

Central Plains Water given requiring authority status

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Minister for the Environment, David Benson-Pope, has today granted Canterbury irrigation company Central Plains Water Ltd the status of requiring authority.

The Minister is satisfied that Central Plains Water has passed the criteria in the Resource Management Act to become a requiring authority.

"I would like to emphasise that this decision is just the first step of a very thorough process. It does not mean that Central Plains Water now has the permission to go ahead with their irrigation project," said the Minister.

Mr Benson-Pope says the technical decision he has made goes to whether Central Plains Water would act responsibly and should be allowed to apply for the appropriate approvals to set up an irrigation network. His decision-making did not consider the merits of the irrigation project itself.

Before Central Plains Water can start implementing their project, they still need to apply for permission from Environment Canterbury and Selwyn District Council. The councils will assess the project on its impacts on the community and the environment under the Resource Management Act.

A requiring authority has the ability to apply to local councils to set aside land that it needs to set up infrastructure such as road, rail, energy or water. It can also apply to the Minister of Land Information to use the ability to acquire land.

There are more than 120 network utility operators who have been granted requiring authority status since 1991 including four irrigation companies - Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Limited, South Canterbury Waterways Limited, Doubtless Bay Water Supply Company Limited and North Otago Water Harvesting and Irrigation Company Limited.

The irrigation scheme that Central Plains Water proposes is based on the concept of 'water harvesting'. If consented, it will take water from intake races on the Rakaia and Waimakariri Rivers during periods of high flow. The water will then flow through open canals to a reservoir in the Waianiwaniwa Valley where it will be stored until it is needed for irrigation.

Download the associated document file [here](#).

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