West Otago Land Management Group
Submission on ‘Action for healthy waterways’ discussion document

The ‘West Otago Land Management Group’ is a farm discussion group that has been running since 2000, comprising 16 farmers based in the West Otago area of the lower South Island. As a group we encompass a wide range of farming types from conventional sheep & beef, sheep & beef & dairy grazing, organic sheep & beef, and dairy farming with operations ranging in size from 3,500 to 19,500 stock units. These farming businesses are family run businesses that have farmed in the community over successive generations and have a strong commitment to the community, the environment and the future of both. A large proportion of us farm in the Pomahaka catchment and are members of the Pomahaka Water Care Group (PWCG). We value our waterways for our family’s recreation, drinking water and sustaining our local economy.

As a group we pride ourselves on being proactive, forward thinking and environmentally conscious. Over the past 4 years we have completed both Level 1 and Level 2 Land and Environment Plans for each of our farm businesses facilitated through Beef+Lamb NZ. We have a strong focus on improving our environmental farm management and continually share knowledge and innovations around good management practices that improve water quality.

We support the overall goal of the proposals to ensure that freshwater systems are healthy and safe for people to swim in and gather food from. We understand what the Government is trying to achieve and support the objective of having healthy freshwater. We support clear, science based environmental bottom lines that protect human and ecological health, and frameworks that empower farmers and communities to work together to achieve these. We also support the need to address issues such as sediment, e-coli and winter grazing.

We support a fair approach where each farmer is expected to do their bit in proportion to their impacts, in an effective and workable manner.