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For immediate release



CENTRAL PLAINS WATER WELCOMES CDHB's HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Central Plains Water's (CPW) resource consent application is on the agenda for the Canterbury District Health Board's (CDHB) Board meeting tomorrow. This follows recent media coverage in which the Medical Officer of Health Dr Alistair Humphrey expressed concern that the scheme's effects on public health had not been properly assessed.

CPW Limited Chairman, Pat Morrison says that since lodging the resource consent last year the company has continued to commission numerous scientific studies including more research into the health effects of the scheme.

Canterbury Medical Officer of Health, Dr Alistair Humphrey says "We have recently had a positive meeting with Central Plains Water and are encouraged by the work carried out by them in the last year evaluating health effects of the scheme. We are still keen that a formal Health Impact Assessment should take place to fill the remaining gaps in our understanding of the implications of the scheme and I am pleased that Central Plains and others are supporting this."

Pat Morrison says he is encouraged the matter is receiving the CDHB's full attention. "We are unaware of any evidence that the scheme will create the substantial risk of microbial contamination of Christchurch city's drinking water supply, as suggested by comments on a recent front page article in The Press. Such potential for severe health impacts has not been borne out by our scientific reports or evidence obtained by the company to date and we are anxious to address the public's concerns about such effects.

"Our technical studies have looked at several areas of public concern, such as nitrates, microbes and pesticides, and the advice we have received from the experts is that the safeguards we are proposing will be more than adequate to ensure public safety.

"The potential health effects of the proposed CPW scheme, along with many other issues, will receive full scrutiny and be presented at our forthcoming resource consent hearing.

"It's vital that members of the public understand that the scheme is not a fait accompli – there is no way the four commissioners will grant the consents we require if there is doubt in their mind the scheme will result in public health issues or widespread contamination of people's drinking water. We ask that people have faith in the resource management process."

Central Plains Water today confirmed the joint hearing by Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury will commence on 19 February 2008. The commissioners are Philip Milne – RMA law specialist (chair), Ray O'Callaghan – engineer, Andrew Fenemor – ecologist and Bob Nixon – planner.

-Ends-

For further information

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