

1. COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR CANTERBURY STRATEGIC WATER STUDY STAGE II

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The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the undertaking of the Canterbury Strategic Water Study Stage II and support for funding the study cost by way of a regional rate.

BACKGROUND

A key strategic issue for the Canterbury region is the management of water. The Canterbury Strategic Water Study provided a significant contribution towards a Canterbury Water Strategy by evaluating the potential long-term requirement for water and the capacity of the region to meet those requirements.

Councillors will recall the seminar in March last year when John Bright from Lincoln Environmental presented the findings of this work.

The study found that Canterbury region is clearly water-short when comparing water demand with water availability on a daily or weekly basis. However, when comparing the water demand with water availability on an annual basis, the region has enough to meet its foreseeable abstractive needs and provide for in-stream flow requirements. This implies that significant water storage would be required if this future demand is to be met.

To further develop the concept of providing major storage facilities in Canterbury and to address other key matters such as water quality not addressed by the initial work it was clear that a regional agency was needed to promote continuation of the studies.

The Mayoral Forum has accepted this role, and at its September 2003 meeting agreed:

“That the draft project outline for an Integrated Water Resource Development and Management Strategy for Canterbury be adopted in principle and referred to individual Councils for endorsement.”

At the same meeting it was proposed that the cost of the Stage II Study (approximately \$250,000 spread over two financial years) would be met by way of a regional rate levied across the whole region by Environment Canterbury.

This Council is therefore being asked to:

- (a) Endorse the undertaking of Stage II of the Canterbury Strategic Water Study under the auspices of the Mayoral Forum; and
- (b) Support the regional rate method of funding the study.

CONTENT OF STAGE II STUDY

A copy of the Stage II project outline is tabled.

Significant Central Government funding has recently been provided for **water quality** research projects that cover one of the key areas not included in the initial study. This allows the Canterbury Strategic Water Study: Stage II to concentrate on the issue of storage and on devising practical scheme options that could best serve the region's water needs. A fundamental requisite of the work is that these “needs” are inclusive of social, cultural, economic and environmental requirements. These water extraction, transport and storage options will almost certainly require co-operation between sub-regions, where for example water stored in one locality could be used in another which is storage deficient and where abstraction applications are made jointly by users on both sides of the river source. Investigation and planning on a regional scale is essential to lay the basis for such cooperation.

Quoting from the conclusions of the original study:

“The future development of Canterbury’s water resources will require strategic, integrated water resource management. The local and regional communities will be required to make decisions to ensure water is distributed amongst stakeholders fairly and equitably. Co-operation amongst these stakeholders will be necessary to ensure that Canterbury’s water resources are developed and used wisely for the long-term benefit of the regional community”. – Canterbury Strategic Water Study P.114

The Mayoral Forum has accepted this challenge and is now seeking its constituent Councils’ endorsement of further study, critical to preparation of a region-wide water strategy.

Recommendation: That the Council:

- (a) Endorse the undertaking of Stage II of the Canterbury Strategic Water Study under the auspices of the Mayoral Forum; and
- (b) Support the Environment Canterbury rate method of funding the study, noting the indicative cost of \$250,000 and the 2004/06 timeframe.