm specific FEP</p>	<p>Delete specified setback distances and instead provide direction in relation to critical source area management including provision of setback distances through tailored farm specific management plans such as FEP or industry farm plans (LEP)</p>
<p>Farm Environment plans</p> <p>Policy2, Rules 3.11.5.1, 3.11.5.2, 3.11.5.3, 3.11.5.4, 3.11.5.5, 3.11.5.6, 3.11.5.7</p> <p>Schedule 1</p>	<p>Support with amendments</p> <p>Support Farm Environment Plan</p> <p>Oppose stock exclusion, riparian setback and application of NRP as set out above.</p>	<p>Amend FEP requirements to include the relief sought above.</p> <p>Amend the FEP to ensure that it is flexible, able to change overtime, is farm specific and tailored to each farm, and that FEP enables farmer innovation and adaption.</p>
<p>Management of forestry operations or lack thereof</p>	<p>Oppose: Lack of provisions to manage forestry operations.</p> <p>Reasons: Our property is an immediately receiving property downstream from a forestry operation in the upper catchment and so we have significant concerns</p>	<p>Include new provisions which specifically manage forestry operations to ensure that the activities are managed sustainably and they do not impact on downstream land owners or receiving waterbodies.</p>

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	<p>around the impact that forestry harvesting will have on the stream running through our property including sedimentation and deposition of wood debris.</p>	

Yours sincerely

Signature  Date 22/5/18