INTRODUCTION

1. The Kānuka Mid Canterbury Regeneration Trust (the Trust) is a charitable trust. The Trust became a registered Charitable Trust under the Charities Act 2005 on 19 June 2019 (registration number CC56917). However, the trustees have been working to establish the Trust since early 2018.

2. The Trust Board consists of six trustees from a range of professions, however the majority come from a rural background. All trustees reside in the Ashburton District.

3. The Trust has been established with the purpose of connecting our land and water, cultures and communities within the Mid Canterbury district. More specifically, the Trust’s specific purposes include:

   (a) to promote and facilitate the conservation, regeneration and enhancement of biodiverse ecosystems in Mid Canterbury for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations;

   (b) to undertake or facilitate projects, educational opportunities or scientific studies to promote the purposes of the Trust;

   (c) to share information and promote to schools, organisations and other members of the public an appreciation and knowledge of the environment and its social, economic and cultural value; and

   (d) to assist with the propagation and provision of plants and resources to individuals, schools, clubs or other groups.

4. These purposes can be summarised with the Trust’s four pillars: Protection, Regeneration, Collaboration and Education.
5. To fulfil the Trust’s purposes, the Trust has been working alongside and in partnership with individuals and groups in our community. The Trust Board has also employed a part-time Community Connector. With some publicity and significant word-of-mouth, in the short time since the Trust was established the Community Connector has amassed a stakeholder register of over 140 individuals, landowners, farmers, schools, businesses and community groups.

6. These stakeholders have become associated with the Trust in a number of ways. Firstly, some have sought assistance from the Trust to undertake a project. Others have offered time, sponsorship or expertise to enable the Trust to fulfil its purposes, or have assisted on projects when approached by the Trust. Many of these individuals are rural landowners, who have approached the Trust requesting guidance or assistance in undertaking projects on farm, such as native plantings, or creating and protecting wetlands.

7. It has therefore been evident to the Trust that, even in the short time and in a small community, there are a significant number of people who want to get involved with projects that will benefit the environment.

**SUBMISSION**

8. The Mid Canterbury district is home to over 33,000 residents. The District’s economy is heavily dependent on a thriving, functioning rural sector.

9. The Trust is concerned about the impact that the Draft National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, the Proposed National Environmental Standards for Freshwater and Draft Stock Exclusion Section 360 Regulations (*the Freshwater Proposals*) will have on the Mid Canterbury district.

10. The Trust supports the Freshwater Proposals to the extent they seek to achieve healthy ecosystems, swimmable waterways and better environmental outcomes. However, the Trust is concerned that some aspects of the Freshwater Proposals go too far and will not be achievable in all catchments. Of particular concern is the proposed National Bottom Line of 1 mg/L for Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (Appendix 2A, Table 5 of the Proposed NPS). This Bottom Line has the potential to severely limit farmers’ ability to operate an economically viable business and would consequently have a significant detrimental effect on Mid Canterbury’s rural economy.

11. Further, the Trust is concerned the Freshwater Proposals do not recognise the work that is already being done in areas like Mid Canterbury. This work includes fencing off waterways and stock crossing points, conversions to more efficient irrigation and effluent systems and operating under farm management plans with consented nitrogen loss limits. The Trust’s experience in working alongside a number of farmers is there is significant ‘buy-in’ from farmers wanting to change their farming practices to improve water quality and ecosystem health.

*Kānuka*

**Mid Canterbury Regeneration Trust**

*linking land and water, cultures and communities*

*Personal details removed*
12. The Trust strongly believe that, (as the Trust is already doing), working with the rural sector will be the most successful way to continue to achieve effective change, rather than forcing impractical, potentially unachievable rules and regulations on this sector.

13. Further, the Trust’s vision of ‘linking our land and water, cultures and community’ encompasses the philosophy that everything is linked. We understand that environmental and economic sustainability directly impacts social and cultural sustainability, particularly in terms of the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of families and communities.

14. The magnitude of change proposed through the Freshwater Proposals has sent shockwaves through the rural community. The Trust is therefore concerned that the impact of these Freshwater Proposals will place a considerable burden on the community at a level that is not only unreasonable, but also unsafe.

15. In summary, the purpose of this submission has been to highlight the significant work that is already going on in communities such as Mid Canterbury. This is evident from the number of people who have already collaborated with the Trust to achieve its purposes of protection, regeneration, collaboration and education. These are themes which have served the Trust strongly to date and which the Trust consider could also be mirrored in any new National Policy Statement, National Environment Standard or Regulation imposed for the purposes of improving water quality.

16. The Trust therefore strongly urge the Government to reconsider its Freshwater Proposals and to not force unachievable rules on communities and catchments that are already taking significant steps towards effecting real change.

Yours sincerely,

Chairperson

Kānuka
Mid Canterbury Regeneration Trust
linking land and water, cultures and communities