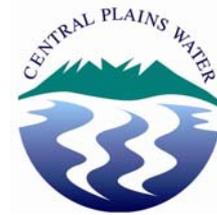


Embargo –not for publication until Friday 25 August

24 August 2006



Auditor General says no case to answer

Central Plains Water welcomes the decision by the Office of the Auditor General not to hold an inquiry into allegations of conflicts of interest by Central Plains Water Trustees.

Commenting on the Auditor General's response to complainants, Central Plains Water Trust Chairman Doug Marsh says, "The Auditor General's letter clearly vindicates the Trustees who have been unfairly targeted by sustained attack from critics of the scheme.

"We are very happy to debate the scheme on its merits and we continue to consult closely with the community about any concerns they have. However, we will not willingly stand by and listen to ill-informed judgements on the conduct of the Company and the Trust, especially when it undermines the potential for realising so many benefits for Canterbury as a whole," Mr Marsh says.

"The Office of the Auditor General says it is not inconsistent for a Director or Trustee to be on both Boards 'especially if that other role gives them specialised knowledge that would be useful to contribute. This may be seen as legitimate and mutually beneficial.'

"The letter also found that there were 'no indications that the Minister [of the Environment] has not complied with his statutory obligations' when he awarded the company requiring authority status for the scheme," says Doug Marsh.

"We wholeheartedly agree with the Auditor General's office and urge people who still have concerns to submit them firstly to Central Plains Water Limited and then, if they are not satisfied, through the resource consent process.

"Submissions for the water take and use applications before Environment Canterbury have closed, but land use applications before Selwyn District Council are yet to be notified. A joint hearing is now expected to take place early next year," says Mr Marsh.

-ENDS-

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