
COUNCIL SEEKS TO SUPPORT WATER SECURITY FOR CENTRAL HAWKE'S BAY

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As part of the 2019/20 Annual Plan Consultation, the Central Hawke's Bay District Council have included a proposal to provide a \$250,000 suspensory loan from the Rural Ward Funds to Water Holdings CHB Ltd, to identify feasible water security opportunities for Central Hawke's Bay.

Mayor Alex Walker recognises the voices that have been talking about the role of water for some time. "Our community is telling us that water security is the greatest obstacle and opportunity to addressing the environmental, social and economic challenges that Central Hawke's Bay faces"

The proposed suspensory loan would support Water Holdings CHB to investigate the options for water security, via water storage, that lie in the intellectual property that they hold. It would also support them to work in a collaborative way, including with community, tangata whenua and Hawke's Bay Regional Council, as part of work already underway to address water security in Central Hawke's Bay and the region.

The funding will not be provided to revisit the Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme as it was known. Given the high public interest that water security has received to date, Council are choosing to consult with the public.

Mayor Alex Walker recognises that water security in Central Hawke's Bay is not just about farm irrigation but about ensuring that the future environmental, business and social aspirations of our community can be met in a sustainable and environmentally focussed way. "The vision for vitality of rivers in the district is real, and important" she says.

"But we also have businesses pausing the lives of their employees as their inability to secure water impacts operations. We have new business opportunities for growth and processing of crops like organic kiwifruit, hemp, and grapes. But investment needs security of a crucial ingredient – water – before any business can take a risk on capital investment."

"Water security will afford the opportunity for businesses to return to or explore value-adding opportunities and diversification of land-use and industry for a Central Hawke's Bay of the future."

Councillors, in supporting the move to consultation on the proposal, emphasised the importance of taking the time to have a meaningful conversation with the community and hear their view on what was proposed. "This is an opportunity for the local voices to be heard for the first time, loud and clear, without being dominated by regional and national opinion. This is crucial for Central Hawke's Bay to show if they want to be part of driving this process moving forward," says Mayor Walker.

What water security options for Central Hawke's Bay could be are yet to be identified in a collaborative approach, with the suspensory loan only available subject to meeting a number of strict criteria set down by Council. The loan will have no impact on rates, proposed to be funded from the Rural Ward Funds that has a balance of \$811,114.

Council encourages the community to provide feedback on this proposal, one of a number of things Council are seeking feedback on as part of its 2019/20 Draft Annual Plan Consultation. To find out more, visit www.chbdc.govt.nz or feel free to visit one of Councils Libraries or Service Centres to view the Annual Plan Consultation Document. Consultation opens on 18 March 2019.

Ends

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