

## 5. CROSS BOUNDARY SUPPLY TO CITY USERS FROM PAPARUA STOCK WATER RACE SYSTEM

RR 9333

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the administration of the Paparua stock water race system.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Community Board members will be aware that a substantial area of rural land within the Christchurch city district receives a cross boundary supply of race water from Selwyn District. The scheme is administered and maintained by Selwyn District with Christchurch users charged directly by Selwyn for use of the race system. Representation of city interests in the administration of the scheme is achieved through membership of Mike Mora on the Water Race Sub-committee with Derek Rid, Water Services Unit providing technical support.

### 2 RECENT INVESTIGATION AND COMMITTEE WORK

A consortium of Pattle Delamore and Agriculture New Zealand was recently commissioned to report on scheme operation. Their findings included the following main points:

- (a) Residents/ratepayers in the water race area were generally in favour of the water race continuing. It was seen as an important asset to the area.
- (b) The water race administration was in need of attention.
- (c) The existing user charging system was unfair to the larger property owners.
- (d) Lifestyle block owners were not aware of their responsibilities for upkeep of water races.
- (e) Inconsistent flows in the water races frustrated farmers and was the major complaint against the system. Some inconsistency was brought about by
  - blockages
  - poor cleaning upstream
  - illegal drawing-off of water
  - illegal changes in flow splits at race take-offs

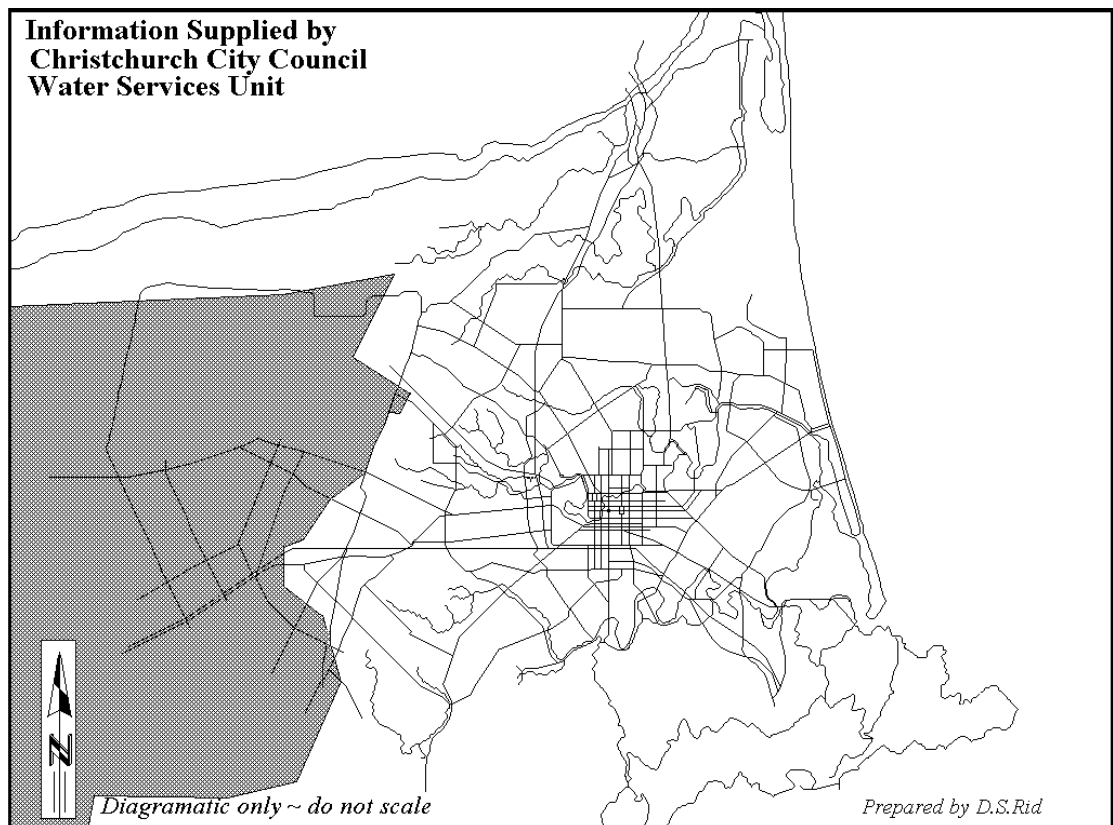
As a result of the report the water race will continue to operate for the foreseeable future provided the consent to take water from the Waimakariri River is renewed by the Canterbury Regional Council in 2001.

Since the Selwyn District Council's Water Race Sub-committee adopted the report and recommendations it has steadily worked through items identified as needing attention. This Sub-committee looks after three water race schemes within the Selwyn District Council area including the Paparua Stock Water Race of which approximately one third by area lies within the city boundary. The work includes:

- (a) A draft set of bylaws, common to all three water races, is being prepared, based on an agreed set of policies (see attached).
- (b) There is a new composition of the Water Race Sub-committee membership, made up of elected members and users, based on area and number of users. This has given the city one elected member and one user.
- (c) Flows within the Papanui Stock Water Race have been improved and are more steady and reliable. The stone weirs for controlling flows into branch races are being replaced with simple gate structures with lockable gate settings.
- (d) The charges for users have been changed to be more in line with that recommended in the consortium's report.
- (e) A draft newsletter has been prepared that informs property owners of their responsibilities relating to the water race system.
- (f) The water race caretakers have a responsibility to identify any non-paying users to the Selwyn District Council so that they may be charged for use of water.

### 3 SCHEME AREA WITHIN CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT

Within the city the water race system provides water to the area shaded on the map.



## **4 CITY BENEFITS**

In addition to providing for stock water needs the city benefits from the water race system in the following ways:

- Aquifer recharge
- Ecological Values
- Aesthetic Values
- Stream flow augmentation
- Rural fire fighting

### **Aquifer Recharge**

Approximately 90% of the water taken for the system from the Waimakariri River ends up recharging the aquifers either through seepage losses, soakholes at ends of races or irrigation.

### **Ecological values**

#### *Plants*

The race water supports 22 native vascular plant species, *Paesia scaberula* not being recorded in the Christchurch plains area before.

#### *Invertebrates*

Diverse, healthy communities comprising substantial numbers of stoneflies and mayflies – two pollution sensitive species uncommon in many urban waterways.

#### *Fish*

Three indigenous species along with brown trout.

### **Aesthetic values**

The races provide corridors of green plant life and areas of moisture in an area of the city that would otherwise be dry.

### **Stream flow augmentation**

Some water races discharge directly into the top end of the city streams giving them additional or in some situations some flow throughout the year.

### **Rural fire fighting**

For example, water was used directly from the water race to help put out the fire at the corner of Buchanans Road and Old West Coast Road during the summer of 1997/98.

## **5 POLICIES AND BY-LAW**

As mentioned above, the sub-committee has prepared a set of policies that apply to all of the schemes administered by Selwyn District. These are attached. As well, the sub-committee has revised the by-law governing water race management and is in the process of having these adopted. It will be sensible for the city to adopt an identical by-law to allow its administration with the city district and this will be brought before your board for recommendation to the Council as soon as the finalised version is available.

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

### **Chairperson's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received and that a joint forum be held with the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board on Monday 22 March 1999 at 4.00pm (venue to be confirmed) to which a full presentation of this important activity can be made.