


2. DEPUTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT

(a) CENTRAL PLAINS WATER ENHANCEMENT SCHEME



Mr Geoff Stevenson, Chairman, The Ritso Society, has been granted speaking rights to respond to a number of issues raised by representatives of the Dam Action Group in their recent submission to the Committee.

The following background information has been provided by the Society:

“The Ritso Society was formed to promote the interests of the farming community in the development of the water scheme. Paid membership now stands officially at approximately 200. In the main, these are individuals and family partnerships, ranging from individual small holders to those farming the most substantial and productive properties in the district. Including all the members of farming partnerships, our actual membership exceeds 300, farming a combined area greater than 40,000 hectares.

Councillors may also be aware that we were asked to raise \$250,000 to free a \$208,000 contribution towards the furtherance of the project from the Canterbury Economic Development Fund. We successfully facilitated an exercise that raised this amount from 46 individuals and farming partnerships. These people have made a purely speculative investment from their own pockets in what is at present nothing more than a very good idea, motivated by the immense short and long term return they see coming to the community and to the Canterbury region from a water enhancement scheme. In total these 46 investors farm around 17,000 hectares. Suggestions they are not representative of the district’s primary producers and rural community are false.”