

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1
WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

Submission Form

Submission on a publically notified proposed Regional Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

On: The Waikato Regional Councils proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 -
Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

To: Waikato Regional Council
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Complete the following

Full Name: Tony & Hannah Bignell

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I am not a trade competitor for the purposes of the submission but the proposed plan has a direct impact on my ability to farm. If changes sought in the plan are adopted they may impact on others but I am not in direct trade competition with them.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

H Bignell

H Bignell

8/3/17

Signature

date

WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS

Provision	I support/ oppose/ and for each whether or not you wish to amend	I seek that the provision is: Deleted in its entirety/ Retained as proposed/ amended as set out below
<p><u>Policy 2 (d)</u></p>	<p>The reasons for this are:</p> <p><u>Oppose</u></p> <p>For the past 12 years our family farm has been leased on operated below capacity as a dairy support. If the proposed plan goes ahead, our farm will be capped at a level which may inhibit our ability to run the farm at capacity, therefore limiting our income potential in the future.</p>	<p>As an alternative I propose</p> <p><u>Amend</u></p> <p>Please refer to our submission on the following page for an alternative we believe is fair & equitable to all land owners within the catchment area.</p>

The specific provision our submission relates to is **Policy 2: Tailored approach to reducing diffuse discharges from farming activities.**

We agree with Policy 2(c) in that a Nitrogen Reference Point (NRP) should be established for every farm in New Zealand. Farmers will benefit as they will be able to compare their NRP against farms of the same nature and assess their practices accordingly. Knowing where you sit on the scale would be motivation enough for most farmers to implement practices to reduce discharges. Making this information available to the public would provide further incentive for farmers to do so and also promote transparency in the industry.

We agree also with all farms having to reduce their discharge levels below the 75th percentile nitrogen leaching value (once this is calculated). We believe this is a fair application of the rule as it will identify those who are taking advantage of our environment and those who are already taking action to keep their leaching to a minimum.

We disagree however, with all farmers operating at or below the 75th percentile being capped at their current levels (Policy 2(d)). This is an unfair application of the rule as it will directly impact the value of the land and its future potential to generate income while keeping up with inflationary pressure on expenditure. Further to this, land which has not been operating at capacity in the past will be capped at levels which may not be financially feasible for a new entrant farmer resulting in continued inefficient use of the land.

As an alternative, we propose that farms already operating at or below the 75th percentile be allowed to discharge up to but no more than 75th percentile level also. We also propose that the nitrogen leaching value be reassessed regularly (i.e. every five years) and gradually reduced to a level that will allow the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River to be achieved in a fair and equitable way.

In light of the inevitable decrease in land values noted above, application of Policy 2(e) to complete stock exclusion from waterways by 2026 would be near impossible for many farmers. Although we support this initiative, these two factors would cripple us financially. Up until now our plan has been to return home and be the third generation to run the family farm. This would involve us leasing the farm from my parents at market rate. I personally feel I had a typical kiwi upbringing, raised in the country by hard working parents making a modest income from their farming operations. We swam in the rivers and we drank the stream water without hesitation. We want this too for our children and our children's children. However, we also want the opportunity to further improve our family farm and its income earning potential. For the past 10 years we have been working towards this goal, gaining practical experience in farming, as well as other areas, and building equity through property.

The uncertainty caused by the Healthy Rivers PC1 has meant we've had to delay this, reassess our financial position and rethink our options. A position we never thought we would be in and which is beyond our direct control.

We ask that you please consider our submission and the impact these changes will have on our family's future.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Tony and Hannah Bignell in black ink.

Tony & Hannah Bignell

Date: 08/03/2017